

# ACTS IN ACTION

ACTS HOUSING

2016 VOL. 2

Dear Friends,

From vacant house, to warm, comfortable home, the stories below and the work we do brings hospitality to the forefront of our minds. Be sure to read about Florencia & Florencio. A charming, generous family, and new ACTS homeowners. Florencia recently shared a meal of delicious tamales with ACTS' team members. We hope to soon be able to share the hospitality of family members like Florencia at a meal with all of you - be sure to check out information within on ACTS Housing's Longest Neighborhood Table Event. We've got a seat waiting for you.

Sincerely,



Michael Gosman, Executive Director

## FLORENCIA & FLORENCIO: NEW HOMEOWNERS



Martin and Angel play on the front porch of their new home, and pose for a quick photo.

*"It is an excitement and emotion so big, I can't explain it. I sometimes still can't believe we own this home,"* Florencia said when asked how she felt about her new home.

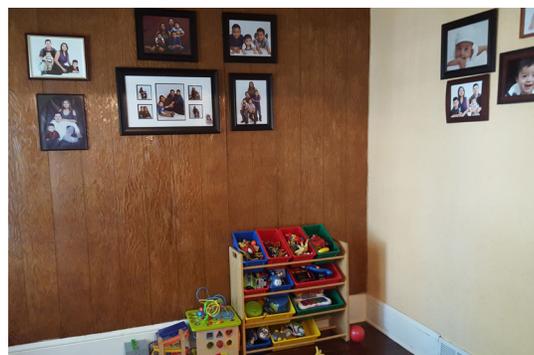
The block the family lives on is peaceful and quiet. On a nice day, from the front porch you can see a park, plenty of green trees, and neighborhood families out in their yards. The family's home stands out, as they painted their porch and front pillars bright green. Inside, the home is anything but quiet, with three, happy, playful young children.

*"It's a lot of space,"* Florencia explained. Prior to owning their own home the five-person family rented the second floor of a small house, *"now we have a lot of space for the kids to run. That also means more space for me to clean, but it's worth it."*

Florencia decorated the home herself, and it has a warm, Caribbean feel to it, with light sandy walls and brightly colored accents. The inside of the home is impeccably clean, even with the chaos wreaked by three young boys. Despite hectic personal and professional lives - Florencia works nights as a server, Florencio full time at a recycling plant - they keep a very tidy home.

A tidy home is just one way the family shows their pride. Florencia explained that while renting, she only bought used furniture, now Florencia is investing in all new furniture.

Three of the biggest reasons Florencia and Florencio wanted to own a home, came in small packages: their children, Martin, Angel and Christian. According to Dr. Megan Sandel, pediatrician at Boston Medical Center, "housing can act like a **vaccine** to provide multiple long-lasting benefits" for children. After renting cramped apartments for many years, Florencia and Florencio understand this better than most. Their new home is not only a sanctuary for their three children, but the children of cousins, nephews and neighbors. Safe, sanitary housing is a public health crisis, a crisis that affects our children, and ACTS families know this can be solved by affordable homeownership.



The children's toy area is adorned with family photos.

### HOT PROPERTY

2428 W Chambers St, Milwaukee, WI

Price: \$30,000

Bed: 3 Bath: 1

For more info Call Blia Cha at:

414-933-2547



## KEY SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT:

### US BANK

By Bob Gosman, ACTS Volunteer



ACTS Housing has expanded and grown significantly since its founding nearly 25 years ago, but its DNA has remained the same. This consistency is one of the biggest things that stands out to Suzanne M. Zwaska, Vice President of government relations and community development for U.S. Bank. U.S. Bank is one of ACTS' longest standing corporate supporters, and Stephen Rothe, Vice President, Relationships Manager, serves as ACTS' treasurer.

*"Their approach to homeownership is unique," Zwaska said. "It's beyond assisting a home owner; it's about building neighborhoods. They embrace the idea that people come into the homeownership process at different places and phases in their lives. Their homebuying counseling is a big part of their model and they work with the specific needs of a family. Their relationship with families doesn't stop when they sign a mortgage document."*



Suzanne Zwaska, US Bank  
VP Government relations &  
Community Development

For Zwaska, who was born and raised in Milwaukee and earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Cardinal Stritch University, respectively, it is extra special to

work for a company that is one of her hometown's most generous corporate citizens. *"It makes it that much more meaningful,"* she said. In 2015, the U.S. Bank Foundation and its corporate giving contributed a total of \$53 million into cities across the country. U.S. Bank is a member of Home Matters, a national initiative that supports the importance of safe and nurturing communities with access to quality resources including education and healthcare. ACTS and U.S. Bank our members of the Take Root Milwaukee Homeownership Consortium, also a member of Home Matters nationally.

Zwaska said it's inspiring to watch the way ACTS partners with families to bring foreclosed, vacant and challenged properties back to life.

*"The partnership we have with ACTS is the type of partnership we strive to engage because of the work they are doing to revitalize communities,"* she said. *"We embrace the opportunity to support the communities where our banks have a footprint. Our foundation's platform, Community Possible, embraces the belief that every individual should have the right to dream, believe and achieve. We invest in the critical community pillars of work, home and play. ACTS Housing is a perfect example of how we invest under our home pillar,"* Zwaska said.

## 2016 FIRST QUARTER IMPACT REPORT

**34**

Home Sales

**\$531**

Avg. Monthly Housing Burden

**85**

Families Counseled

### OUR SINCERE THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE PROVIDED SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FOR ACTS HOUSING IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2016

- Andrew Ruehl
- Andrew and Meghan Slocum
- Bob Gosman
- Britton and Charlie Domer
- Dick and Elaine Larsen
- Einhorn Family Charitable Trust
- George and Julie Mosher Foundation
- Good Shepherd Catholic Church
- Guaranty Bank
- The Holton Foundations
- Jennifer Stillman
- John Griffith
- John and Judy Malaney
- Louis Fortis
- Michael Riopel
- Mike Drew
- Nancy Allen
- Northwestern Mutual Foundation
- Patrick Howell
- Pyramax Bank
- Ricka and Steve Long
- Roxanne Shears
- Sequoya Borgman
- St. Leonard Congregation
- St. William Parish
- The Long Family
- Urban Economic Development Associate of WI
- Vaughn Allen
- Wisconsin Energies Foundation

# REGISTER TODAY! ACTS HOUSING'S LONGEST NEIGHBORHOOD TABLE EVENT

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

ACTS homeowners are known for their hospitality. Once they have a space of their own, many ACTS families open their homes to neighbors, friends, and family.

Join us as we emulate this hospitality at Milwaukee's longest neighborhood table!

Members of the community, business leaders, and neighbors will come together to share a meal at our 200-foot-long table.

Enjoy appetizers from ACTS Housing's neighborhoods and a family style meal. The evening includes an open bar, raffle, and other activities.

*Formal Invitations to Follow*



## REGISTER & ADDITIONAL INFO:

[www.ACTSHousing.org/longesttable2016](http://www.ACTSHousing.org/longesttable2016)

**Or Contact Becky:**

414-727-0016

[becky@actshousing.org](mailto:becky@actshousing.org)

#mketable

## MEET THE ACTS TEAM: BECKY STONER

Before Becky Stoner had even heard of ACTS Housing, she was passionate about the importance of stable housing.

During college, Becky, ACTS Development and Marketing Manager, spent four consecutive summers as a volunteer and then a staff member for the Appalachia Service Project in central Appalachia.

Becky did all manners of home repair for families and individuals living in substandard housing conditions. *"The work was as simple as painting or patching holes and as complicated as building room additions onto trailers, fixing foundation issues and repairing roofs,"* she said. *"I not only learned a great deal about construction but saw firsthand the importance of safe, sanitary housing."*

Becky then spent a year as a housing case manager with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps where she worked with men who were previously homeless - and now living in apartments - with a wide range of



*ACTS Team members Rebecca Stoner (left) and Mary Leach-Sumlin (right)*

*By Bob Gosman, ACTS Volunteer*

supportive services. She then moved to Milwaukee to get her Masters degree in Public Service/ Nonprofit Administration at Marquette. She wrote her Master's thesis on dignity, homelessness and housing.

All of those experiences helped make her transition to ACTS Housing a little less than a year ago a smooth and successful one.

*"Becky had no desire to be part of a band-aid approach,"* said Michael Gosman, ACTS' executive director. *"She wanted to help people solve their own problems and achieve on their own. That's what drew her to ACTS, and she brings a whole host of skills that we are lucky to have."*

Becky fell in love with ACTS' unique model.

*"Here was an organization that not only helped people secure housing but did so in the most dignified way possible,"* she said, *"they reassure people they have the strength to get it done and support them through every twist and turn. What happens here on a daily basis is truly remarkable."*

# ACTS FAMILIES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

STATE FARM GOOD NEIGHBORS BLOG FEATURES ACTS HOMEOWNER MADEE



*Homeowner Madee in front of his new home*

**ACTS Housing surveyed more than 50 clients living in the city of Milwaukee.**

**83%** said they felt safe in their neighborhoods.

**3 out of 4 people** also described their neighborhood as promising.

“When a vacant home in Madee’s Milwaukee neighborhood was up for sale last year, his uncle told him and his brother to go for it. Madee’s uncle is a contractor who works with ACTS Housing. He thought the young men would like living close to their parents.

The brothers went to the ACTS Housing raffle in June, 2015 thinking the home could be a fixer-upper. The young men believed this could be their opportunity to own a home. They put their names into the raffle and Madee ended up winning. Now all he had to do was come up with \$3500.

He was nervous about next steps but ACTS was by his side. ACTS Housing put together a deal for Madee to buy the house. They coached him about his finances and grants. They also recommended contractors and provided him a loan for repairs...”

**READ THE REST** of Madee’s Story at [www.st8.fm/3500](http://www.st8.fm/3500)

Thanks to Kelly Savage and State Farm for putting this feature together.



ACTS HOUSING

2414 W Vliet St.  
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