



COURTESY PHOTO

Serena and Ralston Hughes and their newest family member outside the house at 803 Combel St. in Waveland, Miss., that they will move into this week. They are the last of the eight families selected for the houses built by Wayland to Waveland's Mission to Mississippi.

MISSION: NOT IMPOSSIBLE

SPECIAL TO THE TOWN CRIER

Several fundraising efforts since mid-January helped push the "Mission to Mississippi" over the \$1.6 million goal. More than \$260,000 was raised through private donations and events to help the Wayland to Waveland Hurricane Katrina Relief Steering Committee and the eight builders leading Mission to Mississippi pay for the project that yielded more than 10,000 square feet of living space for eight families in Waveland, Miss.

In addition, the Wayland to Waveland Steering Committee selected the eighth family for the last house in the project. It turns out to be one of the first families considered for one of the homes, Serena and Ralston Hughes and

their three children. It was from in front of Serena's mother's house in Waveland that Anderson Cooper broadcast an emotional story about deaths from the storm, and how Serena came to learn of her mother's passing. It is also how Wayland became attracted to Waveland, ultimately forming the committee that built a memorial garden in Waveland at the city ball field.

For nearly two years, Serena had hoped to rebuild her mother's home and move in there. She, her husband and her children have been living with other relatives (a total of 11 people) in a three-bedroom apartment. She had been unwavering in her determination to rebuild. But re-

WAVELAND, page 12

Mission accomplished

WAVELAND, from page 1

cently, still fighting Mississippi probate issues and emotional issues, she reapplied for the Mission to Mississippi house and was one of several candidates. The steering committee was unanimous in awarding this house to the Hughes family.

Fundraising coordinator Pam Lesser enthusiastically thanked a wide range of people and communities.

"Thanks to everyone for an incredibly successful month of fundraising. We did it! It started small but powerful, with a coin drive in Wayland that yielded \$3,500. It then grew from there," she reported.

The builders, led by Ken Vona of Kenneth C. Vona Construction of Waltham, raised the bulk of the funds with major donations from subcontractors, suppliers, customers, friends and contacts.

At two invitational events in Sudbury and Framingham, people bought shingles for two custom-made doghouses that raised more than \$20,000.

"They were both beautiful and impressive, and definitely succeeded in generating conversation and donations," Lesser said.

The Wayland to Waveland Steering Committee and the Mission to Mississippi builders thanked the many hundreds of workers, volunteers and donors in a "Mission Accomplished" celebration over the weekend. Lead builder Ken Vona presented plaques to nearly two dozen organizers, builders and special contributors.

He also presented a huge banner listing all the companies, workers and volunteers to Selectman Michael Tichnor who represented the town in organizing and supporting the outreach from Wayland to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The eight builders participating in the project are the Kenneth Vona Construction of Waltham, Mitchell Construction Group of Medfield, Twin Peaks Construction LLC of Norwood, Thoughtforms Corporation Builders of West Acton, Gallagher Home Builders Inc. of Maynard, Whitla Brothers Builders of Medfield, CMG Builders of Rowley, Custom Designs Inc. of Wayland, and architect Michael Collins.

To learn more visit "www.waylandtowaveland.org"