

**Cortez Family
617 N 24th Street
Grand Forks, ND
2020**



Ms. Cortez is a single mother of four boys. Upon becoming a single mother, she decided to outline personal goals for herself to improve the life of her sons. Her first goal was to obtain her GED, her second goal was to obtain an associate's degree, her third goal was to reduce her debt, her fourth goal was to obtain a career in law enforcement, and her fifth goal was to become a homeowner.

When Ms. Cortez came to us, she had achieved her first three goals and had a job application pending with the Polk County Sheriff's office. At that time, we had just completed rehabilitating a water damaged home. Habitat for Humanity requirements don't allow affiliates to waste square footage by giving a large house to a household with not enough people for each bedroom. The rehabbed house was large, containing 5 bedrooms. We were worried we wouldn't find a family large enough as none of our applicants were larger than three families. Ms. Cortez was unsure if she would qualify for our program but took a shot and reached out anyway. It was fate!

Not only was Ms. Cortez eligible for our program, but her family size fit the size of the home. With a job offer as a Sheriff's deputy and pre-employment orientation underway, Ms. Cortez officially became a homeowner in February 2020. Demonstrating strength, stability, and self-reliance to her four young boys, Ms. Cortez is a great example of a Habitat for Humanity homeowner.

**Shern Family
958 Thames Court
Grand Forks, ND 2022**



Ms. Shern is a pillar of the Grand Forks community. She is a loyal employee of a local business, dedicated churchgoer, caring friend, and loving mother. Ms. Shern and her kids had rented all their lives. While the apartment they rented was large enough for them, the climbing cost of rent was becoming unaffordable.

A friend mentioned Habitat to Humanity to Ms. Shern one day but she was sure she was not eligible. After discussing the program with one of our board members, Ms. Shern realized she was eligible and quickly applied. Upon selection, our affiliate received an influx of volunteer registrations from friends and fellow church members of Jen's.

Jen's luck compounded with a wonderful donation of 100% of the construction funds from the Engelstad Foundation and our new partnership with Village Homes' owner and contractor who secured discounted bids from local subcontractors eager to help. Construction took one year. The Shern family has been living in their home for six months, just recently celebrating their first Holiday in their Habitat home. Jen will officially become a homeowner when the sale takes place next Tuesday January 24th.