

# Duxbury Neighbors

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COMING TOGETHER

Home  
for the  
Holidays

a Joyous New Beginning  
for Larisa and Maeve Hart



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Cover photo by Vanessa Lara, Sunflower Portraits

AN EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE JOYFULLY SERVING THE RESIDENTS OF DUXBURY



# Home for the Holidays

A Joyous New Beginning  
for Larisa and Maeve Hart

By Tamara Cioeci



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There was a time when Larisa Hart would drive along Temple Street with her daughter Maeve, thinking quietly to herself, how much she loved the scenic drive winding through cranberry bogs, wooded paths and historic farms. Until last June, Larisa had spent the last six years sleeping on a sofa in a one-bedroom apartment with her daughter now 16 years old and a student at Duxbury High School. The graphic designer and single mom had been hoofing it since Maeve was six months old and the two had developed some memorable strategies for managing tight living quarters since their arrival in Duxbury, living in one bedroom apartments for the last fourteen years while working as a graphic designer. There was a job at The Duxbury Clipper for four years where Larisa did graphic art while baby Maeve played next to her desk and another job at Griffin Publishing and extra freelancing work when she could. When the job opportunity to work full time teaching graphic design for Falmouth High School came along, Larisa jumped at the chance, knowing that it would provide an exciting change and new career path. The extra income would prove to be an integral part of the wonderful changes that came next.

For a long while, Larisa had followed the Habitat for Humanity projects in Duxbury and had driven by the Temple Street development watching the progress always dreaming of a chance to live in one of the six newly built condominiums. She never ventured farther than wishing she could live in one until at the suggestion of a family member, she inquire about the application process. At the time, she was told they weren't accepting new applications but to keep checking the website.

"I had been keeping my ear out because I love Duxbury, but it's been a struggle finding affordable housing," explains Larisa. "I would drive by the site and I just had a feeling, 'That's my house.'"

That was last March and after a few moves from different small apartments, Larisa and Maeve had managed well but the daily logistics of simple things like cooking and laundry,

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were to say the least, a challenge.

"It's hard for people to understand that I had to work really hard at keeping myself positive and because we have really good friends, we'd housesit for them on the weekends in the winter so we could have more space," Larisa says.

She was determined to try and get selected for the purchase of one of the new units. While Maeve was away with a high school trip to Chicago with the music department, Larisa filled out her application and waited. Over the course of two weeks, she prepared herself for disappointment.

"I'm a single parent without expendable income. I've had to pinch pennies and have grown used to being told "no" whether it be rentals or other things," Larisa explains. "I gave myself a pep talk"

When she finally received the call, she automatically assumed that she would not be chosen to purchase one of the homes. She rationalized that she and her daughter had been able to manage thus far in small living spaces and they'd be ok. They were good at managing and they would get by. She thought if she wasn't selected, she and Maeve would volunteer with Habitat for Humanity anyway as it was a worthy cause. She did not even process the words when first told she would be moving into her new home in June, but when the shock wore off, Larisa and Maeve cried tears of joy, both knowing that in that pivotal moment, her life as well as Maeve's changed instantly.

"I was driving back from Falmouth and was so excited, I almost drove off the road!" Larisa laughs.

They had little time to prepare as their small family would need to put in 250 hours of sweat equity as they helped build their future home. After the dedication ceremony last June, Larisa and Maeve remember the excitement of their first night in their new home. With a spacious two-bedroom condo graced with lots of light, the two were unable to sleep and were overwhelmed with this new beginning.

"The nice thing about this is that it is affordable for us," shares Larisa. "The amount of light that shines in the windows is amazing and it's really spacious. Those are the two things I like the most."

Each Habitat family puts in a specific number of hours of sweat equity and Larisa and Maeve recall enjoying the work and all of the

skills they learned such as hanging drywall and for Maeve, the two joke, driving the bobcat.

As Duxbury Neighbors has reported, South Shore Habitat for Humanity is an empowerment program and not a hand-out program. It is their mission to build strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter, but partnering with families in need of affordable housing. In partnership with the Town of Duxbury's Affordable Housing Trust (DAHT), they will soon complete the six-unit Feinberg Bog Condominium Project located just off of Temple Street. The townhouse style condos, have two-bedrooms and 1 1/2 baths and are approximately 1,200 square feet. Three of the townhomes are now occupied by three new Habitat Family Partners with incomes of 60% of the Area Median Income. The remaining three units are for sale now and for individuals interested with 100% of the area median income, can contact South Shore Habitat for Humanity for more information.

"This is a great partnership between our nonprofit and the Town of Duxbury and the town's Affordable Housing Trust," said Martine Taylor, Executive Director of South Shore Habitat for Humanity. "The project design makes a smart use of the land so that we are able to provide housing for six families representing two different economic sectors who otherwise would not be able to afford to live in Duxbury." This project will bring the number of affordable homes built by South Shore Habitat for Humanity to ten, and a total of sixty-one throughout our service area.

Larisa and Maeve remember that first night in their new home on June 24th quite well. They couldn't wait to leave the one-bedroom apartment they had spent the last six years and begin their new life. "It felt like it wasn't real" remembers Larisa. "It was so upbeat"

A couple of days later, with the furniture set up, Larisa's mom came to visit and they made their first dinner in the new kitchen when the reality set in.







PHOTO CREDIT: Vanessa Lars, Sunflower Petraits

"My mother and I were very weepy and it was all such a huge blessing," shares Larisa. "I can't even say how much it changed our lives."

Mother and daughter have settled in nicely and are looking forward to spending their first holiday in their new home with their two guinea pigs and new dog Tess, a Spinone Italiano. Maeve, now a junior at the high school, is thinking of college and keeps up with her school work and her commitment to first chair oboe with the wind ensemble in the music department. The two are very happy to be in their very own home for the holidays.

When asked about what they love most about Duxbury, they reply "You know you're in Duxbury when a summer stay-cation is more inviting than going to the cape."

To learn more about SSHH and to inquire about the Temple Street project, go to [www.sshabitat.org](http://www.sshabitat.org). To inquire about the remaining units, contact [nbrown@sshabitat.org](mailto:nbrown@sshabitat.org)

Do you have a story to share? Email Duxbury Neighbors at [tciocci@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:tciocci@bestversionmedia.com)



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