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Kurt, Brenda Warner help furnish remodeled home for metro-east family

BY WALLY SPIERS
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Daniele Huck knew she would be getting to move into a newly remodeled home at 405 Rose St. in South Roxana.

What she didn't know was that the First Things First Foundation, the charitable group started by Kurt and Brenda Warner, was going to furnish her new home with new furniture and other items.

The Warners were on hand Monday at the house dedication and blessing to surprise Daniele and her daughters, McKenna, 7, and Brooklynn, 3.

Huck was almost speechless.

"Oh my gosh," she managed to get out, as she walked through the front door and saw that her new house also was newly furnished.

It was not until she had been through the house and had a few moments that she could go on. "I've struggled my whole life. I'm very, very blessed."

She was emotional even before the event started.

"She started crying when she just saw us pull up," Brenda Warner said.

The house was renovated by the Wood River Area Chapter of the Lewis & Clark Habitat for Humanity. A long list of people and businesses volunteered their time and materials for the project. It is the third Habitat for Humanity house in the village of South Roxana.

The new owner puts sweat equity into the home and also makes affordable payments, which helps the group buy and renovate more homes.

Each child got a pink-themed bedroom. There was a master bedroom, a furnished kitchen, complete with dishes, a living room and a small office with a computer.

There is a playhouse beside the house and even a lawnmower for when the grass grows.

Huck said her favorite thing in the house is the computer.

"It's really going to help out," she said. "I'm back in school studying to be a paralegal. I don't have a computer right now."

Besides school, the 25-year-old works at Caseyville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

The foundation, backed by corporate sponsors Aaron's Inc., U-Haul and Safeway, has provided furnishings for 23 other families. Kurt Warner, the famed quarterback who took the St. Louis Rams to two Super Bowls, said the scene was familiar for him and his wife.

"I see a family taking a step I remember us taking so many years ago," he said. "But you get in a new home and you wonder how you are going to furnish it. So we took care of that."

Brenda Warner said the giving back means coming full circle for her. She was a single mom living in low income housing until her life changed. Now she can help give someone else some of the good experiences she remembers.

"You know, so much of this publicity stuff (surrounding her famous husband) I don't understand," she said. "But this is the good part of it."

In her prayer, Brenda Warner wished that there might be so much laughter and love in the home that the neighbors complained of the noise.

"This is giving people what we call a hand up, not a hand out. Now it's all about moving forward," Kurt Warner said.

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