

SPRINGFIELD

‘Everyone is so kind’

Family celebrates home from Habitat for Humanity

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Ana Castro said she never would have been able to realize her dream of homeownership without the aid of Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity, numerous volunteers and the city of Springfield.

She and some of her children gathered outside the newly built home at 39 James St., in Six Corners, joined by Habitat for Humanity officials, volunteers, and Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, for a dedication ceremony that left her in tears.

“Everyone is so kind,” Castro said. “We’ve been blessed. It touched my heart. Knowing that my children are finally going to have a home that they can say is home — permanent — and not having to move, worrying about traffic and what not. My kids are super excited.”

Their prior home was an apartment in a building in Springfield with no back yard, she said.

The new house on James Street with a large back yard was the 54th house built by Habitat for Humanity in Springfield, and is being followed immediately by a house on Bay Street, said Aimee Giroux, executive director of the regional organization.

Habitat for Humanity began the Castro family house project in November of 2019 with grant assistance from the



Above, Ana Castro speaks during a ceremony to present her and her family the keys to their new Habitat for Humanity home on James Street in Springfield. Children from left are, Yainalee Morales, 16, Xavier Morales, 7, Icyana Morales, 11, and Wilberto Morales, 8. At left, people gather for the dedication of the newest Habitat for Humanity home, given to the Morales family. For more photos, visit MassLive.com.

(DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

Yesterday, Habitat provided her with two plants for the yard, donated in memory of her two children. She also received a Bible, a religious cross, and the keys to the house.

Volunteers who helped with the house project included youth from the YWCA Youth Build, AmeriCorps NCCC teams, Community Works, and students from local colleges.

Castro said her children “are my rock.”

“I’m so excited,” Castro said. “I wouldn’t be able to do this without Habitat. There’s no way. I wouldn’t have even known what to do. I am so blessed. This was a spur of the moment choice I made, and it has been blessing after blessing since I made that choice.”

Castro was joined by some of her children: Yainalee Morales, 16; Icyana Morales, 11; Wilberto Morales, 8; and Xavier Morales, 7.

It was Habitat’s third house built on James Street, located off Walnut Street.

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Ana Castro, Springfield resident

city’s HOME fund program and more than 200 volunteers. There were some delays in the house project related to the coronavirus but the family will be ready to move in during May..

Habitat provides housing with the purpose of empowering low-income families to improve their lives, and to help strengthen communities, by the purchase of an affordable home, Habitat officials said.

The new homeowners are

directly involved, providing “sweat equity,” by giving a few hundred hours of labor toward the new home or fully renovated home, officials said.

Sarno, said he was glad to see a “beautiful family” benefiting from and contributing to the project that also strengthens the street and the neighborhood.

Castro is a single mother who works and has raised nine children including two children who died.