

## Aurora's newest neighbours welcomed by Habitat for Humanity



**By Brock Weir**

Aurora's name was not lost on Cesidio (Sid) Lippa, his wife, Rose, and their two daughters, when they received the keys to their new home on Thursday afternoon.

'Aurora, in Italian, means the beginning of a new day,' said Sid. 'Now, Aurora means the beginning of a new life and a new home.'

The Lippa Family was joined by representatives from builders The Daniels Group, volunteers, Councillor Michael Thompson, and members of the community at large last week when they received a set of gleaming keys to their new home from Habitat for Humanity GTA.



The Lippas, and their daughters, prepare to make the first steps into their new home.

The Lippas plan on finishing the move to their new home this weekend, in what is Aurora's first Habitat for Humanity project. Developed in collaboration with Daniels, it is part of their First Homes development, which caters to first-time homeowners.

'It is a beautiful day for my beautiful family,' said Sid. 'Over a year ago, we were planning on finding another apartment because of our current living condition. It was not safe for our kids, but we couldn't find anything in our budget because our total monthly income is low. There is no way we can afford a better living space.'

He eventually contacted Habitat last year and although they didn't make it through on their first application, they were luckier on the second time around.

In the days leading up to the key ceremony, Sid and Rose were in close talks with Habitat to learn the ins and outs of being first-time homeowners, including taking on the home's no-interest mortgage, which is held by Habitat.

This Habitat build is somewhat unique compared to many Habitat homes in the Greater Toronto Area in that volunteers did not have to build it from the ground up. Built by Daniels, it was largely finished when it became a Habitat home. A small team of loyal and dedicated volunteers were then tasked with putting the finishing touches on the property ? ranging from paint to cabinetry ? before it was ready for the Lippas last week.

?I would like to welcome Sid, Rose [and daughters] Lorianne and Lucyanne into our Daniels family and our beautiful First Home community in Aurora,? said Don Pugh of Daniels. ?We know your journey has had its share of challenges and even greater amounts of accomplishment, days that brought you joy and others that were probably filled with anxiety. The road that brings you here has been lined with friends. Some of the friends are champions, and some are shadows you will never meet, but they all have a common goal ? to see you through this moment, to the moment where you get to call this home.?

According to Mr. Pugh, the relationship between Daniels and Habitat is one he has seen go from strength to strength with each passing year. It is a beneficial relationship, he says, it is ?not going to get any easier? providing affordable homes in the years ahead.

?In the upcoming years, we are going to have to work harder than ever to ensure families like the Lippas can realise their dream of homeownership,? said Mr. Pugh. ?Personally, I cannot think of a better partner to keep those dreams alive.?

For Councillor Michael Thompson, who represented Aurora at the ceremony, Thursday's dedication was a ?fantastic story? for the community.

?We look forward to you being one of our newest neighbours,? he said.

So, who are Aurora's newest neighbours? One person to ask is Adrian Pannozzo, who has been volunteering with the family to help ease the transition. Working closely with the family, he describes the Lippas as ?humble, sincere and appreciative.?

?They have strong family values, take nothing for granted, and are grateful for every day they have together,? said Mr. Pannozzo. ?They are excited with being able to provide their two daughters with a place they can call home. To them, a home means, and I quote, ?a place where you can feel comfortable cooking breakfast in your pyjamas.?"