

\$120,000 Raised for Family Caring for Child with Special Needs



Men with big hearts: (left to right): Allen Alves, Victor Fernandes, Nelson Cardoso.

The Team Noah Foundation is joined by Cameron's Kids, and the Traver / Jordan Alves Foundation (TJA), to build a home addition for 62-year-old grandmother caring for her grandchild with special needs and his sibling. The 20 by 30 foot addition will include a basement for storage, a handicap accessible bathroom, kitchen and a bedroom for the 12-year-old boy who is wheelchair bound. The build is planned to begin and end in a record 7-day span with the help of volunteers.

Currently, the family's home in Wareham is very small. The grandmother, who has health challenges of her own, is the primary caretaker of her two grandchildren. Her special needs grandchild weighs close to 100 pounds and she finds it

exceedingly difficult to manage his care in the current environment, which is not handicap accessible and requires her to pick him up several times per day.

The plight of this family was brought to the attention of Victor Fernandes through a connection with the Schwartz Center for Children, where the child receives services. Victor is a new member of the Schwartz Center's Board of Directors. His own child Noah attended school at the Center for several years, until his condition progressed to the point where home-care was necessary. Recently Victor and his wife Christine established the Team Noah Foundation in honor of Noah to help families with children impacted by medical and developmental disabilities.

Fernandes is also the co-proprietor of Fernandes Masonry, Inc. of New Bedford that participated in the American reality TV series Extreme Makeover: Home Edition a few years ago. Fernandes wanted to do something similar for this family.

Fernandes reached out to two local businessmen who have also contributed to numerous noble causes related to youth or disabilities. Nelson Cardoso, the proprietor of Cardoso Construction and Cardoso Concrete of Acushnet and Allen Alves, the co-proprietor of Lighthouse Masonry Inc. of New Bedford. Both men found it to be such a compelling story that they decided to get on board and contribute with their company's construction skills and labor.

Although the project is still in its initial stage, various volunteers have already stepped up to offer help, according to Fernandes. But much more is needed. "We still need some labor and materials, such as floor and roof trusses, shingles, granite, and kitchen equipment. Furniture any other donations will be much appreciated," Fernandes said. "It would also be nice if someone could donate a vacation so that we could send the family away for one week and get all the work done during that period."

Anyone interested in donating labor or materials, please contact Victor Fernandes at 774- 473- 9776.