

For Immediate Release

Contact: Beverly Cheuvront
phone: 212-991-4000 x 344
cell: 917-224-0969

**METS STAR RON DARLING, ACTRESS EMILY BERGL AND SUPERMODEL SELITA EBANKS
JOIN HABITAT FOR HUMANITY - NEW YORK CITY'S 2011 BUILDER AWARDS,
HELPING TO RAISE MORE THAN \$1 MILLION**

**HABITAT-NYC HONORS DOUGLAS L. PAUL AND CREDIT SUISSE, LES BLUESTONE AND
BLUE SEA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, COLLEGIATE CHURCH CORPORATION AND
THE SMITH FAMILY, HABITAT-NYC HOMEOWNERS**

New York, New York (Nov. 1, 2011) — Mets star **Ron Darling**, actress **Emily Bergl** and supermodel **Selita Ebanks** were special guests at Habitat for Humanity - New York City's 12th Annual Builder Awards dinner at Cipriani Wall Street on Nov. 1. An [online auction](#) for the event will continue through Nov. 28.

"Thanks to our many generous and committed supporters, this year's Builder Awards was our best ever, raising more than \$1 million, which will help build more affordable homes for New York City families in need," said Habitat-NYC Executive Director **Josh Lockwood**.

This year, Habitat-NYC saluted the following honorees:

- **Credit Suisse**, *Corporate Partner of the Year Award*. **Douglas L. Paul**, Vice Chair of the Investment Banking Division. Providing many years of generous funding support and thousands of hardworking volunteers, Credit Suisse has been a steadfast supporter of Habitat-NYC homes. Doug is a longtime member of Habitat-NYC's Board of Directors.
- **Blue Sea Development Company**, *Millard Fuller Social Justice Award*. **Les Bluestone**, Co-Founder. Les is a former Board Chair of Habitat-NYC, and his company was the first in creating affordable Energy Star and LEED homes in New York City. Most recently, he embarked on an extraordinary development partnership with Habitat-NYC to co-develop two green buildings in the South Bronx, the [50-unit General Colin Powell Apartments](#) and the [63-unit Melody](#). Both of these innovative buildings have enabled Habitat-NYC family partners to build their own co-ops alongside volunteers before moving into a welcoming, mixed-income environment.
- **Collegiate Church Corporation**, *Richard Wong Faith-in-Action Award*. **Reverend Charles D. Morris**, Senior Minister of the Fort Washington Collegiate Church, accepted the award. Collegiate Church Corporation's New York City member churches have offered strong faith support to Habitat-NYC for almost 15 years by helping to build both a strong organization and many safe and secure homes for New Yorkers in need and by advocating for better affordable housing policies. (More)

- **The Smith Family**, *Family Partner of the Year Award*. **Juliet Smith** and her children, **Valina, VeAnnah**, and twins **Jada** and **SeArah** moved into their Habitat-NYC home in Brooklyn this year. Juliet personifies the strong work ethic of our family partners. An emergency medical technician, Juliet often worked her overnight shift before going directly to Habitat-NYC construction sites to help build homes. This very determined single mother literally worked 24 hours a day to achieve her dream of home ownership.

SNY.tv sports broadcaster and Mets star **Ron Darling**, who recently joined Habitat-NYC's Board of Directors, emceed the evening. He has helped build Habitat homes in the Gulf Coast and in New York City. This summer, he helped to install Sheetrock at a [Habitat-NYC multifamily affordable building](#) in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Brooklyn.

Actress **Emily Bergl**, who presented the Family Partner of the Year award to Juliet Smith, is a longtime Habitat volunteer who has built Habitat homes around the nation and around the world. She recently organized a volunteer crew of actresses from the off-Broadway show *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* to help build [Habitat-NYC homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn](#).

Supermodel **Selita Ebanks** told the audience about her own struggle growing up in a low-income New York City family. She also read a poignant thank-you note penned by Habitat-NYC family partner Salma Elboute, 11.

Builder Awards special guests also included **Ron Terwilliger**, Global Chair of Habitat for Humanity's World of Hope Campaign; Habitat-NYC Board Chair **Peter Knitzer**, Executive VP and President of E*Trade Bank; and **Candace George**, a Habitat-NYC family partner and Board Member. Habitat-NYC's former Board Chair **Maureen McPhilly O'Reilly** presented the Corporate Partner of the Year award.

Two Habitat-NYC children, **Devonte** and **Xavier Hicks**, who are six and five, joined Executive Director **Josh Lockwood** in introducing a video about the organization's work.

The evening launched a month-long [online auction](#) featuring exciting events, trips and other items. Among the highlights are tickets and [VIP backstage passes to meet the Black Eyed Peas](#), a [BusinessElite trip for two to Europe on Delta Air Lines](#), keys to [drive a Rolls Royce](#) for a weekend, a behind-the-scenes [tour of Sotheby's international auction house](#) and more.

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. With the help of thousands of volunteers every year, Habitat-NYC has built more than 244 affordable homes in the five boroughs of New York City. Learn more at www.habitatnyc.org. ###