

# BLUEPRINTS



P O Box 1022, 210 11th Street N, Moorhead, MN 56561 • 218-284-5253 • lakeagassizhabitat.org

***A world where everyone has a decent place to live.***

## ***Megan's Story***

### ***As the walls for the south Moorhead Habitat House went up in June...***

soon-to-be homeowner Megan\* and her three children are still in awe at their good fortune.

Her surprise multiplied when she first saw the crews of people willing to volunteer to create a house for her family.

"I'm still just shocked," Megan says. "I can't believe I was chosen. Luck doesn't run in our family."



But difficult circumstances and addiction do. Megan is candid, but not dismissive, when she talks about her bumpy story of growing up. She started using drugs and alcohol when she was 12 and by age 18 she was an IV meth user. She went to jail twice for using before finding the help she needed.

"I told my Dad, 'Don't bail me out unless you put me in treatment,'" Megan recalls. She went to a local treatment program for a year and half. During that time she became pregnant with her first child.

### ***"What kept me sober is my son," Megan says with conviction. "I think he truly saved my life."***

Megan stayed sober and off drugs while taking part in Sister's Path - a residential treatment program for women with children. Staying clean was an enormous challenge. But Megan soon had another hurdle - housing. Many landlords prefer not to rent to people with criminal records. After filling out many applications, she finally got into an apartment. Eventually she and her three children, age 7 and under, moved into her mother's mobile home when her mother moved out of town. The repairs proved to be too much to make the home what the family needed. That's when Habitat for Humanity entered the picture.

Though she can't remember where she heard about the program, Megan decided to apply for a Habitat for Humanity home. She fully understood this was a hand up, not a hand out and that she'd have to put in 250 hours working on her house or for Habitat in addition to working her full-time job for a local non-profit that primarily serves at-risk individuals.

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## ***Because of you!***

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## ***Giving Hearts Day***

On February 12th, we participated in Giving Hearts Day, a 24 hour online give-a-thon. We had a great day and raised \$23,085.00 - a record for us! We like to thank Western State Bank, our \$5000 match sponsor, as well as all of those who donated.



# Megan's Story

Continued from page 1

And donors are at the heart of allowing Megan's dream to happen. She says when she's been at her home site she's tries to address those who are giving monetarily and of their time to tell them how much they matter.

**"I try to let the people know who I am and that I'm very grateful," Megan says.**

And in a few short months, Megan and her children will have a solid roof over their heads.

"I'm looking forward to cupboards, drawers and counter space," Megan says in anticipation. " And doors that lock."

Another reminder how lives can be changed by perseverance, good people and homes.

Megan's home is a Thrivent Builds project and is sponsored by Thrivent Financial, Wells Fargo and many local churches. **Additional support came from donors like you! Thank you.**

\*Name has been changed because of previous domestic situation.



**"...lives can be changed by perseverance, good people and homes."**

## Neighborhood Revitalization



Abandoned home

The mission of Habitat for Humanity is to bring people together to build homes, communities and hope.

One of the ways that we help to build communities is the revitalization of run down neighborhood properties. These properties, which are often abandoned and used for criminal activity, are eyesores on the community and can be dangerous.

With the support of our donors and volunteers, Habitat works with the city to turn these properties into homes that fit into the neighborhood. Depending on the condition of the property, the homes are either torn down, with a new home built on the site, or they are remodeled to new condition.

Once the new Habitat home is built, it is no longer a drain on the city or the neighborhood and, of course, helps gives a local family a new lease

on life. The new family will be in this home for years to come and become a part of the community.

This home was one that was recently completed in Moorhead. Sharon Traylor and her 4 kids have moved in and are quickly making the home their own.



Sharon Taylor's new home

This fall, we will be starting a renovation on a home that was donated by a private citizen, who wants to leave a legacy and help a family in need. The home is in good shape, but does need to be gutted and have some landscaping done. We are excited to revitalize this

home. Watch for updates in future newsletters, on our website and social media.

*We need your help today!*

*Thanks to friends like you, our 2014-15 families realized their dream of homeownership. But we still need your help to ensure the next 11 families can start construction this spring. We invite you to make a gift today.*

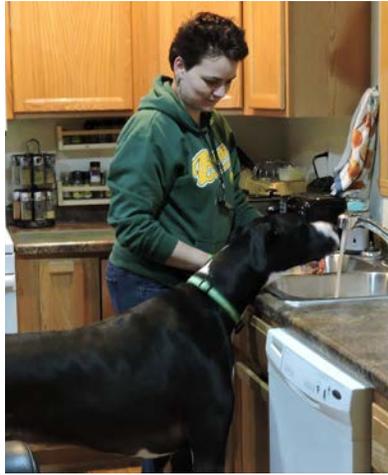
# Canine Companions: Friends for Life

Written by Amanda Wurtz

## **The scurry of furry feet, followed by a few kisses after sitting on...**

...the couch is a common occurrence for Jennelle Bichler. Even the guests are subject to the friendly treatment.

Bichler, a Fargo resident, is one of 50 Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity homeowners. Jennelle, her boyfriend Doug and her three children Jabaz, 18, Damaraha, 18 and Chaz, 15, gain so much joy from the three dogs. The family canines are: Ike, a Great Dane, Izzy, an English bulldog and King, a pug.



Jennelle's Great Dane Ike about to drink from the water faucet. The 2-1/2 year old dog is about 3 ft tall and 200 lbs.

"I've had King for 6 years and I got Ike about 2-1/2 years ago - not too long after we moved into this home, which was in December 2011," explained Jennelle. "I've always wanted a Great Dane, they are protectors but kind too."

In preparation for the Gentle Giant, as the breed is nicknamed, Jennelle and her family put up gates in front of the stairs and at the entrance to the laundry room, installed plastic corner guards and made cabinets for storing shoes and winter hats and gloves. They also made the back corner into Ike's sleeping area with his special wall designs in his honor. When he was a puppy, Ike would go into the closet back there and play.

## **Now, Ike is about 3 feet tall and 200 pounds...**

His large stature and boisterous bark can startle strangers walking in the yard. He's a protector but also can act like a large toddler - even carrying his orange blanket around the house, according to Jennelle. "He has his way of throwing fits and trying to get his way. And, he loves playing with Izzy and tries to play with King." Izzy, born in September, loves taking part in the antics, while King would rather watch.

Jennelle's heart is filled with contentment as she talks about her trio of dogs. From the time she was young, she has had family members who are furry friends. The canine companions have often been rescue dogs, including King. "He was a breeder but he was in bad shape and we nursed

him back to health. I fell in love with him though and I took him in. I've had him ever since."



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King and Izzy take some time to relax on the couch.

Izzy, who has a black and brown coat with white stripe down her face, was taken in just a few weeks ago.

## **"We wanted a dog that would be kind and fit in well with the family. Izzy loves being with people."**

The three dogs are it for now. It's a full house. "Three is our limit."

The personal limit was one at the last place they lived, an apartment in Fargo. The ability to have more beloved dogs is just one of the many reasons why she and her family are thankful for their current home.

## **"This was our last chance, our last hope for a home of our own."**

The 4-bedroom home is a much healthier environment for her children, whose personalities are able to flourish because they have their own living space. Jabaz, who has ADHD and Chaz, who has Asperger syndrome, were sharing a room and fought frequently because they lived in close quarters. Damaraha is now able to play outside in the yard,



Jennelle works with her dogs King, a pug, Ike, a great dane, and Izzy, an English bulldog, to pose for the camera.

especially with this home being in a safer neighborhood.

The dogs are a reflection of their new life, a life that is happier for the whole family. "We are so grateful for the Habitat for Humanity home. It is a hand up and not a hand out. It's a huge help."

## **Build a stronger community**

When you support Habitat, you build homes, communities, and hope. Join us!

- Sign up for our e-newsletter at [lakeagassizhabitat.org](http://lakeagassizhabitat.org)
- Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter
- Donate today at [lakeagassizhabitat.org/Donate](http://lakeagassizhabitat.org/Donate)



# Green Team Realty Gives Back to Lake Agassiz Habitat

Written by Bridget Heacock

**With over 25 years of experience...**



The "Green Goddesses" from Green Team Realty at Tour de Habitat 2015

members come with extensive insight of the Fargo Moorhead area, creating a cohesive dream (Green) team!

Their mission is to help people find the perfect space for their home or business while making the process an easy, fun and pleasant experience. The agency will turn 3 years old on April 2nd, an exciting milestone they hope to share with community partners, past clients and new clients to come.

Tracy has a deeply rooted love for her community of Fargo/Moorhead having lived in the area for 40 years. She sees first-hand how there is a serious need for affordable housing in Fargo/Moorhead. "It's getting harder and harder to buy an affordable house in our community.

**...In the business of real estate, we help people put a roof over their head like Habitat aims to do."**

...in the fields of real estate, marketing and business ownership, Tracy Green, owner and founder of Green Team Realty, is a knowledgeable and vivacious leader for her company.

Tracy Green and her team of 6 team offer real estate services to buyers and sellers within the Fargo Moorhead area. Green Team's 6 hand-picked staff

Tracy and her staff are excited to give back to the Fargo/Moorhead community and create an original partnership with Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity.

With each house sold by Green Team Realty in 2015, the agency will donate \$100 to Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity. In addition to this generosity, the agency plans to publicize their planned contribution using social media and on each home's for sale sign. Green Team has been an excellent sponsor and community partner with Lake Agassiz Habitat events such as Tour de Habitat 2015.

Tracy's advice for other businesses on how to give back: "Just do it. Find a passion your staff connects with and make room for it in your budget. As a business you're making your livelihood on your community; you make it better by giving back."

If you're looking to purchase a home in the Fargo Moorhead area this year, consider partnering with Green Team Realty. Proceeds from every home sold by Green Team Realty in 2015 will be donated to Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity.

Visit <https://www.greenrealty.com>.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Art Show:

New date and place! This years' Home is Where the Art is will be on:

**Saturday, Oct. 24,** Dakota Medical Foundation

For more info, visit [lakeagassizhabitat.org/artshow](http://lakeagassizhabitat.org/artshow)

### Cruisin' for Habitat:

The 5th annual cruise will be held this fall, exact date TBD.

Get your car tuned up and visit [lakeagassizhabitat.org/cruise](http://lakeagassizhabitat.org/cruise) for more info.

**Give to the Max Day: November 12, 2015**

**Wall raising for 2015 Community Build Home:**

**Saturday, Aug. 22, at 11:30am**

## 2015 Tour de Habitat

**The 2015 Tour de Habitat was a huge success!!**

We had lots of fun, lots of people came out and we raised LOTS of money. A record in fact. With the help of many sponsors, including Sam's Club, Thrivent Financial and Scheels and the 24 teams, we raised over \$35,500! We'd love to have your team at our 2016 Tour de Habitat.



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