

CONTACT: Beverly Chevront
cell: 917-224-0969
phone: 212-991-4000 x. 344
e-mail: bchevront@habitatnyc.org

Photos available on request

WOMEN VOLUNTEERS JOIN HABITAT FOR HUMANITY TO CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY BY PAINTING A COMMUNITY CENTER IN JAMAICA, QUEENS

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S COMMUNITY CENTER SERVES YOUTH GROUPS AND SENIORS AND PROVIDES A SOUP KITCHEN TO NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILIES IN NEED

Jamaica, NY (May 7, 2011) – 20 women volunteers from all walks of life celebrated Mother's Day at Habitat-NYC's 2011 Women Build on Mother's Day Weekend. Working alongside future Habitat-NYC homeowner moms, this year's volunteers painted a community center at the historic Grace Episcopal Church in Jamaica, Queens.

The annual Women Build celebrates the Mother's Day holiday and recognizes the struggles of mothers everywhere.

"Knowing I'll be helping improve a community brings joy into my heart," said volunteer **Cristina Rivera**, who was participating in her second Women Build."

She added, "I believe the children are our future, and what we do in this community can be a great step to better things for the children in all communities. One small step can make a huge difference in someone's life."

Christina and other volunteers also helped raise funds that will be invested in building more Habitat-NYC homes for families in need.

Five future Habitat-NYC homeowner moms also joined in the effort to spruce up the center. Among them was **Olayinka Balogun**, who currently shares her one-bedroom apartment with her niece and grandniece. She was contributing "sweat equity" hours, which will help offset the cost of her future affordable Habitat-NYC condominium in Brooklyn.

As she helped paint the Grace Church gym in cheerful oranges, yellows and blues, Olayinka talked about the challenges of living in a crumbling building that is overrun with rodents and drug dealers. "It is not a place to raise a child," she said. Moving to a safe Habitat home will transform her family's lives.



(More)

Women graduates from Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) also volunteered for the day. NEW trains women for jobs in construction-related industries. **Angela Neuhaus**, a graduate of the program, said she went to school for art and this volunteer day “gave me a great opportunity to bring my art and construction skills together.” Plus, she added, “I love working with Habitat for Humanity.”

MaryBeth Trommelen brought her daughter **Ella** with her. “I thought this would be a great way to spend the day together – and to teach my daughter the value of giving.”

Volunteer **Cathleen Ryder** also painted with her daughter, **Gabriella**. “I’m so happy that Gabriella is able to celebrate with me,” Cathleen said. “This is the best Mother’s Day ever!”

Grace Episcopal Church was started on 1702 and is the second oldest Episcopal Church in New York City. It has offered continuous service since the day it opened. “We have never once closed our doors since 1702,” said parishoners **Muriel Sobers** and **Beverly Lyons**.

The church provides many social services for neighbors in need, including a soup kitchen that feeds 150 homeless men, women and children; a clothing closet; afterschool services and a summer camp. Grace Church is planning to expand its programs for young people, and refurbishing the center is critical to the expansion.

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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