

NES Homes Reynolds To Houston, A Mission Of Hope and Generosity

Betsy and Sam Torrence followed the path of Hurricane Harvey intently since they have a son and his family living in Richmond TX, a suburb of Houston. Their fears turned to reality when they received the call that their house was flooded. Anxious hours passed as their son Andrew did everything he could to secure their possessions; then they knew they had to leave. Andrew walked in chest-high water towing an air mattress with their dog and a couple of plastic bags of essentials. His wife, Lauren, trudged in knee-high water close to house foundations carrying their 14-month-old daughter, Emery. They were searching for a rescue boat to get them to dry land.

Fast forward several days. Andrew was able to return to their home and assess the damage. Although not as badly flooded as some, there was six inches of water that breached their one floor home. This required immediate removal and demolition work in order to avoid mold establishing in, and on, everything. Removal... EVERYTHING in the house had to go. What was salvageable was moved to a storage unit. What wasn't, was piled at the curb for the dump. Demolition... EVERYTHING three feet above the water line had to be removed ... walls, baseboard, framing, doors, and insulation; anything affected by the water's path. Then studs and floors needed to be scrubbed and sanitized. Having purchased the home two years prior, they were aware they weren't in a flood zone, and unfortunately, have no insurance.

But what they did have was faith, hope, friends and family. Two families took them in, one for the duration, so they have a home away from home. Many of their other local friends gave hours and hours of work to remove and demolish everything that had been touched by water. Fortunately, they were able to complete the demolition within the safety/sanitary timeframe before mold issues developed. Then the task was focused on rebuilding.

Andrew soon found that in America's fourth-largest city, finding any kind of construction expertise was



going to be a challenge. Although he was handy around the house, the amount and skill level of the work required was formidable. And then came Victor.

In 2015, Sam and Betsy hired Victor Strother, President of NES Homes (A Reynolds Lake Oconee Featured Builder www.reynoldslakeoconee.com/build-your-home/featured-builders), to remodel the home they purchased in The Landing. Right after the hurricane, Sam contacted Victor and mentioned the struggles Andrew was having. Victor immediately reached out to Andrew to



see if he could help. Over the ensuing days and weeks through calls, FaceTime, texts and e-mails, Victor guided Andrew through the demolition and prep work. Not only did Victor lend expert guidance, but he was able to encourage Andrew and Lauren (and Betsy and Sam) that this tragedy could be overcome. Then the surprise....knowing that Betsy and Sam were planning a trip to help rebuild their son's home, Victor volunteered to also drive to Houston, tools in tow, to lend his expertise and time. In addition, he convinced a friend and construction colleague, Clint Lindsey, to make the trip with him.

The driving journey began on September 17. The first exposure to Andrew and Lauren's plight was pulling into their development and seeing massive amounts of debris piled in front of every house. It was heartbreaking. Tears came as Sam and Betsy entered their son's home and viewed firsthand the devastation of the flood. Where to begin? What to do? How to do it? But Victor took the lead and set out the plan. For seven straight days, many being 10 hour days, the group set about their tasks ... insulation, drywall, framing, mudding, sanding, electrical, plumbing, tile prep, and on and on. By the 25th, it was looking like a home again. Although it will be mid-November until Andrew & Lauren will be able to move in due to floor installation, cabinetry, painting, tiling, etc., the worst is over.

The Torrence's said, "The rebuilding of our son's home couldn't have been done without the generosity of Victor Strother. We

have been so blessed that he entered our lives. We recognized his professional skills while he handled our own home renovations, but we witnessed an even deeper depth of character when he volunteered to help our son. We are overwhelmed by his kindness."

Upon returning home, Victor shared some thoughts with Andrew and Lauren through email, "We should all be pleased with the progress that was made. There is still a lot to do, but hopefully, you can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Andrew, with the knowledge you have, I hope you will continue to help the neighbors, it fills a place in your heart money can't buy." In response, Lauren wrote, "Victor and Clint - We cannot thank you enough for coming here to help. You both worked so hard and have given us hope that there is indeed, a light at the end of the tunnel. We are truly blessed. This tragedy has turned into a learning experience - we will be paying it forward. We can't wait to call our house our "home" again and share it with our friends and family."

"There have been so many families impacted by these natural disasters and we hold them in our prayers," commented Sam. "I wish they could all have a Victor to help get them through."