

# the builder



## new beginnings



Earlier this month Paterson Habitat's Homeowner Specialist, Alina Castro, and Chief of Staff, Ashley Biggs sat down to chat with 10-year-old Kaylaisha, in her living room on Hamilton Avenue. When Kaylaisha's parents applied for the Paterson Habitat homeownership program in July 2019, they had hope. Hope that one day they would own a home of their own. Today Kaylaisha's parents' hope has been realized; they are Paterson Habitat homeowners.

Kaylaisha was excited to share with Ashley and Alina how her life has changed since her parents became Habitat homeowners. She began by reflecting back on her life before she moved into her new Habitat home. She and her family had moved multiple times, living with relatives and in rentals. She remembered having to say goodbye to neighborhood friends each time they moved. Then one day Kaylaisha's parents heard about Paterson Habitat and life began to change.

Kaylaisha recalled the day her life changed forever when she found out she was going to have a new home and best of all, a room of her own. Always inquisitive, she had many questions for her parents about the Habitat program. Her mom explained to her that they had to apply and meet several requirements. One of those requirements being sweat equity hours. She was excited to learn that she too could contribute to her families 400 hours of sweat equity by getting good grades and participating in school activities.

You could feel the excitement grow as Kaylaisha explained how a few days before Christmas her parents received a call that they could pick up the keys to their new home. She remembers walking into her new home for the very first time and sliding up and down the stairs in awe of their new home. *(Continued on page 2)*



Paterson Habitat for Humanity has received 3 consecutive 4-star ratings from Charity Navigator!



## A Note from Scott

CEO, Paterson Habitat for Humanity

There are certain times of year, and life, which we celebrate or mark as opportunities to start over. Opportunities to hit the reset button, establish a different pattern, try something new, or to begin again. New Years is the most traditional of these but there are also new fiscal years for organizations, new school years for students, birthdays and anniversaries, new jobs and new projects, new relationships, and new homes.

This past May we celebrated with 17 families who had the opportunity for a new beginning in a home of their very own because of your partnership with Paterson Habitat for Humanity. Each of these families has new beginning stories and we are so excited to share Kaylaisha's with you. In the midst of 18 months of struggle, Kaylaisha's spirit is an encouragement to us all to keep pushing forward.

As the calendar turned to July Paterson Habitat also celebrated a new beginning as we began a new fiscal year, FY22, which is also the first year of our new 40 & Beyond strategic plan. This exciting and bold plan will guide our work over the next four years as we seek to provide even more new beginnings for even more families in even more places.

As we embark on a new year and new projects like our Veterans' project in the City of Passaic and begin planning for our 300th new home in Paterson, we need your partnership even more than ever before.

The challenges facing us are significant. There is increased need, increased costs, and decreased availability of land. However, the possibilities are also increasing as we envision new ways of achieving our mission.

Thank You for your past, present, and future partnership, which is what makes all these new beginnings possible.

Kaylaisha's room is her favorite place of course. Her face lit up as she showed off her room and her LED light decorations. It was something she always wanted in her own room. The stairs are her second favorite part of the house. In previous apartments she never had stairs which led her to a bedroom. It's something to this day she just loves about her new house.

Home schooling was also something she enjoyed in her new home despite the challenges of the last year. She was happy to have a space to learn and to see her friends, even if it was just on a computer screen. This summer she is looking forward to attending Girl Scout Day Camp at the International High School in Paterson. It's a 5-day camp full of fun activities. Her favorite days are Tuesday and Thursday when they get to play in the pool. She will be returning to school this fall. Both Kaylaisha and her parents are excited about that.



On May 1, 2021, seventeen Habitat homeowner families gathered, socially distant, on Hamilton Avenue to celebrate homeownership and new beginnings. That day one of our keynote speakers was Kaylaisha. She brought tears to the eyes of many in the audience as she shared her story and expressed how grateful she was to have a home of her very own.

As the crowd stood by with smiles from ear-to-ear, Kaylaisha concluded her speech while holding up a hand drawn Habitat logo, "Thank you Habitat so much for building this house. Especially my dad and my new grandpa Carlos (Paterson Habitat Site Foreman) and my new aunties Ashley, Alina, and Lydia." She couldn't help but thank her new friends, who she now considers family, and all those who had a hand in making this dream a reality.

Life for this 10-year-old is just beginning and she couldn't be more excited to now have a home of her own where she looks forward to making new neighborhood friends. Friends she won't have to say goodbye to now that she and her family are in their forever home.

Kaylaisha is like the many children who excitedly await the moment they too can have their own room, with those fun LED lights. Kaylaisha's parents are one of many families that partner with Paterson Habitat who are doing all they can to build a better life and a better foundation for their family's future.

**You can help us continue to build homes, communities, and hope for families like Kaylaisha's in need of a decent place to call home by partnering with us. The affordable housing crisis facing our city and county is growing by the day, so too are the costs to build and renovate homes. Please help us provide safe, stable, affordable homes for more children like Kaylaisha by making a donation today using the enclosed envelope or visiting [patersonhabitat.org/donate](https://patersonhabitat.org/donate)**



## meet our newest team members

Paterson Habitat is pleased to welcome and introduce our newest team members. As we expand our efforts across the Greater Paterson Region and work to build more homes for more families in need of a place to call their own, we have strategically expanded our staff. Each of our newest team members brings and adds experience, expertise, and passion to our already strong and committed team.



### Unique Bacote Community Organizer

Unique will be our lead on several of our community health initiatives, including the Lead-Free NJ advocacy program, Passaic County Food Policy Council, community gardens, and neighborhood cleanups.



### Alan Morales Construction Site Foreman

Alan is responsible for ensuring safety on our construction sites while developing meaningful and productive experiences for volunteers and homeowners.



### Vanessa Bruzon Community Organizer

Vanessa will be our lead on our community safety initiatives, including CPTED. She will also ensure our social media presence in the community is current and manage our micro-grant program.



### Kelly Williams Construction Site Supervisor

Kelly is responsible for overall site operations, weaving together homeowners, volunteers, sub-contractors, vendors, and site staff to deliver quality homes on schedule and on budget.



### Phillip "Phil" Keefe Director of Advancement

Phil will lead our fundraising efforts working primarily with our current and prospective individual, corporate, and foundation donors. Grant writing, data analysis, and reporting will be an integral part of his position.



### Tereska "Terry" Flood Construction Project Administrator

Terry is responsible for the permitting and procurement processes for all our construction projects. She partners with our site staff to deliver homes on schedule and on budget, while also ensuring compliance with local and state building codes, grant obligations, and our policies.



Meet the rest of our team at: [patersonhabitat.org/staff](https://patersonhabitat.org/staff)



Paterson Habitat for Humanity  
PO Box 2585, Paterson, NJ 07509

Paterson Habitat 2021 Summer Newsletter

Photography: William Neumann, William Neumann Photography, NYC

Printed by:

**SandyAlexander**  
Print • Direct Marketing • CO • Restouching • Retail Visual Merchandising

A large white house silhouette on a blue background, filled with various colorful icons representing home goods: a sofa, armchair, coffee table, bookshelf, lamp, vase, fork, target, chair, desk, office chair, washing machine, and a small table with a plant.

The ReStore logo features a small house icon with three human figures inside, followed by the text "ReStore" in a bold, sans-serif font.

Paterson Habitat for Humanity

# Your stuff builds homes.

Donate your used furniture, appliances, and other home goods.

[habitatrestorewayne.org](https://habitatrestorewayne.org) | (973) 782-6993  
Open Tues - Sat, 10am - 6pm & Sun, 12pm - 5pm  
415 Hamburg Turnpike, Wayne NJ