



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Press Release**

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***El Paso County Workforce Family Moves into Recycled Home***

***Pikes Peak Habitat Originally Built the Home and Has Renovated it in Partnership with Gilas***

**Colorado Springs, CO** (Mar. 19, 2024) — Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity invites the community to celebrate with us at a home dedication for [Gilas and her son](#) on Saturday, March 24, at 10:30 a.m., in the Woodmen Vistas subdivision (ZIP code 80924) of Colorado Springs.

Gilas will live in a recycled home. The residence was built by Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity in 2011, and the original buyer lived there for more than a decade. The home eventually was returned to our stock, and our construction staff, volunteers, and Gilas have completed extensive renovations to meet Pikes Peak Habitat’s current construction and energy-efficiency standards. Updates include replacing flooring, trim, and interior, exterior, and garage doors. Crews also primed and painted the walls and installed a hybrid water heater, a mini-split heating and cooling system, a radon detection system, and Energy Star-rated appliances.

Originally from Kurdistan, Gilas built a successful career there as a teacher and later a school principal. When her homeland became too dangerous, though, the family fled to the United States—and she had to start over.



*Gilas and her son*

With the help of Lutheran Family Services, Gilas, her then-husband, and their son relocated to Colorado Springs. After arriving in El Paso County, she enrolled in English as a Second Language classes and eventually began studying at Pikes Peak Community (now State) College, with the goal of becoming a medical assistant. After about a year and a half, she was hired as a vaccinator at the Broadmoor World Arena. That eventually led to a career as a phlebotomist, a field in which she's worked full-time for more than two years.

Learning a new language and rebuilding her professional life aren't the only challenges she's faced. As a single mom, she has struggled with the high cost of housing in El Paso County and the difficulty of finding a safe place to live. She and her 12-year-old son share a one-bedroom apartment, and she was attacked by dogs in her neighborhood.

A few months before she applied for and was accepted into Pikes Peak Habitat's homebuying program, Gilas became a U.S. citizen. (Pikes Peak Habitat requires all members of future homeowner families to be [U.S. citizens or Legal Permanent Residents](#).) As a parent, she's pleased that her son will have his own room and a stable place to live. As a Kurdish-American, she understands the need for him to have roots in the United States.

Like all future Pikes Peak Habitat homeowners, Gilas has invested 200 hours of sweat equity working on her home. "It's going to be a great memory that you worked for this house!" she says. "It's not just something you get; you work for it."

Knowing that people from the local community volunteered their time and energy to help make her dream of homeownership a reality is powerful to Gilas. "Especially when you have a different culture and different religion from where you come, it's just great!" she says. "I got goose bumps. It just feels really, really good."

The home dedication celebration is open to media and members of the public. In accordance with Pikes Peak Habitat policy, we aren't publicly sharing Gilas' new address. To join us, please drive to the eastern intersection (there are two!) of Crestone Peak Trail and Sopresa Lane, and look down Crestone Peak Trail for our flags. On-street parking is available along Sopresa Lane.

After the dedication ceremony, you are welcome to meet Gilas and tour the one-story, two-bedroom home. Gilas and Pikes Peak Habitat representatives will be available to speak with media.

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### **About Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity**

Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity builds strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter in El Paso County. We construct permanent, affordable homes in partnership with the community and prospective homebuyers, who purchase their homes with affordable mortgages. In addition, our home repair program works with seniors, veterans, and other cost-burdened homeowners in El Paso County, who "pay it forward" by serving their communities. Pikes Peak Habitat has been an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International since 1986 and has partnered with more than 235 families in El Paso County. For more information, visit <http://www.pikespeakhabitat.org> and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).