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Luck and Faith Produce New Home for Family

[By Lauren Gibson Gilroy](#)
6/28/1991

Last year, Silvester and Dora Rodriguez and their eight children lived in a dilapidated three-bedroom rental house. On Sunday, they will hold an open house in the home of their dreams - a mortgage-free, refurbished, eight-bedroom former mansion in Brady Heights.

The Rodriguez's miracle began two years ago when their landlord, Jesse Knox, whom the family had taken care of for years, died and left the children the rental house.

According to Dick Bland, pastor of Centenary United Methodist Church where the Rodriguez family attends services, the family took care of Knox after he became blind.

"The children grew up around him and they were very loyal to him," said Bland. "I remember how Dora was when he died. It was like she lost her own parent."

The Rodriguez family is living in happier times now, thanks to a little luck and a lot of faith, said Bland.

Last week, after an unusual trade with the city of Tulsa, the Rodriguezes moved from the small home they had lived in for 14 years to the eight-bedroom house.

The city of Tulsa's Development Authority decided last year to acquire the Rodriguez home to use the land for an apartment

building parking lot. Under the federal guidelines involved in the relocation of the family, the city had to find a decent, safe and sanitary replacement. That meant a house with at least six bedrooms for the now nine

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Rodriguez children and their parents, said Acquisition-Relocation Supervisor Bobby Cunningham. It also had to be one the family could afford to maintain and pay taxes on with the income Silvester makes as a metal grinder. Only two days after the search began, the H.O.W. Foundation

put on the market an eight-bedroom house it had refurbished at the corner of Fairview Street and Cheyenne Avenue. The house was right next door to the Rodriguez home.

"We wanted this one because it's right in the neighborhood and it's big enough for the kids," said Dora Rodriguez. The family moved their few belongings from their 877-square-foot, \$7,100 home to their new 1,750-square-foot, \$50,000 house on June 20. Church members plan to bring more furniture, bedding and other household items to Sunday's open house. The city referred the family to several agencies that will help them with the budgeting and other details involved in being homeowners, said Cunningham. "We're going to do everything we can to assist them with keeping the house," she said. "The church has really helped us," said Mrs. Rodriguez. "They paid for medication when the baby was sick. I hope people donate to the church so they can help other people, too." Dora recalls joking with her landlord years ago: "I told my landlord, 'I may not be rich but someday I'll live in a house like yours,'" said Dora. "My dream came true."

[By Lauren Gibson Gilroy](#)

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