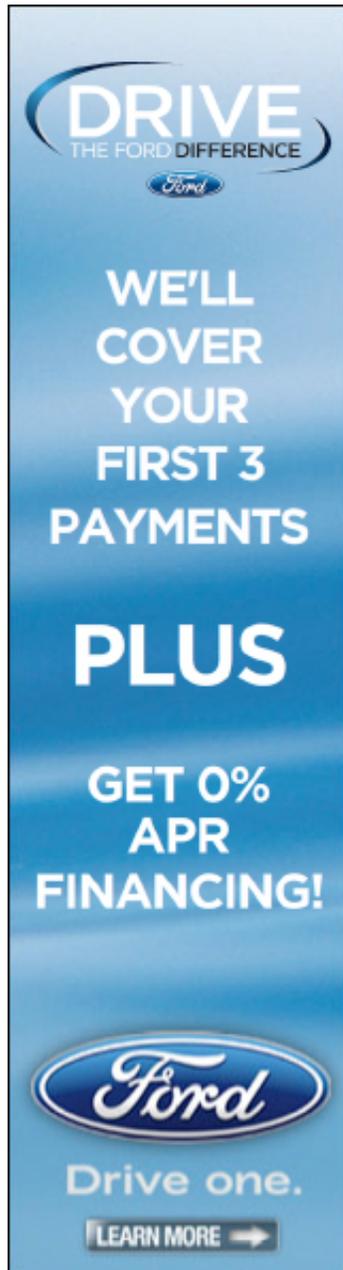


NEW YORK POST

'GOD'S GIFT' AFTER BLAZE

By JAMES FANELLI and LUKAS I. ALPERT



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March 7, 2008 -- It's been a year since a fire raced through Moussa Magassa's Bronx home, killing five of his children, but a good Samaritan who offered to rebuild the house is about to make good on his promise - a gift Magassa says is a blessing from God.

"When God wants to give to me, he gives to me," Magassa told The Post.

Since the blaze on March 7, 2007 - one year ago today - Magassa, 46, and his family of 12 have been staying in three different apartments around The Bronx, but the contractor who offered to help him rebuild says they will soon be able to return home.

"We have all the permits now and I'm ready to go. I want to get it done and get him and his family home," said Marc Marinoff, of M. Marin Restoration in Valley Stream, LI. "If everything runs smoothly, it should be substantially done in six to eight months."

Work is set to begin on the burned-out house at 1022 Woodycrest Ave. as early as next week, he said.

"Everybody is happy. God's the one who can give and take. I'm doing fine," Magassa said.

Marinoff is using Magassa's insurance money to finance the project but will cover any overage out of his own pocket.

Last year's horrific blaze killed five of Magassa's children and the four kids and wife of Mamadou Soumare, a fellow immigrant from Mali whose family shared the house.

Ten months after the fire, Magassa became the father of three new children - one son to his wife, Manthia, on Jan. 4, and twins the next day to his other, polygamous wife, Aisse. One of the newborn twins died.

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