



Building Hope: Regions Bank Helps Empower Affordable Homeownership

Regions and a growing community celebrate the success of a new program unlocking the benefits of homeownership.

By Nestor Mato

NORTHAMPTON, MA / [ACCESS Newswire](#) / March 3, 2025 / When Latisha Jewett finally walked through the threshold of her new house, the Regions bankers who helped her reach that day were there cheering her on. The dream to have a home for her and her son had become a reality.

"Her mortgage is less than her rent. That's a good thing to have happen, and now she's in a position to start building her own generational wealth, to have her son in a more stable living situation," said Mayor Kevin Anderson of the City of Fort Myers while talking to [WBBH-TV](#).

The mayor was joined by local news outlets and the community for a ribbon cutting ceremony for Jewett. And the [City of Fort Myers](#) marked this milestone in its Affordable Home Construction Program by unveiling the first single-family home built under the initiative. The program launched to empower families and individuals earning less than 120% of the area median income. It represents a beacon of hope for housing affordability.

Affordable housing initiatives like this change lives and build generational wealth, helping families create stability and security for years to come.

Cynthia Valenti, Mortgage Production Manager for Regions Bank

"This is more than just a house; it's a home. A foundation for a brighter future," said Cynthia Valenti, Mortgage Production Manager for [Regions Bank](#). "Affordable housing initiatives like this change lives and build generational wealth, helping families create stability and security for years to come."

The family benefited from a \$10,000 Regions Bank grant and \$75,000 in county down payment assistance, structured as a forgivable loan. The home was purchased below its appraised value, and the city did not include the value of the lot in the price.

"The \$75,000 in assistance is in the form of a no-interest, no-payment second mortgage that will be forgiven at a rate of 20% per year over the next five years," said Brian Hafenbrack, Community Mortgage Loan Officer for Regions. "Regions Bank supplied a first mortgage of \$161,000 and with the city paying the closing costs, Ms. Jewett achieved her dream."

The city is already clearing lots for the second and third homes in the program, with a goal of constructing six homes annually. Regions Bank plans to continue its community partnership by offering financing to future buyers, along with grants and resources to make homeownership attainable. The Affordable Home Construction Program is supported by the city's [Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#). The Trust Fund covers construction costs for homes and supports rental assistance for low-income residents.

"Ms. Jewett and her son are thrilled and very grateful. She was beaming! Our local councilwoman included toys for her son including a bike," said Valenti. "Partnerships like this prove that when communities come together, we can address even the most challenging issues. Ms. Jewett is now a happy and confident homeowner!"

Across Alligator Alley, Regions Bank also helped construct a family's dream by participating in the Habitat for Humanity of Broward County CEO Build.

Kelley Brown, market executive and commercial banking leader in Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, traded her briefcase for a hard hat to help nurse Brenda Williams achieve a goal she thought was out of reach.

[WSVN-TV](#) was there as Brown and South Florida businesses leaders went to work. The news outlet said Habitat serves a critical need for affordable housing in Broward County. Sandwiched between the ocean and the Everglades, about 97% of the land is already spoken for.

"Participating in the Habitat for Humanity CEO Build is more than just picking up a hammer; it's about coming together to create opportunities and make affordable housing a reality for those who need it most," said Brown. "It's an honor to part of a company and project that reflects the heart of our community."

