

LENAWEE UNITED WAY

Achieving financial stability does not depend on income

By Lynne Punnett

Habitat for Humanity has learned a lot of lessons over our nearly 40 years in the ministry of affordable housing.

Among the most important is that people don't have to make a lot of money to be financially stable. And just because a person is in a higher income bracket does not mean they are financially stable. In fact, many people who make a lot of money are in big trouble financially, so toss out the window any preconceived ideas that low- to middle-income people cannot be financially stable. Habitat knows thousands of people personally who disprove that.

As our organization and understanding of people's preparedness to own a home has evolved over the years, more than ever we emphasize financial education. The process with Habitat often begins with an applicant desiring to improve living conditions for their children. They may need to reduce the amount they are paying in rent; often at or near 50 percent of their income. And like everyone who owns a home, they hope to build equity.

Some Habitat partner homeowners qualify for a mortgage the day they apply. But for others Habitat provides one-on-one counseling that can be needed to get through the hurdles (often credit issues) that are keeping them from qualifying. Because of the outstanding partnership Habitat has with Community Action Agency, some applicants are better suited to work on credit issues under their direction for a while and then



The Black family, from left, Veronica, Rod, and their son, Oliver, are shown at their new home provided with the help of Habitat for Humanity. SUBMITTED PHOTO

come back to Habitat to pursue their dream of owning a home.

Through this collaborative effort everyone is involved in the best approach to achieving the ultimate goal.

These direct services are only possible because of the wonderful spirit of cooperation that exists here in Lenawee County and leading by example is Lenawee United Way. A big part of the financial counseling, coaching and mentoring we provide here at Habitat is possible because of support we receive from the United Way and for that we say thank you!



Habitat for Humanity of Lenawee County is located at 1205 E. Beecher St., Adrian. For more information call 265-6157 or visit www.habitat-lenawee.org.

For more information about Lenawee United Way visit lenaweekunitedway.org.

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