



Perris Press Release

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Habitat House is Now a Home

The Habitat for Humanity house in Downtown Perris has become a home.

Yolanda Arenas and her three children moved into the residence at Second and D streets over the weekend, almost four months after work on the house began at the annual Southern California Fair in October. The last bit of construction took place late last week with the installation of the washer and dryer.

Arenas and her family moved boxes and small appliances into the house over the weekend. Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and his wife, Kay, were on hand to greet them and welcomed the family to the neighborhood.

Arenas said she was overwhelmed by the hospitality. "I have no words to describe it," she said. "I cannot be grateful enough. We are excited to plant our roots here in the City of Perris.

We will reward their commitment by being productive citizens."

Perris elected officials and administrators have taken a keen interest in the home-building project and have worked closely with Habitat for Humanity to welcome Arenas and her children-- sons Raymond Samano, 16, David Samano, 10, and daughter, Jessica Samano, 18.

Perris City Council members and administrators all took part in the ceremonial "driving the first nail" event at the fair. Mayor Busch led a team of City workers who painted, hung drywall and caulked ceilings. City Councilman Mark Yarbrough painted siding in 100-plus degree heat at the Southern California Fair and was on hand when the home was moved from the fairgrounds to its permanent location early one morning in November.

The family was all smiles last week as they hauled boxes from the trunk of Yolanda Arenas' car and carried them into their new home. Shoes had to come off when they walked through the front door. The walls and floors, tiles and fixtures were all immaculate. Yolanda Arenas said she was delighted the three bedroom, 1088-square-foot home came with a dishwasher. She's never owned one before.

The children have already staked out their own bedrooms. David said he hopes to hand posters of Indian art in his room. He'll be sharing a room with his older brother. David plans on taking the top bunk in the bunk bed.

Jessica said she wants to hang pictures of movie icons James Dean and Marilyn Monroe and rock-and-roll legend Elvis Presley. She also likes the strawberry plants growing in the backyard and the lemon, tangerine and orange trees already bearing fruit.

"I really feel happy for my mom," said Jessica, a Perris High School senior. "I'm starting to feel settled."

Mayor Busch and his wife dropped off a platter of cookies for the family. The Mayor walked through the home and strolled the huge wooden porch.

"You will have great sunsets," he said. "This is really nice. This is an example of how all other Habitat for Humanity homes should be built. It's absolutely the ideal size and layout and this porch is absolutely great. They did everything right."

Perris City Councilman Yarbrough said he was pleased to be able to "bring the American Dream home to one family." The project was funded with City Redevelopment Agency money and with the apparent imminent demise of RDAs in California, the just-concluded project may be "one of the last of its kind for a while," he said. He said he hopes other resources become available to fund worthy projects like Habitat for Humanity, a sentiment voiced by other Perris officials.

"It's a life-changing project," Yarbrough said. "I'm glad we were able to do it."

Arenas was selected from 150 families to receive a Habitat for Humanity home. Her family put in hundreds of hours of "sweat equity" building the home. Arenas is employed full-time and was selected in part because of her steady and stable employment. Her mortgage will be about \$600 a month.

Tammy Marine, the executive director of Habitat for Humanity Inland Valley, praised the cooperation that existed between the agency and the City of Perris.

"We could not be more thrilled with how this project has gone," Marine said. "It is a feel-good project that benefits many people. I am so proud of our relationship with the City of Perris. It is a perfect example of what can happen when people come together for the right reasons."



Perris mom Yolanda Arenas (right) moves into the family's new home on East Second Street. With her are daughter, Jessica Samano, 18, and son, David Samano, 10.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch chats with David Samano and Yolanda Arenas during a tour of the just-finished home: "They did everything right."



Kay Busch, wife of Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, presents Yolanda Arenas with a platter of cookies as a house-warming gift.



David Samano, Jessica Samano, Yolanda Arenas, Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and his wife, Kay, on the porch at the residence built with the help of the City of Perris and Habitat for Humanity.