Home: The Nicest Word There Is

Volunteers Nancy Hunt and Leah Murchie with Joe and Efrain at their new apartments

What are the things you think of when you reflect on home? Is it your cozy sofa? A favorite chair? Spending time in your kitchen cooking for friends and family? Snuggling up in your bed at the end of a long day? Home conjures up a myriad of thoughts and feelings. Our celebrations and our mournings often happen within its protected walls. For many of us, it's our center. It is always there, welcoming us when we are tired and weary with its familiar smells and sounds.

With this understanding of home firmly etched into our beings, Journey Home set out this past spring to help create a home for the many newly housed within our community. We understand that providing a key is only the first step of the process.   Making that empty apartment a home is a process and we wanted to help begin that process.

Armed with a good idea and a dedicated group of volunteers, we developed a grassroots initiative that partnered humanitarians within our region to folks who were moving from homelessness to housing. These volunteers led efforts with friends, family, and neighbors collecting furniture and household goods. Once all of the needed items were collected, the groups arranged to deliver and help move clients into their new home. The result has been nothing short of amazing! People from all walks of life have participated in this effort – faith groups, grandparents, children, stay-at-home parents, teenagers and even a local Brownie troop.

Home has taken on a new meaning for many of our friends who have experienced homelessness. Home has also taken on a new meaning for our friends who volunteered with this initiative. Relationships have been built, awareness has been raised, and homes have been created. And now there are many more homes throughout our region waiting to welcome their new owners – complete with cozy beds and favorite chairs and familiar sounds and smells. Lives have been changed – for all of us.