



2010 Kickoff: 30 New Habitat-**NYC** Homes Under Construction In January

Families like the Arcenias, right, to benefit from homes in these newest projects:



Hart-Lafayette

16 homes are rising in Bed-Stuy



Marilyn Gelber, President of the Brooklyn Community Foundation, above, signs drywall at December volunteer kickoff of Hart-Lafayette homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

More photos on page 3

Prospect-Macy

Partnership brings 14 homes to S. Bronx

Volunteers will be lifting hammers soon on 14 new Habitat-**NYC** homes rising up in the South Bronx.

These new homes continue an innovative new practice for Habitat-**NYC**: They are part of a new 63-unit building constructed by a for-profit affordable housing company in partnership with Habitat-**NYC**.

As with the Fox-Leggett Co-op Apartments model, our first partnership project, Blue Sea Development Company is building the eight-story Prospect-Macy Co-op Apartments and Habitat volunteers and families will complete the interiors of our units.

Both buildings are in the Longwood section of the South Bronx, where they will help fill an immense need for affordable homes. Nearly a third of all Bronx workers over

Continued on page 6

Rebuilding in Haiti
Habitat Responds to Tragedy
Page 4

Habitat for Humanity - New York City
transforms lives and our city by building quality homes for families in need and by uniting all New Yorkers around the cause of affordable housing.

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From the Executive Director

Happy New Year everyone!

For so many in our city, 2009 was a year of great trials. And yet, through volunteerism and heartfelt giving, you helped Habitat-NYC build more homes and undertake more community improvement projects than ever before.

We at Habitat-NYC are continually amazed by the selflessness of our supporters, who volunteered with us on the coldest day in February and the hottest day in July! You donated your time, technical expertise and hard-earned money to help increase our impact in communities hard-hit by the economic downturn.

I am looking forward to a very special honor next weekend, when family partner Troy Agard is treating me to a house-warming dinner at his new Habitat-NYC condominium on Atlantic Avenue in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Troy, who had been living in a crowded home shared with his mother and sister, wants an opportunity to make a home-cooked meal and say thank you.

Not one to turn down a home-cooked meal, I am thrilled! But if Troy had just a bit more room, he'd love to invite you and the 10,000 volunteers and countless supporters who helped to construct this 41-home project alongside me, Troy and all our new homeowner families. I wish you could all sit with us and hear about the incredible difference – in terms of finances, health and pride – that homeownership has on the lives of our family partners.

Troy is just one enthusiastic homebuyer we partnered with in 2009, and we know from experience that his life, and his family's life, is forever changed for the better.

We have a similarly ambitious agenda for 2010 – to serve more families, and impact more distressed communities – than ever before. We are so grateful that you join us in this work and look forward to a year of transforming the lives of New York's hardworking, low-income families.

Sincerely,

Find It on Our Website

Want to know more about Habitat-NYC? Our website is chockfull of resources just waiting to be used. Please explore at www.habitatnyc.org and click away at your fingers' command throughout the website. It is regularly updated and a great way to stay connected to us. You can:

- Check out our fabulous homes and download an application;
- Flip through picture albums of our past events and find upcoming events;
- Friend us, follow us and link with us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn;
- Save a tree and read our newsletters online;
- Read about our achievements, impact on communities and public policies on our publications page;
- Become an advocate and help change public policy;
- Get involved and search for volunteer opportunities;
- Learn about our projects and how they are helping families achieve better, greener and happier lives;
- Help us to continue to create lasting homes in New York City by donating online.

Habitat- NYC Kicks Off New Project in Historic Bed-Stuy



Top left, former NYS housing chief Deborah Van Amerongen poses with Habitat- NYC Executive Director Josh Lockwood.

Top right is Candace George, who owns a nearby Habitat- NYC home in the Bed-Stuy Community.

Center, participants signed drywall for the future homeowners.



Bottom left, Assembly Member Darryl Towns welcomes future Habitat- NYC homeowners to this neighborhood.

Bottom right, HPD Commissioner Rafael Cestero discusses the city's role in helping to create these new, affordable homes.



On a cold December day, we gave a warm welcome to the first group of volunteers — 15 Citi employees, two Grace Church volunteers and two family partners — who are helping to build 16 new Habitat- NYC homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

These volunteers worked with two future Habitat homeowners, installing drywall in the four condos at 118 Hart Street, one of the four buildings in this new project.

As part of the kickoff celebration, guests and volunteers signed messages for future homeowners on Sheetrock, which will be installed in the Hart Street homes.

Speakers included Richard Barak, from the Brooklyn Bor-

ough President's office; Marilyn Gelber, President, Brooklyn Community Foundation; Deborah VanAmerongen, former Commissioner of NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal; Rafael Cestero, Commissioner of NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development; NYC Councilmember Al Vann; NYC Assembly Member Darryl Towns; and Peter Knitzer of Habitat- NYC's Board.

Habitat- NYC homeowner Candace George, who has owned a nearby Habitat home for six years, told participants: "Your work is transformative."

Habitat- NYC has constructed 41 homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant. This new, \$6.8 million project includes four buildings and 16 units with a mix of two and three bedrooms.

Corporate, Foundation, Government and Faith Contributions

January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009

\$100,000 and Up

Brooklyn Borough President
Marty Markowitz
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Corporation for National
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\$1,000 - \$4,999

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Chase Community
Development Banking
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Partners, Inc.
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West End Collegiate Church
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Rebuilding in Haiti

As we go to press....

Habitat for Humanity International will bring its disaster rebuilding expertise to Haiti, where Habitat has built more than 2,000 homes.

To learn more or to help support HFHI's Haiti rebuilding efforts, visit www.habitat.org.

Good as Gold

Our just-completed Atlantic Avenue Complex in Brooklyn recently received LEED Gold certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

LEED-certified homes complete a technically rigorous process verifying that they are built to be energy- and water-efficient, environmentally sound and a healthier place to live.

"As a LEED-certified home, Atlantic Avenue Complex serves as a model of greener living for the entire community," said Nate Kredich, a VP of the Green Building Council.

10th Annual Builder Awards

Habitat-NYC's 2009 Builder Awards in November saluted Delta Air Lines, Corporate Partner of the Year Award; St. John's University Habitat Campus Chapter, Millard Fuller Social Justice Award; Pastor Vivian Grubb and True Holy Church, Richard Wong Faith-in-Action Award; The Candace George Family, Family Partner of the Year Award.

Pictured here are (left to right) top: Rev. Donald J. Harrington, President of St. John's University, and Ludy Registre, President of the Campus Chapter, with Habitat-NYC former Board Chair Maureen McPhilly O'Reilly. Middle: Hoda Kotb, NBC Today Co-Anchor and emcee with the George family. Bottom: Habitat-NYC Leadership Council Member Bob Vila with his wife Dianna Barrett.

Photos: Anthony Collins



2010 Legislative Priorities

Vacancy Decontrol Repeal Is New Goal

Adding a new legislative initiative in 2010, Habitat-NYC will urge the New York State Legislature and Governor to repeal state-controlled vacancy decontrol legislation of New York City's rent-regulated housing.

"We've lost an estimated 300,000 affordable housing units over the past decade through vacancy decontrol, and we continue to lose affordable homes at a faster rate than we can produce new units," said Paige Bellenbaum, Habitat-NYC's Director of Advocacy.

Aimed at bringing control of city housing policy back home, this initiative is part of Habitat-NYC's 2010 Housing Covenant, our annual policy platform.

Goals of the 2010 Covenant include:

New York City

- Keep affordable homeownership at the forefront of city housing policy;
- Build awareness of predatory lending practices, focusing on 1) refund anticipation loans; 2) deceptive credit card practices; 3) rent-to-own businesses; 4) foreclosure rescue scams.

New York State

- Enact the Empire State Housing Investment Fund legislation (A09115 / S5727), which will create an effective instrument for building and preserving affordable housing.
- Increase New York State's investment in affordable housing.
- Repeal vacancy decontrol.

United States

- Increase funding for national affordable housing programs, including
 - Public housing, Section 8 and Section 202.
 - Programs that enable Habitat affiliates to build and preserve affordable housing, including the Community Development Block Grant, the Home Investment Partnerships Program, Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program and Section 4 Capacity Building.
 - The National Housing Trust Fund, which should be allocated at least \$1 billion in funding.

A Call to Action!

You can support our 2010 Housing Covenant by:

Joining our Housing Justice Action Network to receive monthly advocacy newsletters, action alerts and an easy online way to add your voice to policy debates;

Signing a Habitat-NYC "paper house" postcard calling for the passage of the Empire State Housing Investment Fund and to increase the state's capital investment in affordable and supportive housing.

Becoming a Habitat-NYC Loan Ranger to help alert low-income consumers about predatory lending practices and better alternatives, or to arrange for a Loan Rangers volunteer to provide free workshops for your community or faith groups.

Read the Covenant at www.habitatnyc.org/advocate.

New Safety Net for Habitat Families

"When you lose your job, you feel devastated. Your whole world comes crashing down," says Alecia Robinson, a Habitat-NYC family partner who was laid off from a recruitment advertising company. "When the job ads stopped coming in – we stopped working," she says.

To close on her Atlantic Avenue Habitat home, Alecia knew she had to plunge back into the job market immediately. As a single mom, she also had the heavy burden of supporting herself and her seven-year-old son.

And without delay, Habitat-NYC reached out to give Alecia a hand up to finding a new job. We arranged a resume-writing workshop, then helped circulate her newly polished resume.

Habitat-NYC also referred her to government employment services, which welcomed Alecia into their programs.

"Having the support system at Habitat really helped," says Alecia, who is now re-employed and living in her new Habitat-NYC home.

Alecia is not alone. New York City's lowest-income communities – the neighborhoods where most Habitat-NYC families live – have been the hardest hit by the Great Recession, according to a recent Fiscal Policy Institute report.

To help in tough times, we created a new Family Partner Post-Purchase Assistance Program, which will offer proactive help to Habitat homeowners facing potential emergencies.

Through a series of partnerships between Habitat-NYC, nonprofits and government agencies, this program's crisis management component will be designed to help family partners find new jobs after a layoff. For example, our partnership with the city's workforce development services will help fast-track family partners into its job counseling and search services.

While Habitat-NYC currently requires family partners to take basic financial management and homeownership courses, we plan to offer a range of enhanced free financial education and home management classes to help Habitat-NYC families master more of the skills they need to remain successful homeowners even in difficult times.

Community Resource Manuals are now being developed to help new homeowners connect with their neighborhoods. As they first settle into their homes, Habitat-NYC families will have detailed information available about local schools, daycare and afterschool programs, libraries, parks, places of worship, community boards and much more.

The first Community Resource Manual was created for the 41 Atlantic Avenue families and details services in Ocean Hill-Brownsville as well as citywide programs.

Habitat-NYC is committed to ensuring that the lives of families we serve are forever transformed for the better – through bad times as well as through good times.



Alecia Robinson and her son, Devon, proudly display their Habitat-NYC homeowner certificate. Photo by Anthony Collins.

Prospect-Macy

Continued from page 1

18 hold low-wage jobs. Despite working full-time, they earn less than \$24,000 a year, according to a recent report by the Center for an Urban Future.

Fewer than 10 percent of the community's residents are homeowners, and the new co-ops will help strengthen the neighborhood.

The Prospect-Macy project will continue Habitat-NYC's practice of constructing green homes that are very healthy, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

Families interested in applying for Habitat-NYC homes can check our website for details and downloadable application forms. Go to www.habitatnyc.org and click on Own a Habitat Home.



Rendering of Prospect-Macy Co-op Apartments