

WOMEN BUILD

Girls play house, women build them.

The Granger Family

Packing up and pulling up stakes has been a way of life for Shalonda Granger since she was a very little girl. Knowing each new place to call home would soon be in the rear view mirror created a sense of rootlessness and instability.

Raised by a single mother who struggled with addictions, Shalonda lived a transient life as she and her mom frequently moved in search of affordable housing.

“I grew up constantly moving from place to place, which caused me to attend 10 different schools by the time I was 18,” recalls Shalonda, who went to three elementary schools, four middle schools and three high schools.

Each relocation and new school meant Shalonda had to not only re-adjust to new living spaces and neighborhoods, but also chronically experience the heartbreak of leaving old friends behind and having to make new ones. The lack of stability took a toll on Shalonda that followed her into her adult life.

“Growing up, I was never given proper tools on how to succeed in life or given that stability needed to do so,” said Shalonda. She found herself not being able to afford adequate housing and at risk for continuing the cycle of chronic relocation while raising her three-year-old twin daughters, A'Lana and Giselle, after separating from their father. The family of three currently resides temporarily in a friend's efficiency – a tiny living space with little storage. Despite working as a patient placement rep at Moffitt Cancer Center for the past ten years, her modest income makes it challenging to find a larger rental unit she can afford while juggling living expenses, feeding and clothing her daughters and child care



“I am doing things differently with my daughters and refuse to see them live in some of the same conditions I lived in as a child.”

costs. “My biggest concern was what happens after our time is up at our current place? Where will I be able to afford a place that is safe and decent for us? How many more times will we have to move because of rising rent?”

“I don't want my daughters to go through what I did,” said Shalonda. “I want us to be rooted.” Determined to provide her daughters the stability and security she never had, Shalonda applied to the Habitat for Humanity program.

After qualifying for Habitat, Shalonda happily finds herself and her kids to be

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our 2021 Women Build family. She is excited to be able to own a home of her own, something she never dreamed was possible. Her new home means a secure foundation for her children and a nurturing space to grow. She is grateful to Habitat and its Women Builders. “Thank you, thank you for your financial and physical support in building a secure home for my family!”