Wyoming Families to Build House in El Salvador

"Happiness doesn’t result from what we get, but from what we give."

This is a story of three families and how their different paths brought them together and have given all families a way to give and receive.

By Nora Salazar and Blayne Smith

Nora Salazar’s father lives in San Salvador, and his driver’s home was the introduction for Nora to the Habitat for Humanity’s great work in El Salvador. Here is Nora with her husband Gerhard Koenderink, their son Woody, and daughter Sophia.

Three years ago, my father’s driver, Marcos, asked my dad if he could have a loan so he could put floors in his house. The last tropical storm that raged through San Salvador, El Salvador had made a mess inside the house. He explained that he currently had dirt floors. Not long after that, my father visited Marcos’ house for the first time in the seven years Marcos had been employed with him (my father suffers from epilepsy and requires a driver). He was shocked to see that Marcos, his wife, and three boys lived in a one-room dwelling, with corrugated metal and cardboard walls. There was no indoor plumbing and the out-house was located down a hill, stood about four feet tall, and was basically a hole in the ground. They showered with a hose. The land was steep and was being washed away by rain. My father never imagined that Marcos lived under these conditions. This quiet, kind man, that was so devoted to my dad, was always so clean and pressed. Marcos had never asked for anything in spite of the obvious dire living conditions the family lived in.

Once my family was aware of this situation, we quickly contacted Habitat for Humanity (HFH) in El Salvador and later in the year, HFH had presented us with plans for a three bedroom cinder block home and a quote for $8,500.00. We all chipped in, and I am happy to say that Marcos is enjoying his new home and bathroom.

It was one morning, a few months ago, that I ran in to Suzanna Smith and she told me that Blayne, her husband, was going to El Salvador to work on a house for Habitat for Humanity. I quickly called Blayne because I wanted to tell him what a wonderful organization HFH had been for us and Marcos—how the small amount of $8,500.00 had given Marcos and us an unbelievable gift.

Blayne Smith

I had been active with Habitat for Humanity locally for a few years, as our church is part of a coalition that builds homes in the Cincinnati area. One night I was checking it out on behalf of my church. Having been on a few international mission trips before, I was intrigued at the possibilities. When I got to El Salvador, I was so moved by the conditions the families lived in. It was then that I wanted to do more. Habitat for Humanity was a perfect fit. They were doing good work in El Salvador, so I requested to go on a trip there.

The last time I was in El Salvador was in 2012 and I got to see the little dirt road where Marcos lived. I was so happy to see his house all finished and that he had a new bathroom. I want to continue to support HFH because it is making a difference in people’s lives.

Let’s talk turkey!

Sue S. Lewis
Executive Sales Vice President
(513) 931-7700 Office
(513) 324-8095 Mobile
sueslewis@sibcycline.com
#1 in Wyoming Sales & Listings!

AROUND TOWN: FALL FESTIVAL

The weather was not cooperative for Fall Festival 2015, but that didn’t stop people from supporting this annual Wyoming tradition. With hot chocolate, kettle corn, gaga, and a smattering of musicians willing to expose themselves (and their instruments) to the drizzle, the day was a true taste of fall. Enjoy the photos of all the action.

Avery Frank and Mariella Wilson-Woodrow stroll the booths together.

Time to give thanks in your new home!

Let’s talk turkey!

Sue S. Lewis
Executive Sales Vice President
(513) 931-7700 Office
(513) 324-8095 Mobile
sueslewis@sibcycline.com
#1 in Wyoming Sales & Listings!

Wyoming Family Dentistry
Julia Kinlaw, DDS • Laura Kinlaw, DDS • Emily Boehm, DDS
513-821-0659

For over 30 years we have provided quality dental care in a friendly, comfortable environment. We are committed to excellence in our field, and will utilize the latest technological advances to ensure you receive the finest care possible.

411 Wyoming Avenue • Wyoming, Ohio 45215 • www.wyomingfamilydentistry.com
The Alcohol Task Force has also worked to bring local and national speakers to Wyoming on such topics as underage drinking laws and enforcement, guidance on talking to teens about substance abuse, identifying signs of abuse, and the specific dangers of marijuana use.

Another recent program was a presentation by Dr. Jessica Kahn of Cincinnati Children’s Hospital focusing on “Marijuana and the Teen Brain.” Dr. Kahn stressed the vulnerable nature of teen brain development and cited a wealth of research on rates of use and the potential dangers caused by marijuana. She noted that nationally, eighty-five percent of all teens have used marijuana by their senior year of high school, and that approximately twenty-five percent of teens who use marijuana go on to abuse it or become dependent on it. One in six teenage marijuana users become addicted.

Current brain research indicates long term structural and functional changes in teenage brains following marijuana use, causing impairment in coordination, attention, verbal learning, memory, information processing, decision-making, and overall intelligence. Additionally, marijuana use may cause depression, anxiety, panic, psychosis, and addiction to other drugs in teenagers.

The Alcohol Task Force is very grateful to Dr. Kahn for her highly informative, objective presentation of current research on the effects of marijuana use.

Wyoming’s Alcohol Task Force encourages all members of the community to stay informed about the risks of teenage drug and alcohol use. More information can be found on the group’s Facebook page. The website for the National Institute on Drug Abuse provides resources and up to date research on drug and alcohol issues: www.drugabuse.gov. An additional website is aimed specifically at providing information to teens: www.teens.drugabuse.gov or drugfacts/maryjuana.

José Israel De la Paz Ticas
José is Marcos’ younger brother. He is currently living with his wife and two children in a one-room house on a piece of land of another brother. The house is in inadequate condition, it is too small for the family and the land is not saleable. Remember Marcos’ out-house? Well, it was a shared dwelling between José and Marcos’ families.

José delivers gas tanks for a living and cannot afford to build even the most humble shack on a piece of land that he inherited from his father.

Building José a Home
It is such an exciting moment for our families, to be able to give someone such a tremendous gift, a gift so out of the realm of probability for José. Never had he imagined that he would have a safe home, but even more unbelievable that it would come from strangers from far away.

And so here began our journey. We contacted HFH, they presented us with plans to build a three-bedroom house, a dining room and kitchen space, a bathroom with a shower and toilette, and a perimeter sidewalk. The cost of that house is...
Nora and Blayne are leading the mission to raise money for a home for this family. José De la Paz Ticas with his wife Sandra, his daughter Madelynn, and son José. Behind them is their collapsing home.

Our project consists of three parts. Part one, was to find a deserving family that qualified under HFH requirements. José and his family have met our criteria and have qualified with HFH. Now, part two, is to raise $6,850.00 (70% of the total cost of the project). We would love the help of our community in achieving this goal. If you would like to contribute, and make a tax-deductible contribution please visit us at habitatcincinnati.org, at the comment window under Global Village donation page please write “Build José a Home”. We are very committed in documenting every step of the process and will be sending periodic updates on our progress to our donors.

And part three of our project, is the actual building of the house. We will organize building teams that will actually go to El Salvador and physically help build José a home via HFH. Our tentative projected date for our first building team will be June 2017.

For more information on how you, your child, or family can help and be part of this wonderful experience please contact Blayne Smith at smith.br.3@pg.com or Nora Salazar at norakoenderink@yahoo.com.

Light Up Wyoming will be held on Saturday, December 12, in conjunction with the Wyoming Holiday Open House. In its 29th year, Light Up Wyoming is a longstanding tradition in the community with the goal of creating an “unbroken circle of light” to show Wyoming holiday spirit! Light Up Wyoming is one of the primary fundraisers for the Junior Women’s Club of Wyoming, a non-profit organization that supports the local community through volunteering and fundraising. Every year the club disinvests funds locally through the Junior Women’s Club of Wyoming Foundation. Luminaries kits are $15 and come with enough supplies to make 20 kits. Order your kits before Thursday, December 1 and receive FREE home delivery. Kits can be purchased through paypal on our website, http://www.jwc-wyoming.org/. In-person sales will run the December 5 and 6 in the High School Tennis Court Lot and December 5 and 12 at the Civic Center.

Not going to be around for Light Up Wyoming or don’t have the space to put them out? Consider purchasing kits to donate and be used for public spaces within the community! We can also assist seniors on the setup and cleanup of kits during the event – just let us know when you order.

For more information or to order for delivery, using a check, contact us at lightupwy@gmail.com.