

Karli & Brandon – First Homes Community Land Trust Homeowners

Karli has been a First Homes Board Member since October 2014

In 2012, my husband Brandon and I were living in a small, upper-level duplex close to downtown Rochester. We had looked into buying a home, but having recently married and graduated college with significant student-loan debt, we were unable to make the typical down payment to purchase one—let alone afford a monthly mortgage.

In early 2013, we were expecting our first child. For the rest of that year, we anxiously looked for an apartment in a decent neighborhood, but found that many units were either too expensive for our budget or were full. Our son was born in October 2013. Back home in our one-bedroom apartment, we had to take the door off of our walk-in closet to put our newborn's crib inside. It was then that we knew we needed to get out of there.

A few weeks later, my mom forwarded me a link to a beautiful, energy-efficient, older home listed in First Home's Community Land Trust program. She told me to look into the program as it was geared toward low- to moderate-income first-time homebuyers. After doing more research, we discovered that First Homes does not require a large down

payment and that they also pay the subsidy of the home's lot—meaning that my husband and I would own the house and make improvements but pay a renewable lease to First Homes for the lot. Not paying for the lot meant the monthly mortgage was comparable to what we were currently paying for rent on our small one-bedroom duplex.

After viewing the home with First Homes' Program Officer Shirley Lee, we were in love with it. It was a foursquare home that was turnkey and located in a great school district. Six months later, we moved into our new house! During our first night there, with all of our stuff still in boxes, my husband and I kept saying that we never thought we would live in such a nice house. We did not think it was ever going to be possible.

We are so thankful for the First Homes program and its staff. Their assistance and first-time homebuyer class made the process simple and straightforward. More importantly, it allowed us to stay in Rochester near our families and raise our son in a stable environment.



Left to right: Karli, James, Brandon

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- Karli

2000

In 2000, First Homes was created to provide starter homes for working families.

2002

In 2002, First Homes created the Community Land Trust (CLT), which allows homes in the program to remain affordable in perpetuity.

1949

In 1949, the Foundation received its first major bequest from Jennie E. Mo of Byron. With careful investment through that years, that fund has paid out several times the original investment in total grants to benefit the community.