

New Home

For much of the week of 14 to 19 June 2026 a team of about 29, mostly from Peace Lutheran Church in Arvada, Colorado, or joining us from elsewhere, built a small home in three days for a homeless family in northern Dominican Republic near Santiago. The guiding organization was Casas por Cristo which has been building such homes for decades in Mexico, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, and Honduras. [Casas por Cristo; PO Box 971070, El Paso, TX 79997; +1 (915) 778-0046; casasporcristo.org]

We were housed in a rented building of multiple levels. The kitchen and dining area were on the first floor, women on the second floor, men on the third floor, and a roof space covered with solar panels on top. Mattresses were on the floor or on bunk beds. Tap water was in the bathrooms but not for drinking. Purified water was available in large dispensers. Wifi let us communicate with others. So our conditions were quite functional and served our needs for this mission trip. The weather cooperated well with pleasant working temperatures and breezes and tolerable humidity and no rain.

The family we served was nominated by a local pastor, and they were often seen watching our work: (left to right) young son, divorced mother, two older daughters.



The home site in this aerial image is the uncleared lot to the left of the yellow pin at the start of the latitude/longitude values. The white roof at the top of the view is a previous Casas-built home (shown later). Piles of sand, rock, and bagged cement were nearby ready for mixing. Large barrels of water were already loaded.



View south: sand, gravel, rebar



View west: leveled home site



View north northwest: vacant slope

Monday: The site for the home was already dug out of the slope and was close to level.



We gathered for prayer and instructions Family watching beside water barrels

Placing 2x4 forms at floor edges



Stacks of cement bags

Floor outline is in place, to be leveled

Leveling the wooden frame for the floor



Determining the level of the clay floor



Inserting edge rebar



Tying edge rebar

We placed a wooden form to confine the concrete floor and finished the leveling of the hard clay dirt by pushing a beam and removing excessive dirt. A trench was also dug on the inside of the wooden frame to get ready for special rebar. Mesh rebar was rolled flat across the floor area and overlaps were tied together.



The corner post holds up the patio roof



The family delivering lunch materials



Church members prepared lunch daily

Our teams shoveled the solid materials into buckets (not full, to keep the weight manageable) and carried them up the slope to the mixers. Similar buckets were dipped into the water tanks.



Loading buckets with sand



Loading buckets with gravel



Loading buckets with cement



Loading mixers



Initial concrete dump raked to edges



Ready for mixer reload

Initially we had two mixers, but the motor of one later stopped working.



The leveling board is sawed back, forth



Our Casas leader stands, guides effort



Concrete floor smoothing progress



Moving a water bucket



Leveling and smoothing the concrete



Almost done pouring concrete

The wet concrete mix was leveled as we worked, all the way to a final corner. Two local men did the final finishing of the concrete surface which hardened overnight. During the night a local dog made some marks in the floor surface while it was still soft.



The concrete finishers add yellow dye



Watching her new home being built



Watching her new home being built



Saw for cutting lumber



Building the walls



Stacking the walls

During the afternoon many of the wall frames of the home were built nearby. Every wall was different depending on door and window placement and needed lengths.



Nearby older Casas home



Late afternoon - our tired children (left)



Fixing a local toe



Family at day's end prayer



Our leader, and neighbors watching



Our excellent weather

(Assembled by Dr. Ed Holroyd, 22 June 2026)