



Perla Saucedo, 39, Donna (housing)

I saw a flyer and it was called "youth build." It was a program that was for youth from 16 to 24 years that would help you get your GED. I was 24 at that time when I saw that paper and it was just up to 24. It was the best decision I ever made, and Proyecto Azteca gave me that opportunity to get my GED and then hire me and to be here where I am.

We needed to be in class, and we needed to be in the construction. And they [taught] us everything. I know how to put like do the basic construction from the bottom. Since we build wood-frame homes, I was involved in every step of the house from the bottom, installing fence, tape and float, painting, tile.

What motivates me most is just seeing the process as when the family comes they get qualified, just them getting the news that they got qualified for a home, [and] that they're going to have a first-time home for their families. I go outside with them and see the process like "Okay this is Phase 1, Phase 2" and finally when they get the keys for the home just by looking, that's the best feeling ever — to see the process of the construction from Day 1 to the end.

When me and my husband decided to build our home, it was back in 2007. We did it in stages, and it took us like four years to build our home but we're debt-free. We constructed the house.

It was very rewarding. It was like a dream-come-true, for me especially because as I was growing up, we used to rent. We used to live in Section 8 and we would constantly be moving from house to house, so when I was young I would say, "When I'm older I don't want this for my kids. Someday I would like to have my house and have a stable place to say 'I've been living here for so many years and not moving like each year.'"

So it was really rewarding for us to be able to make that dream come true and build our own home and have a stable place for our children.