

CULLINS FAMILY STORY



Photo by: Brittany Sloan

James and Jessica met at Burger King, where she worked. James said, “One of my best friends was the regional manager. I met Jessica, we went on our first date and the next day, I had to go meet her mom.” Jessica laughed and said, “It was just that I had to take my boys to my mom’s, and I said to him ‘guess what, you’re taking me.’”

The Cullins family has a very loving and strong bond. They have three sons, Jaheaven, Jahalen and Ju’sayaus and a daughter, Jaliyssa. They also have a son, Ryan, who lives on his own. Sadly, their

other son, Jaheim passed away November 2018 at the tender age of fifteen. They’ve been through tough times but have weathered each storm with courage and grace.

Church has been a big part of their lives and gives them faith to persevere. It’s an extension of family, which makes them feel loved. They have a purpose and enjoy giving their time to others.

They are currently renting a three-bedroom home, which is “kind of scrunched”, Jessica said. The boys share a room and Jaliyssa stays with us. James said, “It’s not the best of situations, but it’s not the worst.”

James and Jessica have relatives who lived in Habitat subdivisions in Cleveland. They applied for a home in 2019 and are grateful to be accepted. They have already completed their sweat equity hours in the ReStore. Although he’s in a busy season working at Tri-State Warehouse, he plans to continue volunteering and paying it forward by donating hours to other families.

Their future home is across the street from the elementary school where James grew up and where Jessica used to volunteer. She said, “I was in there every day. At the time we had one of our kids in pre-k and others in school, and I would volunteer for both sides.”

“The kids have a lot of hope and excitement about their new home,” said Jessica. James added, “I think once they get in their own home, it will make them feel better, too. With the loss of their brother, it will take some of the uncertainty out of it.”

James said, “We will not squander our gift of being a new homeowner. This is one chance in a million that you get this. It’s not only that we don’t just take the gift and put it to the side. What we’re gonna do is build on it.”