

Major Program Area • Single Family Housing

Family with No Experience Builds Self-Help Home in Eight Months

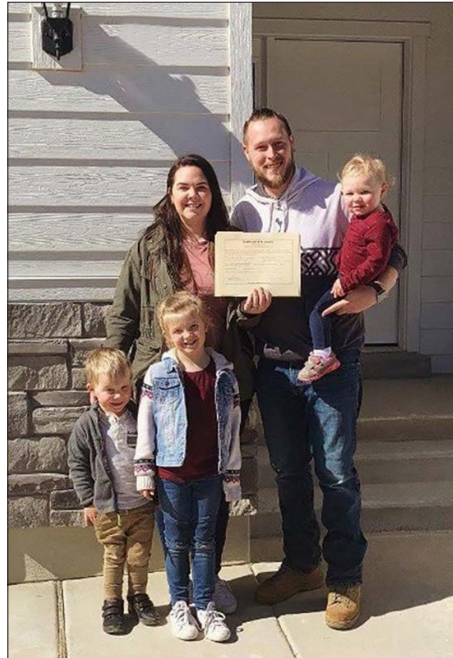
In Salem, Utah, Joseph, and Alyssa Thornton are parents of a young growing family of five and have more than their fair share of daily challenges. Despite their challenges, the Thorntons participated in the USDA Rural Development's Mutual Self-Help program, building their home two months ahead of schedule.

Many people may ask how a busy family with extra challenges could accomplish such a daunting task. As predicted, it was not easy for the Thorntons. Although, what they could not foresee, was the love and support from their new community.

The success of the Thornton's journey began first with a strong desire to improve their living situation. Not far from their desire, was their commitment to their goal of home ownership through diligence and sacrifice.

The Thornton's participated in building homes with the 63rd group from Self-Help Homes, they built more than just shelters; they built strong bonds that will last for many years to come.

When the Thornton's had unexpected health challenges, people from



The Thornton family are building their own home through the Mutual Self-Help Housing Program in Salem, Utah.

their cohort met these challenges by volunteering to fill the gaps to keep the group on schedule.

"Our future neighbors were very much our good friends. They offered to pick up our eldest for school and bring her home while we were still in the hospital," said the Thorntons.

Progression moved forward at a record pace, as the group worked together to build their homes through long hours, hard work, and cooperation. In February 2021, the Thornton's and nine other families moved into their newly constructed homes.

"Ten homes, built in eight months, by 10 highly-motivated families (most of whom had no prior construction experience). ... If pride is one of the great sins, I will gladly suffer the price for the pride I have in my children and their spouses," said Joseph's mother, Sheri Thornton.

The Thornton's are not the only ones grateful for the opportunity to live in a neighborhood and community they love. They say it was one of the most difficult things they have done but was worth the effort.

"I am so proud of this family I get to call my own," said Jenn Hansen, Alyssa's mother. "Goals are hard; they take time and dedication. For this family, today, goals were smashed out of the park and worth it."

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: Provide affordable home-ownership opportunities for very-low & low-income families, who would not usually qualify for a home loan, through the Mutual Self-Help Program. Residents will provide most of the construction labor under the direction of a construction supervisor building new homes.