

“A Life-Changing Moment”: Single Mom Fulfills Dream of Homeownership Through Habitat for Humanity in Coral Springs



[< Previous](#)

[Next >](#)

Brenda Gonzalez and volunteers in front of a Habitat for Humanity townhome in Coral Springs.
Photo Credit: Brenda Gonzalez

By Zahra Huber

Published April 13, 2025 at 12:57 PM

Last updated April 13, 2025 at 12:57 PM

CORAL SPRINGS, FL — After years of setbacks, single mother Brenda Gonzalez is finally preparing to move into a home of her own in Coral Springs — one she helped build with her own hands.

The 32-year-old Fort Lauderdale resident and mother of two will be one of 13 families moving into a newly completed Habitat for Humanity of Broward townhome development on Riverside Drive this summer.

For Gonzalez, it marks the end of a long journey that began with a dream to create a better life for her sons, 11-year-old Jake and 5-year-old Jordan.

“This has been a dream of mine for so long,” she said. “I wanted to give my kids a home where they feel safe and stable — where we can build a future together.”

Her path to homeownership wasn’t easy.

Gonzalez lost her job during the pandemic, just one month after returning from maternity leave. She was already raising her newborn and sharing a cramped apartment with her two sons.

“We were dealing with a couple issues in my apartment. We had mold, we had termites, and my kids were sharing a bedroom. Things were pretty uncomfortable,” she said.

Gonzalez was first introduced to Habitat for Humanity through a friend in 2023, but didn’t qualify on her initial application.

Determined, she spent the next year learning more about the program, improving her finances, and earning a promotion at work. By early 2024, she reapplied — and this time, she was accepted.

“I didn’t really understand what the program was at first. I thought it was about getting a free home,” she said. “But it’s so much more than that. You’re showing that you’re willing to put in the work to earn it. You’re partnering with Habitat — not just getting handed something.”

As part of the program, Gonzalez was required to complete 300 hours of “sweat equity,” including financial education classes, working shifts at Habitat’s ReStore, and participating in the construction of the Coral Springs site.

She finished most of her hours in just a few months.

“I just kind of sped through it,” she said. “I was like, I’m going to do this. Whatever I can do to get my process done quicker.”

She helped paint, hang drywall, and even installed metal framing panels in the new development.

“It’s very exciting, because it was always a dream of mine to be able to work on my home and have a piece of me in there,” she said. “Just to see it come to life from the ground up — it means so much.”

The new development just north of Sample Road includes 13 townhomes split between two lots, which were on vacant land owned by Coral Springs and once planned for neighborhood parking lots.

City leaders donated the properties to Habitat for Humanity of Broward after determining the parking lots weren’t needed and the land was better served for housing for families such as Gonzalez.

Groundbreaking took place in fall 2023, and a dedication ceremony is scheduled for late May.

All 13 homes have been assigned to first-time buyers who meet the program's criteria — including having lived or worked in Broward County within the past year and completing community service and homeowner education with Habitat.

“This is a life-changing moment for these 13 incredibly hard-working families,” said Donald Smith, Vice President of Homeowner Services for Habitat for Humanity of Broward.

“Each has poured 300 hours of sweat equity — not just to build a house, but to create a true sense of home and community in Coral Springs,” he added.

Gonzalez said what stands out most is the sense of connection.

“You’re not just building a home. You’re building community,” she said. “You get to know your neighbors. The kids get to know each other. There’s a bond that’s created from the very beginning.”

Her new home — a three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath townhome — is also a fresh start for her family.

“It gives us hope, stability, and a chance to grow,” Gonzalez said. “Everything I’ve been manifesting for years is finally coming true.”