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By [Robert Burns](#)

EDGEWATER — A woman we'll call Jay is settling into her new house in Florida Shores. Jay would prefer to protect her identity. She and her two daughters have just fled what she calls "a violent and drug plagued neighborhood" and have resettled in a quieter place.

Jay's plate is full. Both of her girls are in elementary school. Jay works full-time as a pharmacy tech. She was just certified in phlebotomy (drawing blood) by Daytona Beach College. Jay says her next move is to try to get hired by a local hospital and eventually become a nurse. That's her plan anyhow.

Because of that plan, Jay has drawn the attention of a relatively new, local not-for-profit agency. Its goal is to help people with a plan who need a little help. "Our Family is not a handout... it's a hand up," said Our Family president Regis Sloan. First outlined in 2005, Sloan said, by spring of 2006 the not-for-profit was helping Southeast Volusia's most worthy strugglers.

The charity targets needy families with at least one child under 18-years old, living at home. The family must live in New Smyrna Beach, Edgewater or Oak Hill. The parent/parents must be working and/or going to school. Sloan said perhaps most importantly, the family must have a working plan to escape poverty.

Sloan said "Our Family helps out with things like paying utilities, child care, some transportation needs and other expenses. Things which can derail someone struggling for a better existence." Nodding in agreement, Jay said she's been benefiting from "Our Family" for close to a year now. She said it's made a huge difference. "I couldn't have moved out of our last neighborhood, where my girls were in danger, if it hadn't been for Our Family." Jay said, that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Our Family helps its clients develop a plan with a flexible timeline, in order to succeed, Sloan said "We've worked in partnership with the Center for Business Development for the past year. We now hope to really impact the entire Southeast Volusia area," he said.

One mother who has recently moved out of harm's way... and onto a path, which could lead to a profitable career in medicine said, she's already feeling like a success story. Jay said since childhood she's dreamed of a career in nursing. "Jay is a success and with her plan she'll continue to be a success" said Sloan. "We're sponsoring 26 other families and we hope that'll grow. So far, three clients have graduated the LPN program at DBC. Two clients have received

their substitute teacher's certificate and are working. These are all success stories."

To find out more about Our Family, you can visit their web site at [www.ourfamilyflorida.com](http://www.ourfamilyflorida.com).