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Habitat home in Knightdale dedicated

Knightdale— Tanisha Briscoe and her sons, Ifediora, 4, and Chikemka, 8, will spend Thanksgiving in a new home.

It's not just any home, but the family's first. The three-bedroom, two-bath cottage in Mingo Creek came with 250 hours of sweat equity and a 20-year mortgage due to Briscoe's industry and the generosity of a cadre of volunteers.

The Briscoe home is the 335th house Wake County Habitat for Humanity has built in 23 years, said Habitat Executive Director Woody Yates.

More than 1,000 people now have a home because of the nonprofit organization.

This house also is one of 300 per year Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is sponsoring with a \$105 million three-year commitment to Habitat, said David Calloway, a financial consultant at Thrivent's Raleigh office. About 200 volunteers from Lutheran churches in Wake County helped build the house.

"People will say 'I put in that window or that door,'" said Calloway.

Calloway said it's remarkable to see how a house comes together with essentially unskilled workers with a little Habitat training. Some of the work that volunteers can't do themselves is contracted out by the organization.



Ifediora, left, and Chikemka Briscoe and their mother, Tanisha, beam from the porch of their new home.

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Ifediora, whose name means “one who is loved by all” and Chikemka or “God is the greatest” and their mother listened as several Lutheran ministers and Habitat coordinators read Scripture during a dedication ceremony Thursday.

From Proverbs, Isaiah and Philippians, they read about making a house a home and the essence of charity. Marcus Hewitt of the Habitat Wake Board of Directors, presented the family with a Bible and volunteers shared stories about building with the Briscoes.

“Working with Tanisha and her family was a very good experience,” said Jim McDonald, whose wife Patty and daughter Jenny joined him in the work. “She was one of the hardest working people I’ve met (on a Habitat project).”

McDonald recalled the day Tanisha’s friends, who were members of a gospel choir, came to help and what fun it was to work while music filled the house.

“I thank Tanisha for working with us side by side,” said Shannon Janosko, volunteer coordinator for Hope Lutheran in Wake Forest. “You did a great job. We had a great time laughing.”

Briscoe moved to the United States from Jamaica at 16 after family hardships. She lived with her father and had to adapt to life in her adopted country. Later, she took a home ownership course through Wake County to prepare her for her dream.

Briscoe also enrolled in an early childhood education program at Wilson Technical Community College to help her in her job as a teacher at Harp’s Mill Creative School in Raleigh.

Since May, when ground was broken for construction, she has graduated.

“This is just the beginning of everything good,” she said, standing at the top of the steps and gazing into the night sky.

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