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41 HABITAT-NYC FAMILIES RECEIVE KEYS TO NEW, AFFORDABLE, ECO-FRIENDLY HOMES IN OCEAN HILL-BROWNSVILLE, BROOKLYN AS HISTORIC HABITAT-NYC COMPLEX IS COMPLETED

Brooklyn, NY (Sept. 26, 2009) – 41 low-income New York City families received the keys to their new Habitat for Humanity - New York City homes in a joyful celebration in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn.

The ribbon-cutting marked an historic first for Habitat-NYC: This is the largest and greenest multifamily complex ever built by a Habitat affiliate in the nation. These 41 affordable green condominiums are expected to receive LEED Gold certification, one of the highest green building ratings.

Joining the festivities were some of the almost 10,000 volunteers who worked together to build these homes, funders who provided financial support, and faith and community leaders, and elected officials who made the new homes possible.

“This is an emotional and exciting day for Habitat-NYC and our 41 families, whose lives will be transformed by these healthy and affordable homes,” said Josh Lockwood, Executive Director of Habitat-NYC. “They are a testament to the vast impact New Yorkers can have by working shoulder-to-shoulder to build homes and revitalize communities.”

The new homeowner families, along with thousands of volunteers, worked more than two years to help construct these homes. The 41 families contributed at least 300 hours of “sweat equity” per adult to build their new Habitat-NYC homes.

Esther Huambo, a single mother of two who will own one of the Habitat homes, said she was grateful for the many New Yorkers who helped build her three-bedroom home.

“In breath-taking cold days, with no heat or windows or doors . . . in the very hot days of summer with no air conditioning or fan . . . you came out to work side-by-side with us. You do this out of the kindness of your hearts,” Esther said. “On behalf of all the Habitat family partners, and on behalf of my children, Jose and Delilah, I would like to say: ‘Thank you.’”

The block where these homes now stand had been a long-vacant, garbage-strewn lot. Habitat-NYC invested \$11.6 million to build the complex of three, four-story building. According to an economic impact report by HR&A Advisors, the project will generate about \$34.5 million over the next four decades – approximately \$3 for every dollar invested.

Habitat-NYC families are first-time homeowners who earn 45% to 80% of the federal median income for New York City (\$31,905 to \$56,720 for a family of four).

Thanks to the environmentally friendly construction, homeowners in the Atlantic Avenue complex will save an estimated 30 percent in utility bills and will enjoy the health benefits of green building.

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Designed by Dattner Associates, with assistance from United Technologies, NYSERDA, the U.S. Green Building Council and Global Green, the homes meet Energy Star standards and boast many energy-efficient, sustainable and non-toxic components.

Funding for the complex includes

- Construction loan provided by Citibank
- \$1.64 million from the New York State Affordable Housing Corporation
- \$1.145 million from the New York City Housing Trust Fund
- \$400,000 from the Brooklyn Borough President's Office
- \$820,000 from the Independence Community Foundation
- \$308,000 from the New York State Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Home sponsorships by Bank of America, Citi, Credit Suisse, Delta Air Lines, Goldman Sachs, and Hilb Rogal and Hobbs, and funding from NYSERDA, the Starr Foundation, St. John's University Campus Chapter, Southern Wine & Spirits, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, United Technologies Corporation, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and others

New York City's Department of Housing Development and Preservation sold the land to Habitat-NYC for \$13.

Elected officials, funders, community leaders and green building experts congratulated the residents. Speakers' comments included the following:

Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Borough President: "I am honored that Habitat for Humanity - New York City has chosen Brooklyn as the site of its largest, greenest housing development, although I can't say I'm surprised. Every day, Brooklyn shows the rest of the world what it means to live an eco-friendly life. Anyone who says it's not easy being green hasn't been to Brooklyn. I can't wait to see what Habitat for Humanity has on the horizon, because it's always a great day for Brooklyn when Habitat-NYC lands here."

Marilyn Gelber, Executive Director of Independence Community Foundation: "Our Foundation has been one of Habitat-NYC's closest working partners and one of its largest private foundation funders over the past decade. Together we showed how an elegantly simple rural housing model can become a powerful urban engine for neighborhood change. We congratulate Habitat-NYC and all the new Habitat homeowners for their hard work, hope, ambition and generosity which combined to create this extraordinary new green development in Brooklyn."

Marian Zucker, Executive Vice President for Housing Programs and Policy at "nyhomes:" "We at 'nyhomes' are proud to work with Habitat for Humanity and its partners to create these affordable and 'green' condominiums. We were happy to bring a range of resources to this project – including \$1.64 million in subsidies from the Affordable Housing Corporation, mortgages from the State of New York Mortgage Agency and the sweat equity of our staff working alongside future condo owners. Building and financing affordable housing is not easy in these economic times, but the Paterson Administration is committed to promoting homeownership for working families in New York City and across New York State. We congratulate Habitat for Humanity - New York City for its leadership in working with government and the private sector to develop these wonderful new homes."

Douglas Apple, First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development: "HPD has long supported the goals and programs of Habitat for Humanity - New York City, encouraging our employees to volunteer their time and skills. We are proud that in addition to the time and energy HPD poured into the Atlantic Apartment Residences, we were able to sell this land to Habitat-NYC for just \$13 and to devote \$1.845 million from the New York City Housing Trust Fund to this high quality, LEED Gold, green project."

Gail Grimmatt, Senior Vice President of Delta Air Lines, New York: "It is immensely rewarding to see the final product of hours of hard work. To think that almost 10,000 volunteers built these houses is truly heartwarming, and I'm proud that Delta was a part of it. We deeply value our partnership with Habitat for Humanity, and being here today inspires us all to continue supporting their tireless work."

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Harvey R. Chaplin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. and a Brownsville native: "This project has particularly special meaning for me, having been raised in this community right here on Saratoga Avenue in Brownsville, where I attended PS 156. To give back to my community and to see these first-time homeowners beaming with pride is what makes projects like this so worthwhile. On behalf of Southern Wine & Spirits, I want to extend my personal thanks to all our winery partners who have also generously supported this eco-friendly project for Habitat for Humanity - New York City."

Elisabeth A. Kline of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans: "This dedication ceremony is a visible, local symbol of how Thrivent Financial for Lutherans supports Habitat for Humanity across the United States and around the world through our \$125 million alliance. We strive to make an impact on communities every day, through our members and for the causes they care about. Just as Thrivent Financial helps secure the financial future of our member families, today we open the door to secure futures for 41 families, through our volunteer and fundraising efforts."

Francis J. Murray, Jr., President and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA): "NYSERDA is pleased to provide \$123,500 in funding toward this project and join with Habitat for Humanity - New York City in helping this worthy endeavor meet the requirements of both the Energy Star label and the LEED Gold Certification. Because of the energy-efficiency measures implemented, homeowners will reap the benefits of a more comfortable, healthier living environment. I commend all who have helped bring this project to fruition, as it affords families the opportunity to live in an environmentally friendly home and supports the aggressive efforts of Governor David A. Paterson's '45 by 15' initiative in New York State."

Ted Bardacke, Global Green USA Senior Associate: "The New York City Chapter of Habitat for Humanity continues to demonstrate its leadership and innovation with this project, which incorporates Habitat's ideals of affordable housing and fellowship through a complex multi-family project that successfully meets a high level of green standards and will save its new homeowners money, improve their health and help the environment, "This development is exactly the type of affordable green housing that we hope will serve as a model for future development throughout New York City and across the country."

Global Green USA has been assisting Habitat-NYC on this project since 2005, beginning with early visioning work and green technical assistance that has continued through design and construction. Global Green has partnered with Habitat for Humanity affiliates throughout the country for more than 15 years to help create energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly homes that are affordable to build and operate.

Viola D. Greene-Walker, District Manager of Community Board 16: "Community Board 16 thanks Habitat for Humanity - New York City for their vision and their funding partners, who have transformed a garbage-strewn vacant lot into 41 units of affordable housing in our community. We welcome and celebrate our new neighbors, who have invested their hard-earned dollars and time into their new homes".

About Habitat-NYC

Habitat-NYC transforms lives and our city by uniting all New Yorkers around the cause of decent, affordable housing. With the help of thousands of volunteers every year, Habitat-NYC has built more than 220 affordable homes in the five boroughs of New York City. Learn more about Habitat-NYC at www.habitatnyc.org.

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