

A Foundation for the Future

Habitat Homeowner Profile: Kaitlin & Her Family

Written by Sheila Fey, HFHGP Board of Directors

Before Habitat

Kaitlin understands what it means to build something steady in uncertain conditions.

She served in the U.S. Navy after enlisting straight out of high school. Stationed first in Annapolis and later aboard the *USS Harry S. Truman*, she worked in deck operations and aviation ordnance, supporting ship operations during a Mediterranean deployment. Life at sea meant long days, unpredictable schedules, and constant change.

"You don't get to pick and choose," she says of military life. "And you're all in it together."



Deployment brought both opportunity and uncertainty. There were moments of awe – pulling into Marseille, traveling to Paris, seeing Dubai, passing through the Strait of Gibraltar – but also long stretches of not knowing what came next or where the ship would be headed. That instability taught her adaptability and resilience. “You learn to adjust quickly,” she says. “You learn to trust your team.” One lesson stayed with her most: veterans take care of each other.

After leaving the Navy, Kaitlin became a full-time mom, managing the busy rhythms of a growing family – school drop-offs, team practices, appointments, and the constant coordination that comes with raising four children. Her focus was on home and stability as her family adjusted to life beyond military service.

Following her separation, however, the financial realities of single parenthood made it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Returning to the workforce became necessary – but it also led her back to a community she deeply understood.

She joined the Plymouth Area Veterans Center, part of Volunteers of America Massachusetts (VOAMASS), first as an office assistant and now a case manager – reentering the workforce in a role that felt aligned with her experience. Today, she helps veterans overcome barriers to stable housing, connecting them to housing placement support, crisis resources, income and employment assistance, and clinical or behavioral health services when needed.

What began as a job quickly became purpose. Working with veterans allows her to combine lived experience with professional skill. She understands the pride that can make asking for help difficult. She knows the language, the systems, the culture. And she brings compassion shaped by her own chapter of uncertainty.

Some veterans need help navigating housing or benefits. Others, she says, simply need someone to talk to.

"Veterans take care of each other," she says. "We're still in it together."



...continued on page 2 >>>

Kaitlin's Family

Today, her children are 18-year-old twins Aiden and Willow, Molly (12), and Eloise (8) – each with distinct personalities that keep the household lively and grounded. All four have grown up in the Plymouth Public School system, and Kaitlin is a familiar face at athletic games, school events, and activities throughout the community.

At home, her children keep her grounded and inspired. Aiden is a natural leader and honors student preparing for college. Willow, a basketball and track athlete, is known for her kindness and resilience. Molly has embraced the role of “family manager,” organized and mature beyond her years. Eloise, the youngest, is adaptable and joyful – accustomed to being part of a close-knit veterans community.

In recent years, housing instability became an added layer of stress. Though Kaitlin worked tirelessly to create consistency for her children, they had never truly had a place that felt permanent.

Partnering with Habitat

When coworkers encouraged her to apply for Habitat for Humanity's Veteran Build, she hesitated. The paperwork was long. The vulnerability was real. But just as she encourages the veterans she serves to step forward and accept support, her own community refused to let her give up. When she learned that her family had been selected, she was stunned.

“I never saw it coming,” she says. “It’s the best thing that’s ever happened to us.”

This Habitat home will be the first for her and her children to call their own. After years of adapting, adjusting, and moving, it represents something new: permanence.

Growing up, Kaitlin watched her father build their family home himself. She saw what it meant to create something permanent from the ground up. Now, she and her older children are doing the same – putting in their own sweat equity hours and helping to rehab the home they will live in. The home, located in Carver and originally built around 1890, is undergoing a complete rehabilitation and modernization – making it a uniquely meaningful and ambitious project for Habitat.

For her family, this Habitat home isn't just sentimental. It's security. After years of adapting to change, it's a place they're building themselves (with the help of Habitat's expertise and hundreds of dedicated volunteers)...where they can finally stay put.



The family's future home, pre-Habitat rehabilitation



Stay updated on this project & others:

Visit hfhplymouth.org/what-we-do/projects.html



Help make this work possible

Visit givebutter.com/hfhgpp to donate