

Meet Michelle & Her Family



But God

Michelle and her two sisters were raised by their parents in Peoria, Illinois. Most of her childhood memories involve moving around a lot. From apartments to duplexes their family lived in an unpredictable state. Finding stability was an ongoing journey for her young parents. They lived in Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri before landing in Tennessee.

Michelle was inspired to become a Massage Therapist after seeing her grandmother's reaction to receiving her first massage. She wanted to provide the same type of service to others. As a young high school freshman, Michelle began to study massage techniques through research in the library. She would later use these techniques to practice on her family and classmates. In 2010, Michelle signed up for massage therapy school and in January 2011, she graduated from Anthem Career College. Michelle has been a licensed Massage Therapist for the past 13 years. "I truly feel like my massage is a ministry as well as a testimony," Michelle said. "Through being simply anointed, I am able to provide my clients healing."

While growing her business and raising two beautiful girls, she could feel old habits beginning to creep in. Moving all the time trying to find the "next affordable place to stay," Michelle found herself striving for stability. She was unsure of where to begin, but she knew that she did not want to be a stereotype any longer. It was around this time that Michelle first heard about the Rutherford County Area Habitat for Humanity Homeownership Program.

One of her neighbors had told her about the program and suggested that she apply. Shortly after, Michelle's church, First Baptist East Castle, partnered with RCHF to teach a homebuyer's class. It was there that Michelle met the RCHF Homeowner Services Manager and was encouraged to apply for the program. After all that she had been through, Michelle was thrilled to find out that she had been accepted into the RCHF program.

Things were going well and then suddenly; the world was on lockdown. In just a few short months, Michelle lost 50% of her income and was faced with some hard decisions. In May of 2020, Michelle decided to move to Texas for a fresh start. This also meant that she could no longer be a part of the program in Rutherford County Tennessee.

When Michelle arrived in Texas, she quickly realized that she had made a mistake. "I was only in Texas for a couple of months," Michelle said. "I didn't need long to see that I had been motivated by fear and embarrassment. I thought I was failing my children and I needed to change my mindset." In July of 2020, Michelle moved back to Tennessee and then spent the next couple of years working on herself. Her faith grew stronger each day, and in the spring of 2022, Michelle decided to apply for RCHF again. When she received the call that she was accepted, all she could do was cry. She was overwhelmed by God's grace to give her a second chance and this time she is determined to succeed!

Michelle and her girls are extremely grateful to be a part of this gift. Becoming a homeowner will give Michelle the opportunity to provide stability and security for her daughters. The family is looking forward to having something of their own and not having to move all the time. When their home build is complete and they are settled, Michelle hopes to host ministry in her home. She wants to be able to pour into others and pay it forward.

Michelle and her daughters greatly appreciate everyone that are playing a role in God's vision and their testimony. They are especially thankful to First Baptist Church on East Main, First Baptist Church on East Castle, Saint Paul's Episcopal Church and the RCHF staff and volunteers for their generosity in sponsoring and building their new home.