



LOAN TYPE	+/-	TODAY
30 yr fixed mtg	▼	5.31%
15 yr fixed mtg	▼	4.79%
7/1 ARM	▲	4.99%

LOAN TYPE	+/-	TODAY
\$30K home equity loan	▼	8.47%
\$30K HELOC		5.26%
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Life after foreclosure

After losing their homes, these 4 families thought they'd never recover. They've found it difficult to rent and their credit is wrecked, but life is looking up.

Stephanie Thomson

City: Chicago

Price paid: \$245,000

Current value: 175,000

Lesson: "My only regret is that ... we signed a contract and then we couldn't fulfill that contract."

Stephanie Thomson's troubles began when her husband Rich, a highly regarded hair designer, became disabled with neuropathy and could no longer work.

The income loss made it impossible for the couple to sustain the payments on their home in a Chicago suburb.

When they bought the house, they took out a hybrid ARM mortgage. The original bill was \$1,400 a month. But it went to \$1,900 after three years and more than \$2,000 after the second reset six months later.

"With my husband unable to work, we could have paid the mortgage without the ARM reset but nothing more," says Stephanie, who tried for months to get help from her lender.

"They told me they would pray for me. That's an exact quote," she says.

The Thomsons decided to stop paying their mortgage last July -- their first time missing a payment. They didn't pay for 10 months, during which time YouWalkAway.com helped guide them through the foreclosure process.

In April, having saved what they would have paid in mortgage, they relocated to Elyria, Ohio, where Stephanie has relatives. Unfortunately, their credit scores had dropped so low that it was difficult to rent -- much less buy -- a new place. So Stephanie's mom bought a house and rents it to them.

"It's less expensive here; we were able to get a larger house in a wonderful neighborhood," she says. "My only regret is that I'm a proud person. We signed a contract and then we couldn't fulfill that contract because of my husband's illness. It was very difficult."

By Les Christie, CNNMoney.com staff writer

NEXT: [Lori DiBacco](#)

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COURTESY: STEPHANIE THOMPSON
Stephanie and husband, Rich, with their eldest son, Mason, and the twins, Emily and Evan.

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