

## Vega family receives key to Habitat home Sunday

Written by By Ava Barlow, Staff Writer

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April 21, 2011 - It was a long two years in the making, but the day the Vega family had been waiting for came Sunday afternoon when, during a dedication service, they received the key to their brand new home, built by Habitat for Humanity of Fannin County (Habitat).

Gilberto Vega, his wife Stacie and their three children, Matthew, Andrew and Kayleigh stood before the group of 40 to 50 people humbled.

"We would like to thank the people from the church in Fort Worth that provided the walls, and all of the volunteers that worked countless hours here, and to Habitat for working with us," said Stacie Vega, through tears. "We have been looking forward to this day for a long time."



The Vega's home was started in February 2009 when Habitat was given a gentle shove to get started on the Leonard project by Southwest Christian Church in Fort Worth, who offered to build the 2 x 4 walls and deliver them to the sight. A slab foundation was not even poured yet, but Habitat was able to frame up the foundation and pour the concrete slab. Project leader Jay Stephens, placed a Bible in the wet concrete open to the scripture that encourages people to

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“build on the firm foundation of God's word.”

The building of the home had gotten off to a fast start. With the blueprints in hand, church members from Southwest Christian Church met and constructed the 2 x 4 walls in Fort Worth, taking markers and inscribing scriptures and encouraging words on each board of the walls. Once complete, they rented a truck to haul them and then delivered them to the site on a cold Sunday afternoon. A week later, on Saturday, some of the church members joined Habitat members and volunteers from Southwest Oklahoma State University to put the walls in place on the foundation. The volunteer count for that first day was over 60, and all of the walls were in place in one day. This job normally would take about three months to complete, and Habitat would normally pay for the supplies. This was a huge blessing to the Habitat organization, which found money running very low throughout the building time, due to the fledgling economy. The volunteers would build as long as they had supplies, and would stop - at one point for several months - until more funds were available.

Local churches and organizations helped with meals for volunteers. Several Leonard Boy Scouts and leaders logged in volunteer hours on the site, as well as the many volunteers from across Fannin County that were faithful to be on site week after week, when work was proceeding.

Finally the home was finished, which brought the group of well-wishers to the site on Sunday afternoon for the dedication service, refreshments, and tours of the home. Stephens presented the key to the family and a representative from Southwest Christian Church presented the family with a Bible.

“Keys in hand - thank you God for answering our prayers,” posted Stacie Vega on her Facebook page on Sunday at 3:30 p.m. “Moving in today!!!”

**Pictured top, Habitat Project Leader Jay Stephens presents Gilberto Vega with the key to his new home, which was dedicated Sunday afternoon. Pictured bottom, the Vega family stands on the front porch of their new home built by Habitat for Humanity of Fannin County, as volunteers and Habitat workers held a dedication service last Sunday. Attendees got to take a tour of the home following the service. - Ava Barlow staff photos**