



MEET THE **LOPEZ-HERNANDEZ** **FAMILY**

Edith Lopez-Hernandez is a single parent who possesses a big heart for others and an unwavering determination to improve her family's living situation.

Lopez-Hernandez is employed as a care navigator/caseworker for a national health insurance provider, and a dedicated parent to five children who range in ages five through 17. She was selected as one of five homeowner partner families that will build and buy their new-construction homes in Haven Pointe, Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County's 46-home residential neighborhood in Wentzville, Missouri. The planned community is the local nonprofit's most ambitious undertaking yet in its 27-year history of building homes, hope and communities in St. Charles County.

The family struggled in recent years to find a home that offers safety and security, as well as ample room needed for a large, growing family. As a stop-gap solution, the family moved in with her mother, who resided in a small, one-bedroom apartment. Cramped quarters necessitated that the family of six would sleep in one room. Lopez-Hernandez, whose employer offered a flexible work arrangement at an alternative work site, used the quieter confines of the bedroom closet in which to work remotely. When her mother moved out-of-town, Lopez-Hernandez and the children relocated to a single, one-bath room at a local hotel – a situation that dictated many restrictions, including no possibility for the children to play outdoors. Throughout this difficult journey, Lopez-Hernandez told her family to keep praying for a new, abundant life.

Last year, Lopez-Hernandez completed an application to be considered as a homeowner partner of Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County. "I wasn't approved the first time, because I didn't meet the income specifications, so Habitat counseled me on ways I could improve my financial situation and encouraged me to try again," she said. "During this time, I made sure I did everything right by my kids to pay my bills on time and reduce my debt," she added. Her diligence and sacrifices were worth the effort, as she was selected for the opportunity to build a new Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County home in which she will pay an affordable mortgage.

Lopez-Hernandez is excited to join scores of other Habitat for Humanity homeowner partners over the years who have worked hard to accomplish the required sweat-equity hours on the new construction, or renovation, of their homes. She also will participate in Habitat's free financial education and coaching program, which includes insights into credit, budgeting, setting financial goals and saving money, and will participate in Habitat's complete tutorial on home maintenance.

"As I work alongside the Habitat building team and its many dedicated volunteers in the building of my home, I know this experience will extend beyond just the home's solid foundation," she said. "This blessing will provide my family with the comfort and space we need to build our abundant life together."