

Coming Home: Fox Valley Habitat for Humanity dedicates 60th Aurora-area home

Montgomery-based Fox Valley Habitat for Humanity dedicated its 60th Aurora-area home at 564 Spruce St. in Aurora on Saturday, April 28.

Yorkville resident Sarah Tesch, a Habitat volunteer board member, presented a ceremonial house key to the Juan and Maria Martinez family of Aurora to highlight the celebration. Martinez daughters Jasmin, Ruby, Kiran and Crystal participated.

The family is scheduled to occupy the 1,500-square-foot, four-bedroom, two-bath home with detached garage in June. The house is Habitat's first two-story structure since the group's inception in 1989.



The celebration opened at 10 a.m. at St. Rita of Cascia Catholic Church in Aurora with a bilingual Spanish-English prayer service. Rev. Oscar Cortes, St. Rita pastor, read a gospel selection and preached on "Be an Instrument of Salvation." He concluded by requesting that Habitat volunteers and officials to "Keep on doing what you do."

Rev. Jeff Barrett, Habitat CEO and pastor of Genesis Community Church in Montgomery, introduced donors and community officials.

Speakers included future homeowners Juan and Maria Martinez of Aurora; local legislators Bill Donnell, Fourth Ward alderman; Chuck Nelson, Deputy Aurora mayor; and Linda Chapa LaVia, Ill. State Rep.-Aurora and Habitat board member.

Offering comments from donors were Nick Wallace, owner, AC Ready Mix, LLC and Habitat board member; and Shakeel Omar, vice president, Fox Valley Volkswagen and GMC in St. Charles. In 2015, FVAG donated a new Volkswagen that Habitat raffled to raise \$35,000 for the Martinez home.

Omar said, "We are grateful for organizations like Fox Valley Habitat for Humanity whose mission aligns with our values. When decided to donate a new vehicle to them, we knew that it would be used to bless a special family.

"We knew that it would be used for a greater common cause. And finally, and most important, we knew it would be used to further God's kingdom.

"Thank you, Habitat for Humanity, for allowing our company to be a small part of your mission," Omar said.

After worship at St. Rita, the celebration continued with a blessing ceremony and reception at the home site.

Chris Schindler, Habitat development manager, opened the ceremony by detailing Habitat's mission and a group dedication litany.

Yorkville resident Sarah Tesch, Habitat board member, presented handmade quilts to each Martinez family member. Quilters at Grace United Methodist Church in Naperville contributed quilts.

Tesch also presented a family bible and ceremonial house keys to the Martinez family. After Pastor Cortez blessed the home with holy water, Tesch concluded the ceremony with a benediction.

Refreshments and self-guided tours closed the celebration.

The Martinez home was Habitat's debut in the 10th annual National Women Build Week. On May 12, a half dozen area women raised trusses and installed a roof on the garage.

NWBW was created by Habitat for Humanity International in partnership with Lowe's home improvement company, which donated \$2 million and volunteer support.

NWBW is held annually the week before Mother's Day. Designed to spotlight home ownership challenges faced by women, the program has attracted more than 98,000 women from all 50 states at nine previous events.

Founded in 1989, Fox Valley Habitat is headquartered at Genesis Community Church, 1300 S. Broadway in Montgomery. A Habitat warehouse is at 250 S. Highland Ave. in Aurora. Call (630) 859-3333 for more information.