

Community Ministry *Newsletter*



August 2024



The Sundays: David, Allen and sons David Mugisha, David Nziza and David Gisa.

Habitat *for* Hope

New home gives Sundays place to help others

The blessing and dedication of David and Allen Sunday's new Habitat for Humanity house on March 16, 2024, was a major milestone in a transition from their homeland of Rwanda to Abilene. It is a story of perseverance and hard work in the search for a new start in a distant land, far away from family and familiar ways of life.

Because of a civil war in Rwanda, David's family fled to neighboring Uganda. Returning home after cessation of fighting, David completed his education, eventually working his way through college. While working in a hotel David met Allen Muhoza, who was working in another hotel. Their relationship blossomed and they married in 2016. Following graduation from university, David gained employment in the Bank of Kigali. In search of a different life for his family, David entered the U.S. government's once-a-year Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (Green Card Lottery),

which provides 55,000 immigrant visas annually. In 2019, on his third attempt, David received a green card. Soon thereafter, David, Allen and their son settled in Odessa, where their sponsor resided. Because of Odessa's high cost of living they decided to relocate to Abilene. Here David began work in a carwash while applying for jobs at the State Supported Living Center and the French Robertson Correctional Unit. Soon he was working from 8 a.m.-noon at the carwash and 2-10 p.m. at the state school. In March 2020, he transitioned to full-time employment at the correctional unit.

While searching for affordable housing, David learned about Habitat for Humanity. The Sundays were one of 250 families who applied. Six finalists were chosen for interview by the board. During the interview, David was asked, "Why should we help you acquire a new house?" David's reply: "Because I have a passion for helping others!"

The Board decided that the

Sundays would be one of the recipients of a new house. This was followed by many hours of assisting in the construction of houses for himself and others. Today, David, Allen and their three sons are proud owners of a new house.

But how did they come to be part of the Hillcrest family? David said he often passed "that big building" on his way to work. One day, he decided to come see what happens inside. He and his family were warmly welcomed and made to feel that Hillcrest would be a good place for them. Many of us enjoy seeing the two oldest boys race down the aisle on Sunday morning to put their money in the children's collection. There is joy on their faces as they too are developing a passion for helping others. ◆

Habitat for Humanity is one of Hillcrest's Community Partners. Should you want to become involved with this ministry, contact Dale Crawford for more information.



A Healing Touch



‘Hillcrest house’ offers shelter for young couple in need

The story of this young couple and their newborn illustrates the mission of Houses for Healing.

A few months ago, the ministry received a call from Hendrick Medical Center explaining that during delivery, a baby’s heart had stopped and the baby had been quickly delivered by cesarean section.

“Did we have a house available for the baby’s grandmother and the father?” We brought them to “our” house, which is sponsored by the Hillcrest Church of Christ. The grandmother lives in Weatherford, and the father and mother in Breckenridge. They had no way to anticipate needing lodging and care in Abilene. We got the opportunity to be the “inn” they needed.

The baby was successfully rescued from the mother’s womb and resuscitated. The baby was transferred to Hendrick’s NICU and the mother was moved to a regular room.

After the crisis had subsided, the grandmother and the father went to “our” house. The baby’s mother was released after two days, but the baby needed to stay in the NICU for four days to make sure the heart was functioning correctly.

We provided groceries and transportation so mom could go to NICU and nurse her new son. When they were ready to dismiss the baby, we were given a bassinet by Jim Clark at the Christian Service Center so the little guy would have a nice place to sleep. The grandmother went back to Weatherford and left the family with us for two more days, then returned to transport them back to Breckenridge.

Since then, 16 additional tiny houses have been completed. Fourteen new churches or non-profits, including Shelby’s Grace, a group dedicated to caring for babies in the NICU, have stepped forward to sponsor these houses. Most guests arrive in need of a place to stay while they receive

treatments, such as chemotherapy, radiation, dialysis or wound care. Sometimes they need transportation to get care, physical rehab or to visit family members who are in the hospital.

Interested in helping? Volunteers provide transportation, help clean the house between guests, serve on the prayer team or help with meals or groceries. To volunteer or to get more information about this ministry, scan the QR Code or go to Hillcrest’s website (Hillcrestonline.com) and search for Community Services (Houses for Healing) under the Ministries tab.

You will be blessed for helping. Just think how good the “good Samaritan” felt after helping a stranger. ◆

