

PROFILES OF HOPE: Meet the Parker Family, the newest IOH residents:

We were invited to attend Life Skills tonight and to pick up the keys to our new apartment at IOH. We move in on Saturday and are so excited! I've been driving Ms. Deborah crazy with texts because we were so afraid something was going to go wrong. This is our chance, and we will not let anything get in the way.

We have two sons, ages 9 and 4. We had been living in an apartment in Duluth and were struggling, barely making it, but getting by. Then a group of teens thought it would be funny to pour sugar into the gas tanks of cars in the parking lot. The next morning, as I drove my husband to MARTA so he could get to work, our engine completely shut down. The cost for repair was \$1000. It has been a spiral downward from there. Once we paid to repair the car, we had trouble making rent. We tried to work with the apartment complex, but late fees added up until we owed \$3000. It might as well have been \$300,000. We were evicted and have been in an extended stay motel since July. It's expensive and not where we want the boys to be. We can't save, can't move forward, can't make any progress. We've been trapped. A prank is all it took to push us over the edge into disaster.

This opportunity at IOH is such a huge break for our family. We are starting over, and have a chance to get things on track. We will do this for our kids. It's so important to show the boys the right way to do things. We don't want them to go through life the way we have – without stability, and without the tools to do things right. We don't want their lives to be a constant struggle, with the least little thing resulting in total disaster. We want them to be confident, secure and prepared for whatever life throws their way.

We believe that everything happens for a reason, and that in life we have choices. We choose to walk in faith, to have hope, and to not allow the past to dictate our future, or our boys' futures. We believe that even the bad can be used for good. It is time for a change and it begins now.

**Names of residents may be changed to maintain privacy.*