

## HOMEOWNERSHIP

# *opens doors*

FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

**H**omeownership can change lives. We see it every day at PHFA.

At the start of 2011, single mom Linda VanVliet was living in a second-floor apartment with her 13-year-old son, Devan, and 11-year-old daughter, Shelby. Life in Hellertown had its pluses. The school was supportive of her children's needs. It was close to DeSales University, where Linda is working on her nursing degree. But their apartment had its shortcomings.

Linda's daughter Shelby has muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair for mobility. Their second-floor apartment made life complicated. Her wheelchair was always kept at the ground level, so her independence was extremely limited.

Linda had been looking for a home for at least a year when, with the caring help of realtor Don Longacre, she found a place she thought could work. It was just down the street from her apartment, so her children could stay in the same school. The home also had a bedroom and bathroom on the first floor, which would be perfect for Shelby.

As a leading provider of affordable mortgages in the state, PHFA issued 7,483 home-purchase loans with a value of \$815 million during this fiscal year, one of its busiest ever. Additionally, 4,119 closing-cost and down-payment assistance loans, with a value of \$4.5 million, helped homebuyers who had demonstrated they were ready for the responsibilities of homeownership. Linda VanVliet is one of the new homeowners we are proud to have helped in 2011.

Fortunately, Brian Stine at American Bank was helping Linda with her mortgage, and Brian appreciated her determination to make a better life for her kids and herself. Where others saw challenges, Brian saw potential. As Linda says, "Brian and Don both went above and beyond."

As a PHFA-participating lender, Brian helped Linda obtain a 30-year, fixed-rate PHFA Keystone Home Loan at a below-market interest rate. Linda also took advantage of another PHFA program designed just for families like hers — the Access Modification Program. That program provided a no-interest subordinate loan to pay for \$10,000 in modifications to make their new home more accessible for Shelby. Doorways were made wider so Shelby's wheelchair could easily pass through, and a ramp on the ground level gave her independence she'd never experience before.

After they closed on the house in April, Linda wrote Brian, Don and PHFA a heartfelt e-mail that read: "Thank you, again, for all your help with making this dream possible. I smile every minute when my daughter says, 'Mom, I'm going for a walk,' and just goes without any help."

Now, Linda has taken in her elderly parents, too. It's another advantage that homeownership has made possible. "To be able to take care of my parents is great," Linda says. "Words can't describe it."

