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The Pulse ^{\$2}

HART, TEXAS, CASTRO COUNTY, VOLUME 3, NUMBER 4, DECEMBER 22, 2016



Veronica Gonzalez, right, with her children: Azeliza, 7; Kilin, 10; and Luis, 6.

Veronica Gonzalez And Children Enjoying Their New 'HOME'

By Neoma Williams

Veronica Gonzalez and three of her children are enjoying their second Christmas in their new home located in Old Hart.

Gonzalez, who works in housekeeping at Plains Memorial Hospital in Dimmitt, moved into the house in October 2015.

The new home is part of the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, which provides grants to states and localities that communities use. HOME is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

The City of Hart began approximately six years ago to get some HOME houses built in Hart. And, Gonzalez's house is the only house built. She read a public notice in *The Pulse* about the program, and also heard of it through friends. Veronica was successful in her efforts to get a new home because she re-

mained persistent and did what was asked of her to get her new house. She had a clear title to her old home and was able to provide the necessary documents needed to be awarded a new house. She said that it took her four years to accomplish this. She said that she was required to renew her application every six months. And, she dealt with three different HOME coordinators over the four years.

Her old home was demolished and the new one built in its place. The old house was demolished on April 8, 2015 by Steve Qualls Construction of Abernathy. His company built a three-bedroom, two-bath home in its place. Also included is central heat and air, and a new refrigerator and electric cookstove. Qualls gave Veronica a new washer and dryer, she says. Also, there is a pad for her vehicles to park on.

The foundation to her new home wasn't poured until July 2015 because the construction



Retiring Precinct 1 Castro County Commissioner Tom McLain, second from left, is pictured with the men who work for the Precinct. They are pictured near an earthen dam they maintain as part of the flood-control project of the Runningwater Draw. Also pictured are Paul Ramirez, Ben Montiel and Adolfo Carrasco.

McLain Proud Of Dam Maintenance

workers discovered that a neighbor's natural gas line ran across her yard; this had to be remedied before construction began. She and her children rented a small mobile home in Hart until her new house was finished.

Veronica was born in Abilene at Dyess Air Force Base. She started kindergarten in Hart and graduated from Hart High School in 1997. Her mother is Esmeralda Montemayor of Hart.

The family said that there are no roof leaks when it rains in the new house, as was the case in the old house. And, the kids say that the house stays warm in the winter, unlike the old house. And, seven-year old Azeliza adds, "We're safe."

Veronica lived in her old house for 12 years. She is required to live in the new house for ten years, and keep property taxes paid and have the home insured.

Part of the HOME program's goals is to increase the tax base for communities by providing new homes in place of houses deemed as unsightly, poorly constructed, unsafe to live in, etc.

Veronica and her children, Luis (6), Kilin (10) and Azeliza enjoy "movie time" once a week. And, she said she monitors what her children watch on TV. She has an adult daughter, Alejandra Hernandez, who lives in Dimmitt and is employed at Dimmitt Pharmacy. Also, her 14-year old son, Lito Hernandez, lives with this father in Dimmitt.

The children are looking forward to having another Christmas in their new home.

Tom McLain, retiring Precinct 1 Castro County Commissioner, said that he and the men who work(ed) for the County under his direction, are proud of the work they do in maintaining one of the seven dams on the Runningwater Draw. This dam is located southwest of Hart on land currently owned by Laurens Schilderink.

Chad Warminski, conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service Center in Dimmitt, said that this earthen dam was built in 1980 by the agency for flood control. He works with the County Commissioners and the Runningwater Soil and Water Conservation District inspect this dam. He adds that the County and the Conservation District have access to the dam

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