



# News

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HABITAT-NYC REMEMBERS DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S DREAM**

### VOLUNTEERS HONOR KING BY BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES IN BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, BROOKLYN

For the 11<sup>th</sup> year in a row, Habitat for Humanity - New York City hosted its annual "Building on a Dream" Martin Luther King weekend build to recognize King's vision and to continue his dream by constructing affordable homes for New Yorkers in need.

This year, 70 volunteers from 17 faith groups throughout the city spent Saturday and Sunday installing Sheetrock in walls and ceilings at 118 Hart St. in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. These homes are among [16 new Habitat-NYC homes](#) currently under construction on four sites on Hart Street and Lafayette Avenue.

"Nearly half a century has passed since Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his *I Have a Dream* speech, but his powerful legacy of social justice and service lives on," said **Josh Lockwood**, Executive Director of Habitat-NYC. "This weekend, Habitat volunteers, family partners, neighbors and staff came together to continue building on his dream by constructing affordable homes that will transform families and strengthen this historic Bedford-Stuyvesant community."

Volunteers also repainted the girls' gymnasium at P.S. 54, a local elementary school, with a bright pink paint that transformed it into a cheerful, kid-friendly facility. This project was one of many community revitalization initiatives that Habitat-NYC has continued to undertake to help neighborhood services in areas where Habitat families live.

P.S. 54 principal **Lorna Khan** said, "P.S. 54 is delighted to forge a partnership with Habitat for Humanity. We . . . believe in working closely with the community to support the students and parents of our school. When Habitat-NYC volunteers its time and effort to paint our school, it sends a powerful message to the members of the learning community. It says Habitat-NYC cares about us and we are grateful for all it is doing and what it will continue to do for us through this partnership."

At a special program on Saturday afternoon, keynote speaker **Rev. Johnny Ray Youngblood** told the audience that "the work of Habitat for Humanity - New York City is providential for these times."

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Youngblood, who is senior pastor of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, is widely respected for establishing the Nehemiah affordable housing program in East New York.

The program included rousing music by the Brooklyn Steppers - Blackfire Drumline, soul-stirring performances by the P.S. 54 Gospel Choir and Dancers and inspirational speeches on Dr. King's legacy.

Participants also raised support for [Habitat for Humanity International's rebuilding efforts](#) in Haiti, which will bring funding and volunteers to build homes for Haitians who lost their homes to the Jan. 12 earthquake.

During the King weekend, Habitat-NYC launched its Housing Covenant 2010, the organization's annual housing advocacy agenda. Priorities for this year 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**

*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.*

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