



FAMILY STORY

For Esad and Mihrija (Mika) Kraina, partnering with Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity is the “greatest chance to owning a home.”

“No one else can offer a home like Habitat can,” said Esad. (You don’t have to pay interest. It’s unbelievable.”

In 1999, Esad met with the US Embassy and moved to the United States to seek peace. He was just one of the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing as a result of the Kosovo War and looked to America for a fresh new start.

Two years later, Esad met Mika while back in Serbia visiting family. After knowing each other for a mere three days, the couple married. They carried on their long-distance relationship, seeing each other every couple of months and talking on the phone each day. During

this time, their son Alen was born, but Esad waited to move them to the United States until he was a citizen

Just five years after first moving to America, Esad became a citizen of the United States and moved his wife and two-year-old son to Iowa. “She came home,” Esad said smiling.

And just five years ago, Esad learned about the chance of homeownership through Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity while working at McComas-Lacina. At the time, the company was doing construction on a Habitat home, and Esad inquired about building a home of his own. He stopped into the office and was told to apply in 5 years due to a long queue of partner families. Five years later, he did just that.

Esad, now a delivery driver for Pizza Hut, and Mika, a housekeeper at the Sheraton Iowa City Hotel, live in Coralville. The parents of two-year-old Alen and seven-year-old Denis said they want to do everything in their power to give their children the best lives possible.

“I have to invest all that I have for them to go to college,” Esad explained. “I have to push my kids to finish school. I want to support hem along the way. However much I’m able, that’s my obligation and dream – for them to have the best.”

Esad said he wants more than anything for his children to have a better life than he had, and a new home with Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity is the perfect place to start. The family is looking forward to living in a quiet, safe neighborhood, and they’re looking forward to spending their lives in Iowa City, a place with a good school for their kids and one with more opportunities for them to go to college.

The Kraina family is partnering with Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity and The University of Iowa Tippie College of Business to build a home of their own. Learn more at www.iowavalleyhabitat.org or call the IVHFH office at 319-337-8949.