

Habitat for Humanity International and the Home Depot Foundation announce national expansion of “Partners In Sustainable Building”

Program to Help More Than 5,000 Habitat Families Across the Country Build Green Homes

ATLANTA, Aug. 4, 2009 – Habitat for Humanity International and The Home Depot Foundation today announced the national expansion of Partners in Sustainable Building. The \$30 million green building program will provide funds and resources over a five-year period to help Habitat affiliates build 5,000 homes that meet Energy Star® guidelines or a nationally recognized green building standard. These features incorporate the use of energy-efficient equipment and water-conserving fixtures and help ensure good indoor air quality.

More than 120 Habitat affiliates across 45 states were selected to participate in the first year of the national rollout that begins at the end of August. These affiliates will be granted \$3,000 for each home built to Energy Star standards and up to \$5,000 for each home built to a higher green standard. Nearly 1,500 sustainable homes will be built in 2009 and 2010 alone. The grant process is annual, which gives other Habitat affiliates the opportunity to participate in the program as well.

Partners in Sustainable Building was established last year through a pilot program with 30 Habitat affiliates across a variety of climates in rural and urban areas throughout the United States. Habitat built more than 260 sustainable homes that met a green building standard during the pilot. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, benefits or features of homes built to this standard include:

Up to 50 percent less energy use than their conventional counterparts.

Reductions of up to a third in indoor water consumption as a result of high-efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances.

Incorporation of durable materials that lower maintenance costs over the life of the structure, making homes more affordable.

Approximately 11 tons less carbon and greenhouse gas emissions per household annually, or the equivalent of taking 250 cars off the road.

“From a new energy-efficient water heater and weather stripping to programmable thermostats and a low-flow toilet and bathroom fixtures, our family is already seeing savings in our monthly utility bills,” said Brian, a Habitat homeowner from the PSB pilot. “We’re so excited about our new home. To know it’s one that we can afford to maintain and live in for years to come means so much for our family.”

The pilot program demonstrated that the upfront costs of building green are modest and can be recouped through savings on utility and energy costs over the course of a home's mortgage. For instance, during the pilot phase of the program, an additional \$2,000 in energy-saving features was added to Habitat houses. Early results show energy savings between 15 and 30 percent. In fact, in some of the PSB homes already built to LEED Platinum standards, energy savings of almost 50 percent are being recorded.

"The Home Depot Foundation believes green building techniques are not a luxury—they aren't exotic or expensive," said Kelly Caffarelli, president of The Home Depot Foundation. "By embracing the practical principles of green building, our partnership with Habitat for Humanity International is demonstrating that these techniques can actually make homes more affordable to own, maintain and live in from day one and for the long-term. With health and economic concerns at an all-time high, this issue is more important than ever for the families who will purchase these homes."

To inspire and educate additional affiliate participation, eight Habitat State Support Organizations, which provide services to 440 affiliates, will also receive grant money to add staff and host training sessions for Habitat affiliates to learn how to build to nationally-recognized green standards.

"The introduction of the Partners in Sustainable Building program has created excitement about the benefits of green building within Habitat for Humanity," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. "With the support of The Home Depot Foundation, we have a great opportunity to bring the economic benefits of sustainable building to our homeowners and to show our volunteers how easily and affordably they can make their own homes greener as well."

Partners in Sustainable Building is the first partnership between The Home Depot Foundation and Habitat for Humanity at the national level in the United States.

About The Home Depot Foundation

The Home Depot Foundation was created in 2002 to further the community-building goals of The Home Depot. The Home Depot Foundation is dedicated to building affordable homes for working families that are healthy to live in and affordable to own. To make homes healthy and affordable, the Foundation encourages developers to incorporate responsible design and use durable and quality materials to ensure that homes are more energy- and water-efficient, have good indoor air quality and provide a safe and healthy space to live. Since its formation, The Home Depot Foundation has granted \$120 million to nonprofit organizations and supported the development of more than 65,000 affordable, healthy homes. For more information, visit

<http://www.habitat.org/newsroom/2009archive/www.homedepotfoundation.org>.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 300,000 houses worldwide, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1.5 million people. For more information, visit

<http://www.habitat.org/newsroom/2009archive/www.habitat.org>.