

After Katrina and Wilma, One Family Finds Their Home in Waco



After two devastating floods sent Glenda Smith and her family further away from their beloved New Orleans, an “angel” from NeighborWorks Waco helped them find a place to call home. A transplant from Nicaragua, Glenda moved to New Orleans in 1979, but chose to evacuate in 2005, ahead of Hurricane Katrina. She and her husband and only child, Nicole, set out for Houston, but were turned away by officials and re-routed to Mississippi. They eventually found shelter at a local Red Cross, where Glenda’s family finally connected with relatives who put them up for two more weeks.

When it became clear that New Orleans had been devastated by the flooding, Glenda and her family decided to drive to Miami, where more family and more resources were available. Weeks after arriving, they were forced to endure Hurricane Wilma. Two weeks without electricity was enough to convince the family that it was time to move away from the coast. Glenda’s niece, a Waco resident, encouraged them to consider making Central Texas their new home.

“After we moved here, my husband and I were much happier...we found a church, and the people were very friendly.” Tragedy struck one more time, however, when Glenda’s husband passed away in April 2007.

Glenda’s husband had been eager to find a new home for the family after relocating to Waco, but credit problems repeatedly complicated their efforts until a local realtor suggested that they contact NeighborWorks Waco. Glenda completed an application and began the homebuyer counselling process. After working with Delisa Burnell-Smith for three months, Glenda qualified for a mortgage that fit their budget and got the “green light” to begin searching for a new home.

“Delisa is my angel,” says Glenda. “I tell everyone at my church about NeighborWorks. This is the best program.” Glenda’s church also helped the family move into the home, and even helped paint the interior walls. Glenda and Nicole are also excited that their two dachshunds, now have a large fenced-in back yard to play in.

This remarkable family can finally call Waco home.