

## Transcript: Cody & Melissa Olsen telling their Mutual Self-Help Experience in their own words

(Interview on May 31, 2024)

Did you know that the USDA has a housing program where you can use sweat equity to lower the price on a new home? My name is Cody Olsen and this is my wife Melissa, and this is how we are getting into our first home with the help of the USDA.

**Cody:** My parents actually built with the USDA Rural Development Loan program with neighborhood nonprofit in Nibley, Utah back in 2007. I was eight years old. That was my first experience getting familiar with the program.

**Melissa:** When we got married, uh, it was obviously in the discussion of where we gonna live like what's what's in our future how in the world are we gonna get into a house Utah house prices were ridiculous. We didn't see any way for us to really get into a house. We were talking with his parents and we were saying like, I don't know how we're gonna do it, and one of them said. Why don't you do the program that we did and we both looked at each other and were like oh. So we got, we got information from neighborhood nonprofit. We met with them. We went through finances and if we were eligible and income and all the all the little details and by the end of the presentation, they were like you guys would be great for this program.

**Cody:** Neighborhood nonprofit and the USDA Rural Development program allowed us to find a way to afford a house and help us learn something new. We definitely have a lot more appreciation for it than I think if we just moved in. We are currently in the process of building. My wife is 7 1/2 months, seven months pregnant. We're both out there throughout the week working hard in the sun, doing what we need to do. It's hard work, and it's totally worth it given the amount of work that we're putting into it this year, our sweat equity is going to end up being equivalent to or even more than \$100,000 worth of equity into our home. When someone puts it like this. Like what if I told you, you could work part time on your own house for 35 hours a week and make \$100,000. (giggle) It's kind of a no brainer to do it and it's been a fantastic ride. It's been so fun.

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