

Three families working toward a new house to call home in 2014

We would like to introduce you to three great families who will move into their new homes in 2014. They are Jack & Marsha Cooley and daughter Amber - Laura Contreras and children Leslie, Leonard, Eddie and Lilianne - Ivan and Rubidia Munoz and daughter Salma. Recently, on the Saturday worksite, we checked in with Laura, Ivan and Jack and asked them a few questions about their experience with Kearney Habitat.

1) *How did you hear about Habitat for Humanity - who introduced you?*

Jack replied that his wife Marsha had a friend and co-worker who got a HFH house in 2000 and suggested that they look into the possibility. Marsha saw the house and liked it and she and Jack applied.

Ivan also said that they have a lot of friends from church who are Habitat families and they recommended that Ivan and Ruby look into the possibility of owning one themselves.

Laura heard about Habitat about 15 years ago from an old family friend who had a Habitat home. Laura always dreamed about having a home of her own and thought about signing up. She drove by the office many times and finally found out how to apply. She applied and was rejected two times but kept working at the requirements and finally the third time was the charm and she was accepted for a 2014 house.



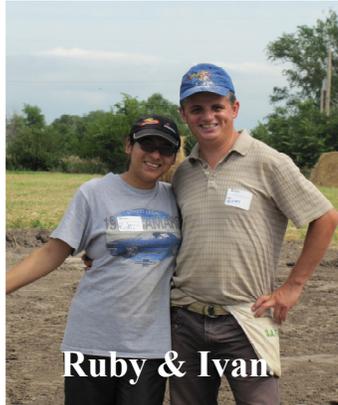
Jack & Amber

2) *Why did you decide to apply for a Habitat house?*

Jack said it was financial. . . why not try! "If the Lord wants us to have a house, we can have one." They applied, waited a year and finally God said it was time, and they are now building their own house.

Ivan said he and Ruby are living in an old home built in 1976 which is inadequate for their needs, and they wanted to have a better home for their family.

Laura always dreamed of owning her own home and thought it was worth trying!



Ruby & Ivan

3) *Have you learned new skills from this building process?*

Jack is a "jack of all trades" naturally and in his current work, so he has done a lot of the activities required in building a home and is familiar with those skills. He said you can always learn new skills, though, and new ways to do things from others, and you can always use those skills.

Ivan said yes, he has learned a little bit of everything. He loves working here and on his own house.

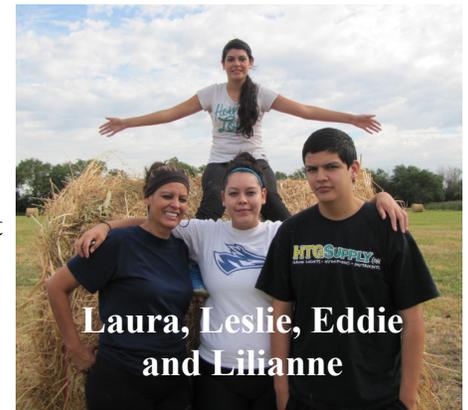
Laura said "Oh, Yes! Hammer, paint, everything is new for me. I am happy to learn these new skills."

4) *Has the effort been worth it?* (Each homeowner puts in 20 hours of work to qualify, and then 400 hours, 250 by themselves and a work partner and 150 by friends that they ask to help)

Jack and Amber both said "Oh, Yes! Not only working on our own house but it makes us feel good helping others, too."

Ivan said the same - "Oh, Yes, it is an effort but not really because it will be a home for my family!"

Laura agreed - "Yes, of course! This is a tough job. Now I can see it from the inside and how much work goes into building a house." Her daughters and son are able to help part time, but knows that it is a big job.



**Laura, Leslie, Eddie
and Lilianne**

5) *What is the best part of building?*

Jack indicated that when it is your house, you know that you have accomplished something well worth it. He looks forward to helping others get their homes, and in fact his daughter Amber wants to apply in the future for a home of her own! He recommends to others to be patient in the process. . . good things can happen!

Ivan answered "Everything. I like everything!"

Laura also said that the best part is "everything"! She likes to see how things go together. When she saw the sod go down in the front of her house it changed everything and it was so beautiful and she felt so happy! And when she saw the cabinets go up in her kitchen she cried because she was so happy.

Building simple, decent houses for families in need. . . a learning experience, a hard job, but worth the effort because you become a homeowner! Special, indeed!

—Tina Sheets, Habitat homeowner and Family Support Chairman

Greetings from the Family Selection Committee

As members of the Family Selection Committee, we are responsible for responding to telephone and email inquiries, interviewing applicants, reviewing credit reports, analyzing application information, and recommending applicants to the Kearney Area Habitat for Humanity (KAHFH) Board of Directors for approval as prospective homeowners.

Families are selected based on their need for adequate shelter, their ability to pay for a Habitat home, and their willingness to partner with KAHFH. Our committee typically responds to at least one new inquiry each week. During the first eight months of 2014, we have received three new applications and have one family approved for the 2015 building season. Much of our committee's time is spent responding to initial inquiries for assistance. Our committee members often provide counseling to potential applicants who do not qualify for a Habitat home so that they can take the necessary steps to prepare themselves for home ownership. We encourage ineligible applicants to re-apply when they are able to meet KAHFH's family selection criteria.

The most frequent situations which make applicants ineligible for a Habitat home are:

*Family already owns a home and site
Applicant is unemployed or becomes
unemployed during the application
process*

*Married applicants fail to apply jointly
Excessive debt*

*Household income is too high or too low
Immigration status*

Unacceptable credit history

*A minimum of 1 year of residency, wor-
ship, or employment in Kearney has
not been met*

Habitat for Humanity partners with God's People In Need of Simple, Decent, Affordable Housing

We look forward to assisting applicants as they move through the process of applying for a Habitat home in Kearney.

—Paul Bartlett, chairman Hugo Longoria, Sr.
Patty Rinn, Lucy Witt, Stan Wilson, Cindy
Barney

Reese still swings his hammer for Habitat at 89

By MARY JANE SKALA Hub Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, July 7, 2014

KEARNEY: In November, Ed Reese will be 90 years old, but he's still swinging his hammer.

He puts in an average of eight hours a week helping Habitat for Humanity build homes. "It gives me something to do," he said modestly. "I put on my nail apron, get my hammer and pliers and help nail on the siding. I do anything except climb ladders."

He has volunteered for Habitat longer than he can remember. "Maybe 20 years?" he said. Several mornings a week, he joins other retirees and spends four hours at Habitat sites. He wears denim overalls that have roomy pockets for his hammer, nails, wrenches and other tools. "One of the first days I volunteered this spring, they were digging down to see how deep we needed to put the footers so they could lay the foundation," he said. Meanwhile, he's just watching the painting going on now at another Habitat home because "I didn't want to mess up the paint."

Habitat is a cause he believes in. "Many Habitat for Humanity homeowners really can't afford most contractor-built homes, and I get satisfaction out of seeing a decent house go up for people who need it,"

A professional welder, Reese was born on a farm near Poole and came to Kearney in 1956. He got a job at Caldwell Manufacturing and then worked in Marlatt Machine Shop. "I did porch railings and ornamental things," he said.

From there, he opened his own welding shop in Elm Creek. After his retirement, he spent part of the summer helping build the bleachers at the Elm Creek school sports complex. He cut the steel, got it ready for cranes to set the framework and then helped fill in the complex. Among other things, he helped install seats acquired from the demolished Mile High Stadium in Denver.

Reese met his late wife, Betty, when he and a National Guard buddy went for dinner and drinks at the Fort Kearny Hotel. She was working at the hotel desk. He invited her to go roller skating at the National Guard Armory. They spent most of their married life in a home just one block away from the armory.

Betty died in 1998. The couple had four children: Laura Tadlock of Gibbon, who works at the University of Nebraska at Kearney; Lisa Reese Parish of Kearney, executive director of the Kearney Area United Way; Dennis, a football coach and industrial arts teacher in Loomis; and Dan, who works for Bridgestone-Firestone Tires in Nashville, Tenn. Reese also has four grandchildren.

When not building Habitat homes, Reese creates things in his basement workshop. "I've got a mess in the basement," he said with a grin. In his living room has a handcrafted walnut stool made from a dead tree in daughter Lisa's yard. "That tree was growing under electric wires, so they cut it down," he said. "That big log laid in her yard for a time. Eventually, I started making things out of it." He also made a grandfather clock for Lisa. After he drew a sketch of the clock, his son Dennis planed the boards at his woodworking shop in Loomis and gave them back and he got busy. "It didn't turn out real well, but I worked on it all winter, and she seemed happy with it," Reese said.

Busy with wood in the winter, he heads outside in the spring and starts preparing the soil. He has two sizable garden plots that grows turnips, lettuce, beets, potatoes and German giant radishes.

