

## Thea's Story

November 2022

Meet Thea, a mother, animator, and cashier at the Food Coop. Thea has lived in Port Townsend for 13 years. She never imagined that it would take so long to find a permanent home, one that she envisions growing old in and ultimately willing to her son, Bela.

**Q.** What led you to Habitat?

**A.** I love my job at the Coop. I hope I'm there for a long time. Yet every day, I'm also struck by how many posts there are on the Coop's community board from people desperately looking for housing. One of those people is me.

There is a housing crisis here. Working class people looking for permanent, stable homes can't compete in the housing market. I have a friend who owns a Habitat home, so I knew about the organization. It's one of the few in town that is actually making a difference when it comes to affordable housing.



It's not just me who needs stable housing, though. It's important for my son. He has been diagnosed with a disability that is daunting for him. I'm so proud of Bela and how he has been able to thrive, given his circumstances. Fortunately, this community loves and supports him. I can't take him away from the support network he has built here. I am in a temporary living situation now, and I'm so thankful to my current landlord for the chance to live there. But I have to find permanent housing.

**Q.** What has the Habitat program been like for you?

**A.** I just want to tell people, "Habitat, heck yeah!" Seriously, I could not continue to live here and help my son with his disability otherwise. It was such a relief to get into the program. It's

heartbreaking that the average rental price here is so far out of reach. When I finally purchase my Habitat home, my mortgage will be \$600 less than the cost of a rental!

Having a permanent home means that I can continue to help my son manage his condition. He won't have to worry about disruption of the support network he has here.

Habitat homes are well built, too. They are energy efficient. They are inspected. I'll have a place to set up my studio for creating animations. I do rotoscoping and since I got involved in it, I've shown at Chautauqua, the Fireweed Film Festival and Sound Check. My art and ensuring that my son has the support and love he needs are my passions. None of this would be possible if I didn't have stable housing.