



Valley Voices: Michele DuVair, F3  
Sunday Crossword, F3  
Faces & Places, F4



PHOTOS BY PETER HOFFMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Rick Guzman (left) measures the height of Baby Rick on his third birthday, May 20, at the Guzman residence on Aurora's West Side. Baby Rick is part of a Somali Bantu family the Guzmans helped reunite and still keep in touch with. Baby Rick's sister, Dollar Musa, 6, right, and uncle, Yusuf, 14, (far left) were among with other family members in attendance.

*Brother of drowning victim hopes to help refugees transition into new world with...*

## A HOUSE IN BRYAN'S MEMORY

When Bryan Guzman drowned in Lake Michigan in a freak accident last December, his family wanted to create something positive from this tragedy as a way of remembering — and honoring — a special young man.

Bryan, 21 at the time of his death, had a knack for bringing people together, which was apparent at his wake in Naperville, where hundreds of mourners from all walks of life embraced and reminisced about his ability to bond with so many.

In that same spirit, Bryan's older brother Rick Guzman and his wife Desiree, both of Aurora, are spearheading an effort called "Bryan House" that will assist legal refugees in the Fox Valley as they strive to find a more rewarding and stable life here. The house will be a "living memorial," not symbolizing the loss of Bryan, but rather celebrating the potential his spirit has to bring new life and opportunity to others, said Rick Guzman.

He and his wife have wasted no time in working to make Bryan House a reality.

The Guzmans are talking to the city of Aurora about a suit-



Desiree Guzman and Amanda Garrido, along with Rick and Amanda's parents, walk back to the Guzman home after looking at a potential location for the Bryan House on Aurora's West Side.

### What you can do:

Members of the community can sign up to sponsor a day of rent for Bryan House. Visit [www.trafonline.com](http://www.trafonline.com) for more information.

able location on the West Side of town for the house that will be zoned for multiple families. Through fundraising efforts that have already totaled \$55,000, they hope to have the house established by the end of this year or early 2008.

### How it all began

Rick, a law student at Northern Illinois University, and Desiree, assistant director of ministry and services at North Central College, met seven years ago at a church study group. When Rick proposed to Desiree Tolbert, he also proposed the

❖ Turn to HOUSE, F5

### FROM THE STORYTELLER

I didn't know Bryan Guzman or any member of the Guzman family before I started working on this story, but I did go to the same high school as Bryan (Naperville North). And I remember people talking about how gifted he and his brother Dan were as musicians: I even saw the two perform a few years back.

I went to Bryan's wake in December after he drowned because I felt connected to Bryan through all of my friends that had known him. When I heard about the memorial in his name, it really struck me as something creative and positive coming out of such an unfortunate experience.

Bryan's girlfriend, Katie Hofmann, agreed to introduce me to the family; and subsequently Rick and Desiree agreed to let me follow them around from time to time. Rick and Desiree live a life to help others, in their professional work and outside of it. The idea behind the Bryan House is really just an extension of what they stand for as a couple — and it's not hard to see.

After getting to know them more — and through them, learning more about Bryan — a memorial this creative seems only fitting for this young man who lost his life way too soon.

— Peter Hoffman



Amanda Garrido plays with the blinds in a vacant house while her parents, along with Rick and Desiree Guzman, toured the building as a potential location for the Bryan House. "I don't like this house. It has too many kitchens," Amanda said. Amanda is the daughter of Rey Garrido and Yanary Labrador, who are Cuban refugees currently sharing living space with the Guzmans.

