

Residential Construction: Building A Future One Home At A Time

Although high school students building their seventeenth Habitat for Humanity home is a story worth sharing, it is the journey of the new homeowner, Hsar Pwe Doh and his wife that makes a person take pause and appreciate the saying, "There is no place like home." Below is Hsar Pwe Doh's first-hand heartwarming story of hardship, uncertainty and sacrifice that ends with a new beginning in Meridian, Idaho.



Dah Soe (left) Hsar Pwe Doh (right)

My name is Hsar Pwe Doh. I was born in Burma, in the village of Lay Tee, city of Twang Oo. In the year 2000 the Burmese government, which had been at war with the Karen people of Burma since the 1930s, entered the village and began burning everything in sight. My family and I left in a hurry with our few possessions and began a long journey, walking night and day for over three weeks to a refugee camp in Thailand called Umphien. There we made our home for the next 8 years. We lived in a house made largely of bamboo without electricity, running water, or plumbing.

In 2009 I was notified by the UN representative that I had been selected for transfer to Boise, Idaho. I was the only member of my family to be selected, although my parents and two brothers have since joined me in Boise. I settled into an apartment here and got a job as a Sushi cook in a local restaurant.

Right after I arrived in Boise I was told about the bus system and tried to figure it out. I took a bus downtown where I thought I could transfer to another to go to my work. But when I got downtown I couldn't find the right bus so I walked around in the downtown area for almost 12 hours trying to figure out what to do. Finally the police stopped me, patted me down, and wanted to know what I was doing just wandering around. I believe they thought I was going to do something criminal! When they figured out my situation they showed me the right bus to catch and I went home.

In 2013 I met my wife Dah Soe - on the internet! We'd both come a long way from being in the camp in Thailand! And we now have two sons. We are very happy to have been allowed to be in the Habitat program and hope to be in our new home very soon. Our thanks to all of the volunteers who give so generously of their time to make this happen! Thanks again! Hsar Pwe Doh

On August 3rd the Doh/Soe family received the keys to their new house at the Home Dedication Celebration. This is West Ada School District's 17th year in partnership with Boise Valley Habitat for Humanity giving students the opportunity to learn constructions skills in the best way possible, by building an actual house. The group of students who help construct these homes represent all five big comprehensive home high schools in the district and are in their second

and third year of Residential Construction--a Career and Technical Education (CTE) three-year high school elective program. To participate, students leave campus and go to the construction site for two periods, every other day throughout the school year. Students earn graduation credits as well as learn viable construction skills. They work alongside members of the selected family and other community volunteers. The collective sweat equity of the volunteers make the home affordable for the receiving family who has never owned a first home. Students who worked on the Doh/Soe home, worked under the guidance of veteran CTE instructor Greg Grove and Habitat crew leaders Sharon Smotherman and Lee Klosterman. These Residential Construction students not only learned how to build a solidly constructed house they also learned the value of having a place to call home.



The Doh/Soe family at the Home Dedication celebration along with CTE Residential Construction instructor Greg Grove (back right)