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Dream of home ownership becomes reality

Duplex in Boylston built with hours of donated labor



Guests arrive at the Habitat for Humanity celebration.

By Ken Cleveland CORRESPONDENT

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BOYLSTON — When Kristy Mendoza sent in her application for the Habitat for Humanity project in Boylston, “I said a prayer and put it in God’s hand.”

And, as it turned out, the hands of 772 volunteers.

That cadre of people, combined with financial donations, in-kind contributions and over 3,476 hours of donated labor, helped create a duplex on Mill Road Circle that has progressed from idea to completed house.

For the Mendoza and Davin families, the three-bedroom, 1,150 square foot units are now home.

Ms. Mendoza and Davin thanked the volunteers, many gathered in the basement of Mendoza’s new home yesterday to escape the accumulating snow outside.

“Thanks for giving me a hand up,” Ms. Mendoza said, adding she had worked in human services in a shelter and “became homeless myself.” Being able to provide for her children was a priority.

“I’m a proud homeowner,” and for Ms. Mendoza, her husband, Domingo, and two children, “there’s no place like home,” she said.

“There are so many wonderful people in this organization,” Lisa Davin said of those who helped create the home for her and her two children. “A huge thanks to all of you. There is no deed that was not appreciated by me.” The volunteers, she said, “made this dream become reality. I’m grateful to be part of this family.”



New residents of Mill Road Circle, Boylston, from left, Domingo Mendoza, Dominick Mendoza, 6, Isabella Mendoza, 2, and Kristy De Mendoza walk into their basement for the Habitat for Humanity celebration. (T&G Staff Photos/TOM RETTIG)

The Habitat family was in evidence, despite the weather, with recognition given to many of the people who helped out, from financial contributions to hands-on labor.

"It's a joy to present these keys today," Robert Turbidy said. An early force on the project as Habitat's building project manager, he had become ill, but appeared in a wheelchair to see the project to completion yesterday. He praised Boylston resident Steve Welus, who, as the local building site project manager, took on the bulk of the work when Mr. Turbidy became ill.

"It's difficult to come up with the words that express the joy I feel today," Susan Olsen, co-chairman of the town building committee, said as she told the group the occupancy permit had been approved the day before.

Plaques and certificates were handed out, but the lead sponsor, the George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation, was "more than generous," Ms. Olsen said, providing \$50,000 early on in the project, then stepping in again with a similar amount in September when a lack of funds threatened the effort.

"Everything they were about is represented here today," Mark Fuller said of the foundation's founders.

"There are two constants in every build," according to Michael Wimberly, president of the Habitat board of directors. "One is every one is different, and every Habitat build is made up of extraordinary people."

Habitat's "continued existence only happens with the support of the community," Boylston Local Project Co-chairman Howard Drobner said, citing the people and businesses that helped out and even fees waived by the town.

The duplex features the 31st and 32nd affordable housing units built by the MetroWest/Greater Worcester Habitat For Humanity since it was founded in 1985. Habitat is now working on projects in Worcester and Sturbridge.