

There's no place like home....

A couple in Milwaukee asked an appraiser to look at a painting in their home. While there he saw another, which they thought to be a copy or reproduction of a work by Van Gogh. It turned out to be an original Van Gogh -- Still Life with Flowers painted in 1886! It later sold at auction for \$1,400,000.

What is there in your home that has greater value than you realize? Is it love, or trust or peace? Is it security or happiness? Many of us live with things of far greater value than a Van Gogh.

I was raised in St. Croix USVI in a house that was tiny by today's standards. It was made of cement blocks that was covered by plaster. The floor was terrazzo. The roof was plantation style wooden beams that were covered by galvanized tin. We had a front porch that was in the front and wrapped around ½ of the house. We also had an office in the front of it. There was no space for the washer- so that was in the garage. The dryer was on the back porch. That did not matter to me as a child or later as a teenager- it was more than just a house- it was my home.

Most of my greatest memories revolve around those tiny approx. 1200 square feet of cement. The love, the nurturing, the laughter, the fun, the feeling of family, the lessons that I learned, the character that was shown to me made it more than 1200 square feet – it was in fact my world!

We lost that home in Hurricane Hugo in September of 1989. Two hundred and ten mph winds tore at, and finally ripped the roof off the roof of the house. Most of our belongings were sucked out of our house and thrown into our yard and some items were lost forever. The windows were broken, there were cracks in the foundation, the roof was gone, and our furniture was gone or crushed.

My family and I were in our house when this happened. I remember the rain was so strong the walls were soaked and the water was coming in through the walls. I heard a snap, crackle, and pop and within seconds our roof was gone. We fled into the office- the one room in the house that had a cement roof. The pressure was so great we had to hold the key in the deadbolt to keep the door from opening. That night we cried, we prayed, we sang songs, we waited until dawn. During the night my Dad had a stress attack (we later found out he needed a pace maker) and he passed out during the night. I held the door for 5 hours straight as my Mother tended to my Father.

As we opened the door that morning the storm was gone. It was like opening up your door to a war-zone. Every blade of grass had turned brown from the salt water. The leaves were blown off of every tree. Branches had taken over our once spacious yard. Pieces of wooden beams from the roof, galvanized, and furniture filled our yard. That day we had lost our house- but we had not our home.

Homes are not made of wood, plaster or cement. Homes are made of families, memories, and are filled with love as they wrap themselves around our heart. The house we live in may not be worth a lot, but the home we have there may be worth more than anyone can even count.

Isaiah 32:17-18 ...And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places...