



Perris Press Release

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Family's New Home is the Fifth Habitat Residence in Perris

Fabian Gomez will decorate his new room with Legos and has already chosen the spot where his bed and television will sit. Sister Victoria will decorate her pink bedroom with a princess motif. Mom Laura Gomez loves the new kitchen space—plenty of room for all her pots and pans and new appliances to break-in as well. Dad Hugo Gomez said he will indulge in a pastime most guys enjoy after a hard day on the job—watching television in the living room.

The Gomez family was all smiles. City of Perris officials joined with Habitat for Humanity representatives to welcome them to the community. The family moved into a 1,088-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath home on Eleventh Street, within sight of the new Mercado Park that will open next month.

The home is the fifth Habitat residence—the second in the last two years—to be completed in Perris. The City used federal funds to purchase the Eleventh Street lot and turned it over to the non-profit, who selected the family and constructed the residence. Habitat lent the Gomez family money to purchase the home under a 30-year no-interest mortgage.

"Very happy, very, very happy," said Laura Gomez, 36. "I am excited to become a first-time homebuyer and my family and I look forward to enjoying our home in Perris. It's more than I could ever wish for. We love living here. It's a nice, pleasant place."

Hugo Gomez 42, who like his wife works in a warehouse, said he and his wife always dreamed of living in a home of their home after a decade in a one-bedroom apartment. But they never believed it would happen until they qualified for the Habitat for Humanity program.

"It's been difficult for the kids to live in a small apartment," he said. "This house is so much bigger."

Fabian Gomez, 8, a fourth-grader at Val Verde Elementary School and his little sister, who will start kindergarten in the fall, ran through their home while City officials and Habitat representatives toured the house. Fabian said the dedication left him happy because "almost everyone in the City is coming."

"I'd like to thank you for coming to our new house," he said. "I love you all."

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch led a contingent of City representatives who attended the official dedication on June 20. He was joined by City Councilman Julio Rodriguez, City Manager Richard Belmudez and several City staffers who shepherded the project through from start to finish.

"We all see the good work Habitat for Humanity does," Busch said. "We are all interested in its results."

To the Gomez family, the Mayor extended his best wishes: "I know you will enjoy this house. It's magnificent, well-planned and very usable. I know you will take care of it because it's yours."

Rodriguez said the Gomez family reminds him of his own parents, who waited years before they could purchase a home.

"The opportunities for working-class people in this country are awesome," Rodriguez said. "I am so happy, so excited for them to be here."

Rodriguez said he sees the Habitat project as another win for Downtown Perris. The home is less than a one-minute walk to Mercado Park and is within site of the Mercado Apartment complex, which opened last year and has drawn rave reviews from residents and regional officials as a model for low to moderate-income housing. Perris officials also have spent years renovating and restoring historical buildings on nearby D Street and are in the process of paving the corridor and installing new sidewalks and landscaping.

"Some of the most beautiful structures in the City and the most beautiful park in the county are right-around-the-corner from here," Rodriguez said.

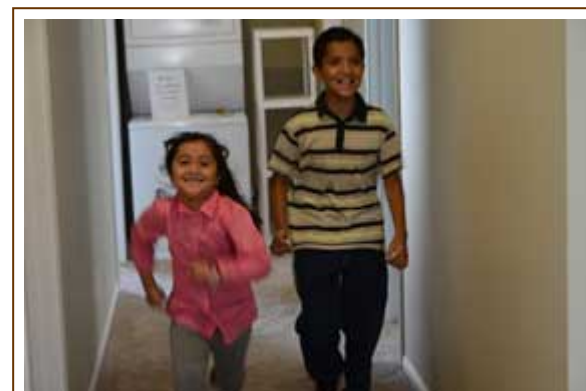
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As part of the City's ongoing commitment to sustainable energy, the residence will have energy-efficient windows and appliances, ceiling fans and a "whole-house fan" installed in the attic that will vent hot air through the roof of the residence. Solar panels likely will be added at a later time.

The Gomez family—mom, dad and their two children—were selected after passing a grueling six-month process that included credit and background checks, employment history and a willingness to put in 500-hours of "sweat equity" on their Eleventh Street residence. More than 150 families expressed interest in taking part in the Habitat for Humanity Project.

Craig Evans, president of the board of Habitat for Humanity Inland Valley, said the program allows working people to help themselves obtain a home. To qualify for the residence, the family had to earn a maximum income of \$32,000 annually. "These are not giveaway homes," Evans said. Evans called the Gomez and other Habitat families "a gift" that allows the organization to do good throughout Perris and other communities. "They provided us with the opportunity to do something wonderful," Evans said.

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Victoria and Fabian Gomez run through the hallway of their new home, built as a result of a partnership between the City of Perris and Habitat for Humanity.



The Gomez family outside their new home on Eleventh Street in Perris: Hugo Gomez, his wife, Laura, and children Fabian, 8, and Victoria, 5.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch chats with Victoria Gomez and her brother, Fabian, following the dedication of their new home in Downtown Perris.



Perris City Councilman Julio Rodriguez with the Gomez family. Rodriguez: "I am so happy, so excited for them to be here."