

## **Habitat Newark Dedicates House #72 Supported by Women Build**

*By Carol Manning and Marty Steinberg*

On Saturday, March 30, 2011, Habitat for Humanity Newark dedicated its 72<sup>nd</sup> home, the third one sponsored and built by Habitat Newark's Women Build III organization. The house is now the home of Sylvia Loperena, a mother of three who, with her two daughters, put in more than 400 hours of "sweat equity" to qualify as a Habitat for Humanity partner family. The dedication followed three years of fundraising by the women of Women Build III before they could begin building.



*Sylvia Lopereno and two of her three children join Dave Zurheide, Executive Director, to dedicate house #72*

Newark Councilman Carlos Gonzales and a group of more than thirty-five Habitat Newark supporters attended the ceremony. "You're doing a great job in providing affordable housing for people in the City of Newark," Councilman Gonzalez said. "It's great that the homeowners contribute their own sweat so they feel a pride of ownership."

Loperena, a postal worker, pounded nails, hung siding and worked on the roof of the home next to numerous Women Build and other Habitat Newark volunteers. "I'm very excited because I finally got to see our work finished," said Loperena. "I love it. I learned how to build a house."

Over the past eight years Habitat Newark's Women Build group raised over \$300,000 to sponsor three homes for three working women and their families. Seventy percent of Habitat Newark families consist of single women and their children. In addition to raising money, more than 300 women volunteers have helped in the construction of these homes, many working on all three buildings. Women Build, a program of Habitat for Humanity International, promotes the involvement of women in the funding and construction of Habitat homes, providing an opportunity for them to learn construction in a supportive environment and empowering women as they address the issue of substandard housing.

"The Loperena Family has been a joy to work with," said David R. Zurheide, Executive Director of Habitat Newark. "I also want to thank the Women Build Co-chairs Lynne Blaesser and Carol Paster whose tireless efforts have made today possible."

The Women Build III house is the 72nd home built by Habitat Newark, founded in 1986. The organization is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and plans to build at least eleven homes during 2011.