

Kim's Story

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Kim is a Port Townsend native whose father worked at the mill. Her parents had to move in the 80's when there was a strike. Her family relocated to Federal Way where Kim continued to live even after her parents retired back to Port Townsend.

“When Habitat asked me to tell my story, I didn't know where to start,” says Kim. “I talked to my oldest daughter, and told her I wanted to tell my story, but I don't know what it is.

“I mentioned how moving around has taken so much energy. My daughter pointed out that it is part of my story. Every time we move, I have to call all of the services that bill me and change my address. I have to change my voter registration. I have to pack up my family and rally people to help me move. I have to clean and paint the old rental to get my deposit back. Who has time for this plus regular work and taking care of my family? It's not sustainable.”

Four years ago, Kim moved back to Port Townsend to care for her parents. “They are getting old and really need help,” she explained. “Plus, it was good for my kids to be closer to their grandparents and good for us all to be close to my kids' schools.”

Relocating seemed like the reasonable thing to do, but little did Kim realize that finding a rental would be so difficult.

“I've never had a problem finding a rental before,” says Kim. “When we first got to Port Townsend, we bounced around from place to place. I thought, we'll find a long-term rental eventually. And then the years went by, and we had to keep moving. All the once-affordable units are becoming private guest houses or short-term vacation rentals. And the places that are still available keep getting smaller and pricier. Now my kids and I are sleeping in one room. It's crazy.”

A case worker at Dove House told Kim about Habitat. Kim applied, but didn't get accepted. “Habitat's Homeowner Services Manager told me I had to improve my credit,” Kim says. “I was so surprised! I didn't have a credit card. I thought that was supposed to be a good thing. I didn't even know how to get one.”

Kim figured it out, however. She got a credit card. And she took care of the debt she had. By the time Habitat was accepting applications again, Kim was ready. She reapplied and was accepted to the program.

“I never give up,” says Kim, the stress showing on her face as she recounts her story. “Now, if anyone tells me it’s impossible for them to change their situation, I tell them it’s not. I share with them how to take care of their credit. If something doesn’t work out the first time, try again.

“I’m still very tired. But knowing that I’m going to buy a Habitat house gives me courage. I won’t be stressed about having to move again. My kids will have a quiet place they can study and do homework. As a family, we dream about the future now. We talk about things we’re going to bake in our new kitchen. We talk about how we can decorate our home for Halloween and Christmas.

“We got this. We really got this.”