

## After tragedy, veterans' family receives home in Sound Beach

Community Village Beacon Record

by Desirée Keegan - March 24, 2016



*Deborah Bonacasa signs the deed for her new home in Sound Beach. Photo by Ron Pacchiana/JPA STUDIO*

When Louis Bonacasa was to return home from his fourth deployment to Afghanistan, he told his wife he'd make it his last. He wanted to settle down, buy a home, become a dietician technician, open a business, give his 5-year-old daughter Lilianna a sibling and finally begin his life.

But Bonacasa didn't return home.

To honor him and his wife Deborah, also a veteran, the Rocky Point VFW Post 6249 chose the Bonacasa family to receive one of two homes being built on Tyler Avenue in Sound Beach.

"I don't have the words," said Deborah Bonacasa, whose husband was one of six killed in a suicide bomb attack on Dec. 21. "It's an honor and I'm just very happy and overwhelmed with joy for their support in fulfilling this dream, because it's something that my husband always wanted to do for the family – to provide the home for us. So it's quite an honor."

VFW Post Commander Joe Cognitore held the contract signing at the Fischer/Hewins post last Wednesday, and said it was a moving moment to be a part of.



“It was one of the best days I’ve had in all my time here at the VFW,” he said. “It was very cathartic. To know that we’ve helped Deborah out, and not only was her husband a veteran but she is too, it’s that much more gratifying to be able to honor both for their service.”

*Councilwoman Jane Bonner presents Deborah Bonacasa, who is fighting back tears, with a certificate of congratulations. Photo by Ron Pacchiana/JPA STUDIO*

This is the ninth home that Cognitore and the VFW have partnered with Mark Baisch on, of Landmark Properties in Rocky Point.

“It’s my way of giving back,” Baisch said. “The Bonacasas are fantastic. It couldn’t be a better selection.”

Landmark Properties builds the houses from the ground up, and Bonacasa was able to pick out some of the finishing touches to make the house special to her.



*Lilianna Bonacasa, 5, holds up a photo of her family's new home given to them by the Rocky Point VFW Post 6249. Photo by Ron Pacchiana/JPA STUDIO*

“I was able to pick out cabinets, flooring, what type of granite I wanted,” she said. “I was able to personalize it and able to pick certain colors that my husband would have liked to have in the kitchen and bathroom, so that was a special time.”

Bonacasa currently lives in California and lived with her husband in Coram for nine years after leaving the U.S. Air Force in 2006, and said that being able to move into the new home in two-and-a-half months is even more special because she’ll be able to be closer to him.

“We’ll be 20 minutes away from Calverton, so we’ll be on the Island with my husband,” she said, fighting back tears. “It’s bittersweet. I wish he were here to see and experience all of these wonderful things. It’s a beautiful home.”

Through tragedy, Bonacasa has been brought closer to her husband and to the new community she will be a part of. A home next door to hers will also house a veteran family. It has not yet been determined who will receive that home.

“I just want to thank everyone involved for all the love and support that they’ve shown our family,” Bonacasa said, sobbing. “I’ll never forget my husband and the sacrifices that he made. Not only did we lose a hero, but a wonderful man.”