



FROM HHTH CALGARY: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SOUTHERN ALBERTA

NICHOLE'S STORY

HOCKEY HELPS THE HOMELESS IMPACT STORIES

"Life before Habitat was hard," Nichole says, somewhat apologetically. Nichole has raised her children on her own since fleeing domestic violence in 2005.

Her children, Robert and Mykalya were born 11 months apart and Michael, three years later. Despite the hardships endured, this spiritual woman with sparkling eyes is no victim. She is resilience personified. "As a single mother, you constantly face judgement; people make assumptions about the support you receive," Nichole explains. A certified life coach, eventually Nichole trained as a junior estimator for an industrial insulation company – a job she has held for the past eight years.

On paper, this means that before Habitat, Nichole's rent devoured one entire paycheque. She became adept at negotiating payments for utilities and the family survived on pasta. The challenges piled on and eventually the chronic stress took its toll. Nichole describes living in a constant state of fear, feeling isolated in every aspect of her life.



Throughout all of the turbulence, this dedicated mom tried to create a sense of normalcy for her children, encouraging them to pursue their dreams. "My kids drive me. I want them to have a stable and secure life." That motivation inspired Nichole to apply for a Habitat home after her sister spotted an ad in a local paper. After completing her home ownership classes and 500 required volunteer hours, Nichole and her brood moved in to their new home in the fall of 2016.

Nichole describes the process of seeing her house being constructed as extraordinary. Being part of this unique and personal experience was empowering – especially having her son Robert building alongside her. The kids have settled in nicely and have really planted their feet. The craziness has dissipated and the family feels grounded. "We are evolving," she says.

Even though an unstable economy and some health issues linger, Nichole now has reserves. She continues to draw on her life coaching tools to cope. The little community that Habitat built is thriving. Neighbours watch out for each other's kids. "I have a safety net. I can knock on my neighbours' doors! That's a first. I feel like I belong in the community!" This transformational change is possible thanks to Habitat donors and volunteers. "This is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. I wish I could convey to a donor the profound impact this has had on my life. This one thing has changed everything. I don't have to prove myself anymore," she says.

Every morning when Nichole walks down the stairs to the kitchen, she pauses on the last step. It feels surreal to her. Her mind flashes back to the volunteers building her house. There is no more stigma or isolation. "To see strangers coming together to help me; that was an incredible act of love." Robert is managing his diabetes, working when he is not in school. He is off to MRU to study business and marketing next year. Mykayla is a passionate humanitarian with a love for volleyball. She attended an international Lions Youth Camp in Waterton last July, making life-long friends with kids from all over the world.

Michael has transformed his (first ever) closet into a gaming centre. His mother describes him as, "one of the most thoughtful young men you'll ever meet. He has an uncanny ability to be empathetic!" Who knows what else the future has in store? "We're accountable, we decide our fate. We've earned this!" she says beaming with pride. Yes, Nichole, you most certainly have.

THANK YOU FOR CHANGING LIVES IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

SOME NAMES AND IDENTIFYING DETAILS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY OF INDIVIDUALS.