

South Bronx Welcomes 14 New Habitat-NYC Homeowners

MELODY IS THE FIRST RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TO MEET NYC'S ACTIVE LIVING GUIDELINES



Bronx, NY (Dec. 10, 2011) – Fourteen affordable co-op units will be home to low-income working Habitat-NYC families who blessed their new homes today at **The Melody**, 853 Macy Place in the Longwood section of the South Bronx.

This project marks the second partnership of its kind, both locally and nationally, in which **Habitat for Humanity – New York City** partnered with a for-profit affordable housing developer, Blue Sea Development Company, and the City of New York. Fourteen of the 63 units in The Melody will be owned by Habitat-NYC families, who helped build the interiors of their units, working alongside volunteers.

Named in honor of the neighborhood's rich musical legacy that nurtured jazz in the 1940s, Latin music and doo-wop in the 1950s and hip-hop in the 1980s, The Melody achieved LEED Platinum, a top green-building rating. In addition, The Melody's design promotes physical fitness and a healthier lifestyle, including indoor and outdoor fitness areas for residents.

Josh Lockwood, Executive Director of Habitat-NYC, said, "This is a day of joy and celebration for our family partners. These determined and dedicated families hold full-time jobs, raise their families -- and help raise the

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roofs on their new homes. Habitat-NYC is proud to be a part of this incredible building, which will transform so many lives in the South Bronx. We thank Les Bluestone for including Habitat-NYC in The Melody and our many partners, funders and volunteers who helped create these homes.”

Les Bluestone, Principal of Blue Sea Development Company, said, “We congratulate our new homeowners and welcome you to The Melody.” He added, “Blue Sea is committed to providing high-quality housing that is affordable, sustainable and healthy. We are grateful for the support of our many partners who helped make this vision for The Melody a reality, including Habitat-NYC, HPD, HDC, HCR and our Bronx elected officials, to name just a few.”

“Wells Fargo is proud to support the important work of Habitat for Humanity, both on a national level and here in New York City,” said **Timothy Edwards**, Vice President of Wells Fargo Community Lending and Investing. “Habitat’s impressive track record for revitalizing neighborhoods by promoting sustainable home ownership is clearly consistent with our commitment to promote long-term economic prosperity and quality of life for everyone in our communities. Leveraging this partnership with Habitat-NYC benefits everyone,” he said.

Speaking at the dedication, **Congressman Jose E. Serrano** said: “I can go back to Washington with more strength on Monday, knowing that people are doing the right thing. Let’s be proud of the fact that people never gave up on the South Bronx.”

City Councilmember **Maria del Carmen Arroyo** welcomed the Habitat-NYC families to the neighborhood. “You have the opportunity to own a home that you will love,” she said “This is quality housing that you know you can trust.”

Social Worker **Carole Eady** is one of the new Melody homeowners. Carole, her daughter, niece and great niece are overjoyed at the prospect of leaving their severely overcrowded apartment in a tough neighborhood for the security of The Melody.

“Our current neighborhood is crime-ridden, and gunshots are frequent. It is uncomfortable inside – but too frightening to spend too much time outside,” Carole said, noting that the area is especially disturbing for her eight-year-old great niece, Nivea.

“She has witnessed a great deal of violence and tragedy in her young life. Political columnist and reporter Errol Louis covered the family’s tragic loss of Nivea’s mother and brother in a series of articles for the *New York Daily News* four years ago. This home will give her an opportunity to start over, in a quiet, safe space. For her, this home will continue a long healing process,” Carole said.

Carole added: “I know I speak for all of our Melody families when I tell you that we are so grateful and so happy to be New York City homeowners.”

The Habitat-NYC families contributed “sweat equity to help build the interiors of their homes and some of the neighboring units, along with Habitat-NYC volunteers. These first-time homeowners earn between 50% - 80% of the city’s area median income (\$38,400 to \$61,450 for a family of four) and are coming from housing that is overcrowded, high-priced or in poor condition. They pay no more than 33% of their income on total monthly housing expenses.

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Unique features of The Melody include:

- New York city's first residential building to meet the city's Active Design guidelines, promoting physical fitness and health for residents
- Fitness room, outdoor exercise path with fitness stations
- Children's outdoor climbing and play area
- The building's public spaces are decorated with artwork by **Beatrice Coron**, celebrating the area's music history.
- Enrolled in NYSERDA Multifamily Performance Program (Energy Star)
- Registered in the LEED-H multifamily midrise program
- Energy Star appliances, windows & lighting fixtures
- High-efficiency condensing boilers
- Combined heat and power cogeneration generates electricity and makes hot water
- Construction materials are non-toxic and sustainable
- Homeowners will be able to save an estimated 30 percent or more on their utility bills

About Blue Sea Development Company

Committed to the mission of green and sustainable communities and homes, the Blue Sea Development Company partners have developed thousands of units of affordable housing over the past 30 years, building the first affordable Energy Star (2002), LEED Silver (2007), and LEED Platinum affordable housing developments in New York State. Other current green developments include a new affordable cooperative building that pays homage to the jazz heritage of Morrisania and a new-low income rental with a rooftop urban farm that will grow fresh healthy produce for distribution to its Bronx neighborhood.

About Habitat for Humanity – New York City

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 220 affordable homes in the five boroughs of New York City. Learn more at www.habitatnyc.org. ###

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