

Dreams do come true, member has new home

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Earlier in 2010, the Sault Tribe Housing Authority became responsible for the oversight of the tribe's Bureau of Indian Affairs Home Improvement Program (HIP) formerly overseen by ACFS. The HIP program provides funds for home renovations or, in some cases when needed renovations are too costly, a new home may be purchased. Six families are being served this year — four homes are being renovated and two families are receiving a new home. This story is about one of those families.

Connie Paquin, of Naubinway, was notified that she would be getting a new home in August 2010. She could not believe her good fortune, when told she jumped for joy repeating "Hot diggity dog, hot diggity dog."

Connie is a real inspiration to everyone who she comes in contact with. Even with her many disabilities and limitations she always has a smile on her face, and words of encouragement for others. This summer her home became invaded with bees. Her answer was to use duct tape (it is the fix-all) to patch every little hole that

they were entering through.

Then, when bats thought it would be a nice place to live, once again she found a way to keep them out. This time her answer was to stuff plastic groceries bags in all the places that may be allowing them to enter. While on a home visit she instructed the inspector, "Don't push on the ceiling in the bathroom, the squirrels have been getting in and storing pine cones and other items and that is why the ceiling in bowing. I am afraid it will cave in if you push on it."

On Dec. 8, 2010, I had the privilege of being at her property when L&M Homes set her new house. The smiles, the tears, and total disbelief that a dream was becoming a reality were all present on that day.

When the first half of the home was being prepared for the setting she made her way outside. She walked over and embraced the corner of the home, looking over at me exclaimed, "It is really mine, I can't believe it." As she walked around the corner and got to look at the inside of her new home she became overwhelmed with emotion as she gazed at the kitchen. Earlier in the day she told about how the cardinal was her mother's



Photos by Joanne Umbrasas

Connie Paquin and her new home. The structure replaces her former dwelling which required extensive repairs.

favorite bird and she had not seen one this year, until earlier this morning and at that moment she knew her mother was present witnessing the Christmas miracle.

Connie is an avid hunter who uses the skills taught to her as child from her father. She is an excellent shot and has the mounted horns on the wall as proof. One could listen to her tell stories for hours about fishing with her mother, hunting with her father and all of her many fond childhood memories. She is a true survivor, she will and has done

what ever it takes to get by all the while with a smile. Most recently, while heading out to her favorite hunting spot she knocked the driver side mirror off. She thought about it and decided once again to use the tried and true duct tape to put it back on, and she did. Her ingenuity knows no boundaries.

Continue to follow the "Christmas miracle" in coming issues. Connie did make one request that I extend a heartfelt thank you and merry Christmas to everyone who helped make her dream come true.

