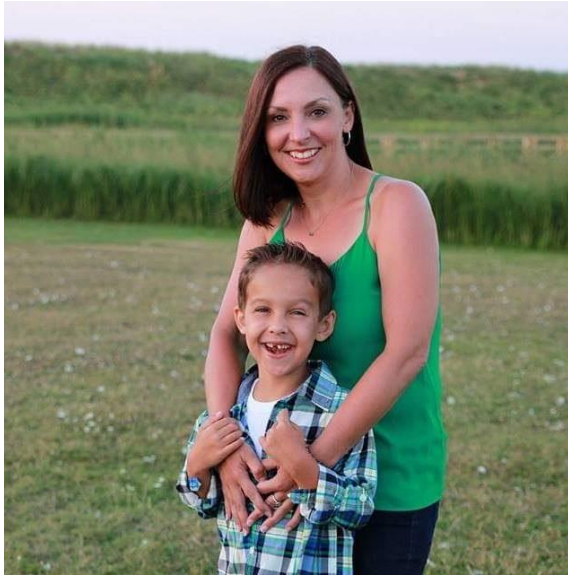


# our phase III families

## Meet Isabelle



It seems like yesterday when I had to pack up my bags and leave my life in Prince Edward Island behind. It was a difficult time for my son Caleb as well since things did not work out between his father and me. I was scared to leave my job and my home to start all over again, but at least we had the support of my parents and we're now living with them in Ottawa.

I looked into rental places at first, but the prices were so high and as a single mom working a retail job, it just wasn't feasible. My parents have lived for decades in Orléans and it just so happens that their home is minutes away from Habitat's current development. A former co-worker in PEI purchased their home through Habitat so I was somewhat familiar with their homeownership program. Even though I was curious

about the build happening nearby, at the time it didn't even cross my mind that I could qualify for a home. One day, someone posted on my neighbourhood's Facebook group that Habitat was still looking for families for their Orléans development and my mother encouraged me to apply. The week before Christmas after a stressful day at work I received an email from (Family Services Manager) Nancy saying I will be a Habitat homeowner. I can't believe I'll get to own my very first home next year!

Being a single mom, working towards my volunteer hours has had its ups and downs, but I've met many amazing Habitat staff and volunteers along the way. Everyone has been so gracious and you can tell that they are rooting for you to succeed. You can really feel the strength of the Habitat community and how proud they are of the organization. As someone who has done a lot of volunteer work in the past it makes me feel gratified that I am also positively contributing to make people's lives better. I can't wait to start volunteering on the construction site helping to build my future home.

One of the things I'm most looking forward to is having my own space. Being close to my parents is great, but it can get quite cramped in their home. Also, as much as I love my son, sharing a tiny bunk bed with him in my parent's guest bedroom is definitely not a situation I want to be in long term! I'm also very thankful that the development is nearby, so Caleb does not have to switch schools again. He's already made his friends and set up roots in this community and he's excited to have a whole new group of kids to play with once we move in. I know he'll be very proud to show off his new home.

In the end, it all comes down to my son who is the most important person in the world to me. I want him to have that feeling of growing up in a safe neighbourhood and the love of community where he can go out and play with friends and not have to worry about whether or not he'll have a stable place to live.