

## Meet Nika



### ***Believe In Yourself***

Sometimes, without you knowing, God is preparing you for what is yet to come.

Nika was born in Philadelphia, PA, but moved to Knoxville at the young age of three. She and her sister lived with their mother and grandmother in low-income housing. They lived in the same house for close to thirteen years. Due to family circumstances, Nika learned at a young age how to take care of herself and her younger sister.

Upon graduation, Nika's mom gave her a choice for her future. She could attend college, enter the work force, or join the military. Even though college had never been on Nika's radar and she was not ready to have a real job, she knew without a doubt that she did not want to stay in the same environment. In 1989, Nika joined the Navy. It was the best decision she ever made.

After serving our country for six years and moving around a lot, Nika was looking forward to settling down. In the spring of 1996, she, her husband, and their two children, moved into an apartment in Nashville. Nika began working at FFV doing aviation maintenance and her husband slowly worked his way to become the General Manager of a national hotel chain. Shortly after his promotion, the family was asked to move to three separate cities in a very short time span. All of the moving took its toll on Nika. With his blessing, Nika moved to Murfreesboro to be close to his family and to have support.

Unfortunately, it was not long until Nika found herself in a difficult place. She and her husband divorced, she was out of work, and she did not have a place to live. It was her church family at New Hope that encouraged her not to give up. In time, she enrolled at MTSU, moved into Family Housing and was selected for work study. She was studying Social Work when she was given the assignment to write a paper on a local organization. Nika had volunteered with Habitat for Humanity before with her church and thought it would be the perfect place. Through her research and own volunteer experiences, she began to think perhaps she could become a Habitat Homeowner.

In 2014, Nika graduated from MTSU with a degree in Social Work. She spent the next two years working on her credit and establishing a steady income. In 2016, Nika decided to apply for the Habitat program and was accepted. She has the budgeting classes, making new friends, and learning how to be a stable homeowner. However, it was the journey of getting to where she is today that she values the most. This is something that she did all by herself through focus and hard work. She relied on her own two feet to move forward and is looking forward to what the future will bring.

Nika would like to thank Schneider Electric and St. Paul's Episcopal Church for providing both funding and volunteers for her home to be built. She would also like to thank any other volunteers that give of their time and talent. She feels blessed to be given the opportunity to start anew and be settled.