

Wyoming Family Home Ownership Program

United Way
of Laramie County



By: Gina Salazar

The Wyoming Family Homeownership Program (WYFHOP) is a non-profit organization designed to provide a “hand-up” to lower income working families with children to successfully prepare families for first time Homeownership in Laramie County .The program begins with a 12 week Financial Education course whose focus is teaching families the importance of living on a budget, income to debt ratios and credit and its impact when purchasing a home. Upon completion from the course, families are encouraged to meet with a credit counselor and save a minimum of \$100-\$150 each month for the next 24 months. Families also learn how to connect to the community with the help of role model mentors and allies. At the end of the 24 month period, thanks to WYFHOP Faith Communities practicing social justice, Business Partners who have a more committed workforce and United Way supporting the building of stronger families, WYFHOP families are able to exhibit a substantial amount of money for the down payment of a “right sized” home. To date, WYFHOP has 13 homeowner families including 37 children and another 17 families together with 42 children preparing for home ownership.

I have been fortunate enough to benefit from this program tremendously. I was a member of the first WYFHOP class in 2007. With the help of the Laramie County Community and the Wyoming Family Homeownership Program, I was able to purchase a home for my family in September of 2010. I feel it is important to give back to this wonderful program and to help others. I am now on the Board of Directors and serve as the Family Mentor for the Financial Preparedness classes.

To qualify for the program you must be a working family with children and be working towards an income of 50 to 80% of the Laramie County Area median Income. For a family of four as an example, this would be a combined income of \$35,000 to \$45,000. WYFHOP will be offering its 2013 Financial Preparedness Classes beginning April 23, 2013. Each Tuesday evening families come together for a light meal with child care being provided by volunteer youth while mom and dad attend class. If you know of a family that would like to trade their monthly rent into a mortgage, encourage them to download an application from www.wyfhop.org or call 307-514-5831 for more information.

The program is also in the process of looking for Mentor Families to support current families going through the program. Those interested can download an application from the website or contact Wyoming Family Home Ownership.