

NEWS

'Miracle home.' Morris Habitat for Humanity helps family get their forever home

William Westhoven Morristown Daily Record

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JEFFERSON — For 15 years, Marly and Scott Davis struggled to raise their six children in a cramped two-bedroom Newark apartment.

Now, they finally have a house of their own, with four bedrooms, a basement, a laundry room and, perhaps best of all, a place to swim and play in the family-friendly Lake Shawnee community.

“This is our miracle home,” Scott Davis said as neighbors, supporters and members of Morris Habitat for Humanity gathered outside the home Monday to celebrate the completion of another build. “It doesn’t get any better than this. We’re still pinching ourselves to believe it’s true.”

“I was born and raised in Lake Shawnee, and I also serve as the president of the Lake Shawnee Club,” Jefferson Mayor Eric Wilsusen said. “I have to tell you, Habitat and the Davis family, you could not have picked a better community anywhere.”



Habitat for Humanity: Family of eight gets home in Jefferson NJ

A family with six children who lived in a two-bedroom apartment in Newark for six months has a new Habitat for Humanity home in Lake Shawnee. *William Westhoven, Morristown Daily Record*

The Davises’ new address on North Parkway is walking distance from the lake, in one of many communities built around scores of lakes in greater Morris County, known by many as “Lakeland.”

Marly and Scott Davis, center, with Scott’s mother Linda Davis, far left, and their six children, celebrate after cutting the ribbon at the home dedication ceremony held by Morris

Habitat for Humanity at their N. Parkway Jefferson Twp. home on August 30, 2021. The family of eight is moving from a two bedroom apartment in Newark to the new four-bedroom house.

The bed for the lake was dug by the Crane Company, which developed most of the more than 500 homes built there starting in the 1940s.

Lake Shawnee’s newest house was built on a lot purchased by the parents of Bob Garvey of West Orange, who learned to swim at Lake Shawnee.

“We started coming up here when I was a baby, in the early ‘50s,” he said. “For a variety of reasons, they never got around to building here.”

When his parents died, Garvey said, he met with his sisters to discuss what to do with the lot, and “we agreed our folks would have wanted this, so we donated the property. They would be really proud to see this house here. The Davis family will love being here.”

The cost to build was high: about 7,000 hours of labor donated by 875 volunteers, including more than 500 hours of Davis “sweat equity” between Mom, Dad and their children.

“We prayed for many years for an affordable home, sometimes crying out,” said Scott Davis, who works with at-risk youth for a nonprofit organization. “We prayed for a good and spacious place, a place of peace, and a place of ministry where we can be a blessing to others.”

Like her husband, Marly Davis, who home-schools their children, praised God for their new home and sang a brief hymn to express her joy.

“We need to thank God for all the volunteers who came constantly,” she said. “Even when we were sleeping, they were working here.”

Wilsusen said it was the first Habitat for Humanity home to go up during his three years in office. Morris Habitat President and CEO Blair Schleicher Wilson said it



Family of eight celebrates new Morris Habitat for Humanity home

Morris Habit for Humanity held a home dedication ceremony for the Davis family at their new home in Jefferson Twp. on August 30, 2021.



Morris Habit for Humanity held a home dedication ceremony for Marly and Scott Davis and their family at their new home on 17 N. Parkway in Jefferson Twp. on August 30, 2021. The Davis family new neighbors including, welcome them with signs during the dedication. *Amy Newman-NorthJersey.com*



Linda and Robert Garvey and their son, Ryan attend the Morris Habitat for Humanity home dedication ceremony for Marly and Scott Davis and their family at their new home on 17 N. Parkway in Jefferson Twp. on August 30, 2021. Robert's parents Helen and Bob Garvey donated the land to Morris Habitat for Humanity for the home. *Amy Newman-NorthJersey.com*

was the fourth Habitat home to open in Jefferson and the 123rd dwelling completed by the nonprofit organization.

A recent merger with the Middlesex Habitat for Humanity has produced a business plan calling for the construction of 40 more new dwellings in the next few years.

Jefferson contributed \$50,000 to the project and in return gets to count the home toward its court-ordered mandate to build affordable housing. Additional materials and services were donated by local contractors and professionals, and corporate sponsors including Whirlpool and Parsippany-based GAF.

Globally, Habitat for Humanity is working to offset the high cost of homeownership for military veterans and other deserving families in all 50 states and 70 nations. In addition to its work in Morris and Middlesex, the expanded Morris Habitat serves portions of Somerset and Union counties.