



The Tarver Family

family and current housing

After years of transitioning between various living situations, Marshai Tarver is ready for a home that she can call her own. After moving out on her own roughly seven years ago, Marshai has lived in three different rental properties. Her second rental was an apartment in a building with multiple units. One of her neighbors got bed bugs which then spread to the entire building. Marshai's employer found out, and she was temporarily laid off to prevent spreading them at work. As a result of having no income, Marshai struggled to pay rent and couldn't afford an exterminator. Rather than be evicted, Marshai ended her lease, left all her belongings, and moved in with her grandparents while searching for another rental. Not wanting to impose on her grandparents, Marshai applied for housing through Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority and moved into a scatter site duplex roughly two years ago. While grateful for a place to live, Marshai struggles to heat the home properly because the thermostat will not kick on unless it is turned up to 90 degrees. This causes the home quickly to become extremely hot. The thermostat was replaced, but the problem persists; so, she mostly uses space heaters. Also of concern to Marshai is the fact that the dumpster for the entire SMHA scatter site community is located directly in her front yard, only feet from her front door. As a result, there is a terrible odor, along with bugs, rodents, and trash that has overflowed onto her yard and is a constant problem. Marshai recalled helping a friend build a house with Habitat years ago, decided to apply for the homeownership program, and was accepted in the summer of 2017. She looks forward to providing her son, Xaviere, with a safe, stable home environment.

**Marshai
Xaviere (5)**

a bright future

Throughout her time in the Habitat program, Marshai has proven to be a hard worker and dedicated to making her dream of homeownership a reality. She recently completed the ten week House2Home education series where she learned valuable skills regarding homeownership, maintenance, and personal and financial wellness. She also invests hours of sweat equity on worksites and at Habitat ReStore. Although it sometimes seems overwhelming to balance raising Xaviere, working fulltime for a financial institution, and completing the Habitat program, Marshai is committed to making a short term sacrifice for the long term benefit of owning a home. "I think what I'm most looking forward to about owning my own home is that I will be able to settle in and make it our own which I haven't been able to do previously," Marshai said. "I'm excited to give my son roots and memories in a home that is ours!"



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