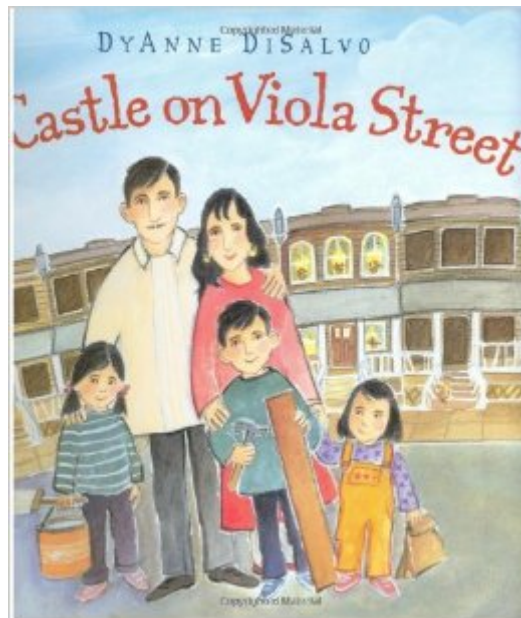


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# A Castle On Viola Street



## Synopsis

Andy is so used to his family's small, run-down apartment that he has never imagined living anywhere else--especially not in a new house with a garden and a porch. Such houses seem like castles to him. But when he hears about an organization that turns abandoned houses into homes, he discovers that his castle isn't in the clouds--it's on Viola Street. And with some hard work and community caring, it could be his very own. DyAnne DiSalvo combines new faces with familiar ones from earlier stories in this warm, vibrant tale about the good things that come when a whole family pitches in to make a better life for themselves.

## Book Information

Age Range: 5 and up

Library Binding: 32 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins (August 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0688176917

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Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.3 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #873,858 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #211 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty](#) #16149 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life](#)

## Customer Reviews

In a day and age where many people believed they are "owed" things in life without ever lifting a finger to help themselves this book is an EXCELLENT example for children to read of how a family, through working hard and helping others, finally obtain a dream of their own, a house. Not that we should just do things for others in order to get things back but we should help others in order to see their lives improved and their dreams fulfilled. Life was hard for this family but they worked hard to make ends meet. When the houses across from the Laundromat were going to be renovated Mom and Dad signed up and the entire family spent their Saturdays working / volunteering in the houses on the renovations. Later in the Fall, the family were notified that next spring they would be working on their own house. What an amazing work ethic / attitude to teach our kids. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

What a wonderful story about building a caring community! Andy and his family are able to find a house for their home when the volunteers start fixing up number 146 Viola Street. His dreams become a reality, bit by bit, thanks to a collective effort by this those who volunteer for this organization which "buys empty houses and fixes them up like new" and his family. Use this book to teach your children about the benefits of being a good citizen and seizing the myriad of volunteering opportunities out there! This is a book you won't want to miss.

I am working on a unit study about the ways that governments, organizations, and individuals help meet people's needs or solve various problems. One of the organizations we will study is Habitat for Humanity, so I was delighted to find this book about how Habitat for Humanity (or a similar group) might work in a neighborhood, and the impact it might have on the families that it helps. The plot is quite straightforward - a child, Andy, lives in a small rented apartment but dreams of owning a home with a garden and a porch. His family learns about an organization that is going to fix up some boarded buildings in the neighborhood, and they volunteer to help. After working on several homes for others, they receive the news that next spring they'll be working on their OWN home. I do wish this book had included a page or two about ways that young people can help Habitat for Humanity. For example, I belong to a homeschool group that is planning to bring lunch to Habitat for Humanity workers in two weeks. And last spring our family volunteered in a community-wide fundraiser for Habitat as well. In "Above All Be Kind" by Zoe Weil, Weil makes a very compelling point that "Without action, compassion can lead to despair and deep sorrow, but when we do act upon our empathy, not only do we and our children feel empowered and positive about ourselves, our collective acts become an extraordinary force for good." Intuitively this makes so much sense to me, and hopefully future editions of "A Castle on Viola Street" will include some service ideas.

There's no question about it. This book is yet another example of Diane Disalvo Ryan's great writing and wonderful illustrations, but there's a spirit missing. Sadly, that special something that inspired her to write books like Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen and City Green is gone. It is evident to this writer that her heart and soul just isn't in it anymore. I used to be a fan of this writer/illustrator but, I feel let down and very disappointed by her recent offerings. I won't be reading anymore of Mrs. Ryan's books. The thrill is gone.

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