



## Emmanuel, Nema, Emmanuela, Renee' & Elijah Yoniyo

Nema and Emmanuel are both from Rwanda. They are married with three children but their journey from Rwanda to America was quite an event. Nema and Emmanuel did not meet in Rwanda, but did so in the United States. To escape the genocide in Rwanda, Emmanuel's family moved to Zaire in 1994, where they were housed in a refugee camp for eight months. His family then moved to Senegal, and it was there the United Nations helped them get to the United States. Nema, also from Rwanda, escaped to the Congo with her family. The family went to Burundi, then to Missouri in the United States. A mutual friend introduced them at a wedding in Missouri. The couple was only 4 years into their marriage when living with Emmanuel's mother in Dayton, Ohio. They later moved to an apartment in Huber Heights. They recall living in an apartment in which neighbors above them caused a flood which damaged their belongings. The water was dirty and they could not use it for cooking or even showering. Nema learned about Habitat for Humanity through other Rwandan families, and after applying was soon accepted into the program.

Emmanuel has been a Welder for many years, and has advanced to an OTR (over the road) Truck Driver. He says he really likes driving and plans to complete his CDL training to drive a Semi-truck. Nema is a State Certified Nursing Assistant. She works part-time while raising 3 children. The couple has 1 boy and 2 girls. The oldest girl, 4-year-old Emmanuela, started school for the first time in late summer. She likes the park, especially the sliding board and playing with dolls and Sponge Bob. Renee, nicknamed Queen, is 2 years old. She likes to explore, and is a great organizer. Elijah, their only son, is almost 6 months old. All of the children are fast learners and participate in family time consisting of listening to music from their country of Rwanda, bike riding, church and group gatherings, community fairs and amusement parks.

The Yoniyo family believes the Habitat for Humanity program will assist with providing stability to their lives as they become homeowners, and not have to worry about others causing them hardship or being forced to move from home to home. Emmanuel and Nema said that their experience with sweat equity was exciting as they were working in the ReStore. They were cleaning shelves, lifting, and pricing items. They were very pleased with the homeowner classes. Nema said, "We are doing well in managing money but we are still trying to perfect our knowledge in the area of good nutrition." Emmanuel, Nema and the children are very excited to start a new life in their own home.