

Lakelli

217 Perry Street

This family is sponsored by the Methodist Churches of Lexington

Lakelli's journey to stability is the kind of comeback story they make movies about. "Have you ever seen a movie where somebody was staying on the street and they're dirty – then by the end they are all lit up, have a job, clean clothes, all that? That's how I feel. That's me." She is very open about the obstacles she's faced throughout her life. "I can't tell my story, my truth, without telling the whole truth. Maybe it will show others they can overcome their demons too."

Until three years ago, Lakelli was homeless. After losing custody of her sons in 2012, her life unraveled. She calls it her breaking point. "I gave up on living. I turned to drugs to escape reality, but reality catches up with you fast. All of a sudden, the lights are shut off. The water is shut off. You lose your house and have to stay with people." She says she didn't have any drive after losing her kids, "I didn't care what happened to me, so eventually, others stopped caring too. Before I knew it, I was on my own and sleeping on the streets. It was easy to find myself in that place. The hard part was getting back on track."



Ready to make a change, Lakelli accomplished the seemingly impossible. She beat addiction and took on three jobs all while working hard to comply with strict CPS assignments. She says, "It took a lot of faith, prayers and support." Today, Lakelli has custody of her children and a bright outlook on her future. "I know you're not supposed to say you're proud of yourself – but I am. I have a clear mind, a clear heart – and we're free. **My goal was to just get back everything I lost. I've done that, and with this program, I'm gaining more.**"

While this family has come a long way, they are still in need of a safe, stable forever home. "Where we live now is literally falling apart. There's no privacy, the pipes leak and the baby has had RSV twice due to the mold." This family is more than ready for a quality, affordable place of their own and the stability that homeownership provides. "I want the people who help build our house to know they are helping a family have a forever home, to never to be homeless again. Giving my children a home of our own is my biggest goal. You could look 1,000 years and you wouldn't find a more grateful family."

Lakelli will share her Lexington Habitat home with her two youngest kids, Jleigh (2) and Davion (16). She also has an adult son, Leslee (22). In addition to being a mom, Lakelli works in custodial services at the University of Kentucky. When she isn't working, she enjoys attending church at Works in Progress Ministries and trying out new recipes. She says homeownership will make it possible for her to work on her next goals. She hopes to one day return to college to pursue culinary training, "I love seeing people enjoy my food, and making them feel good." In addition to attending school, Lakelli plans to use her strong credit and financial security to buy a reliable car for the first time. Their current car is 24 years old with its fair share of problems, like no AC. Lastly, Lakelli dreams of visiting Maine one day. "Seeing the lighthouses is on my bucket list. That's how I'm going to decorate my new house."

When she got the call that she was accepted into the homeownership program, Lakelli said she cried and cried, "My kid asked me 'Are you alright?' and I told him **We're going to be just fine.**"