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16 Low-Income NYC Families Get Keys to New, Affordable Habitat for Humanity Condominium Homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn

JUNE 4 DEDICATION MARKS COMPLETION OF ‘SWEAT EQUITY’ AND CONSTRUCTION

Brooklyn, NY, June 4, 2011 – 16 hardworking, low-income families celebrated their new [Habitat for Humanity – New York City](#) homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, today, receiving symbolic keys to their affordable condominiums.

The joyous dedication marked the completion of construction and the 300 hours of “sweat equity” that every adult family member gave to help build their homes.

Under Habitat-NYC’s urban “barn-raising” construction model, more than 2,500 volunteers – from all sectors of New York City and all walks of life – joined families to build these homes. Among them were luminaries like former Mets stars **Dwight Gooden** and **Darryl Strawberry**, filmmaker **Spike Lee** and actress **Susan Sarandon**.

Josh Lockwood, Habitat-NYC Executive Director, said: “Today is the most special day of our year at Habitat-NYC, as we salute the incredible, hard-working families who will become homebuyers as a result of our partnership together. It is a time when we reflect on the journey we have taken together, a journey of friendship, sacrifice, challenges and joys.”

Peter Knitzer, Habitat-NYC Board Chair, congratulated the new homeowners, adding, “You have a deep stake in your neighborhood – and our dream is for you to become a leader in your community, to ‘pay forward’ the opportunities you have had, and to work to make this a better neighborhood – and a better city -- for all.”

Nicole Barrett, a New York City bus driver and new homeowner, proudly led a tour of her new home, pointing out rooms she had tiled and walls she had painted. The single mother of three currently lives in her mother’s overcrowded home, sharing a bedroom with her two youngest children. The new home means “security for my family,” she said.

(More)

Joining in the celebration were Congress Member **Edolphus Towns** and Brooklyn Borough President **Marty Markowitz**, who handed out voter registration cards and urged new homeowners to be active in their new community.

Habitat-NYC's [Hart-Lafayette project](#) includes four buildings on three sites – two buildings at 512-514 Lafayette Avenue, and single buildings at 544 Lafayette and at 118 Hart Street.

This \$6.8 million project was funded by individuals, corporations and government, including Brooklyn Borough President Markowitz, Brooklyn Community Foundation, the New York City Housing Trust Fund, New York City Capital Funds, NYS Affordable Housing Corporation, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal – HOME Program and NYC Councilmember Al Vann. HPD contributed the land and Amalgamated Bank provided a construction loan.

Hart-Lafayette families earn between 50% to 80% of the city's area median income, contribute sweat equity and assume an affordable mortgage, paying no more than 33% of their gross income on monthly housing expenses.