

Major Program Area • Single Family Housing

Family Gains Independence with ADA Compliant Home

Elisa Chavez and her husband Martin Hernandez were living in a small basement apartment with their seven children. While living there, Martin sustained an injury from an accidental fall, requiring him to use a wheelchair. This injury made their family more aware of the need for an accessible home.

Elisa soon heard about the USDA's Mutual Self-Help Program, filled out the pre-application and signed up on the waiting list. After a brief waiting period Elisa was approved to build with a group of nine other families in Salem, Utah

Elisa and two of her oldest children Isai and Betsy, began the process of building houses under the supervision of a contractor along with their group of families and volunteers. During the build they gained new skills and friendships. Elisa, Isai and Betsy even became skilled with framing and stone masonry.

Many inclusive features were part of the structural design plan, making the home accessible for all who enter. Some of the accessible features include:

- Lowering main floor to eliminate steps at entry
- Pocket doors & sliding closets
- Wide hallways
- Adjustable shower-head
- ADA height toilet
- Roll-in shower
- Modified cabinets
- Ramps to patio & garage

During the process of building the new home, Elisa was fortunate to have assistance at home caring for her husband, as well as friends and family volunteering at the building site.



The Chavez Family were living in a cramped basement apartment before they were able to build their own home in Salem with nine other families. Now they can enjoy the open space provided by their new home.

One volunteer named Ray helped over 30 hours per week as a designated volunteer on Elisa's behalf. Ray was instrumental in helping the group

move forward with their goal and finishing two months ahead of schedule.

Date of Obligation: March 2021

Congressional District: Representative Curtis, District 3; Senators Lee and Romney

Partners: Self-Help Housing

Demographics: Very-Low & Low Income participants

Impact: Self-Help Homes for participants providing 65 percent of construction labor under the supervision of a construction supervisor. Including an all-accessible house for one resident.