

Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity

1006 Eighth Avenue South ♦ Nashville, TN 37203

Building Homes in Partnership with God's People in Need

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE BUILDS A HABITAT HOME FOR ONE OF ITS OWN

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (November 8, 2007) – Volunteers from Meharry Medical College and Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity will build a home for Katherine Smith and her family, beginning Saturday, November 10, at 7:30 a.m. at 1835 Hermosa St., near the Meharry campus.

This is the first time a Nashville Area Habitat home has been built a few blocks from the sponsoring college's campus, and the home will be a "blitz" build, taking place over the course of eight consecutive days. Dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the Smith family's home will be Sunday, November 18, at 3:00 p.m., at which time they will receive house keys and a framed copy of their mortgage agreement.

When leadership at the college contacted Nashville Area Habitat about the sponsorship, they had hoped that a Meharry employee would qualify to help build and then purchase the home. Indeed, the college is building a home for purchase by one of their own -- Katherine Smith, who works in Meharry's operations department.

"Meharry graduates serve the underserved across this nation and around the world," said Dr. Wayne J. Riley, president and CEO of Meharry Medical College. "Serving people begins at home, and the efforts of our faculty, staff and students to build a Habitat for Humanity house are commendable. Their acts of generosity and compassion truly reflects the commitment to service, on many levels, that exists at Meharry," says.

Katherine Smith is a native Nashvillian who grew up in a happy home with her mother, aunt, and sister in the Wedgewood neighborhood. Her family was very involved in church, and she sang in the choir. She graduated from Glencliff High School and attended Tennessee Technical College, where she earned a certificate in clerical studies. She has three children: a 15-year-old daughter and two sons, ages 14 and 6. Becoming a homeowner is a dream come true for the Smith family. They have lived in a crowded three-bedroom apartment for a long time, and their neighborhood is not safe. Smith doesn't want her children to see the drug-dealing going on close to their apartment, and she looks forward to living in a safer neighborhood. The whole family is excited about painting their own rooms -- something they have never been allowed to do in rental units.

"Thank you is just not enough to tell the people at Meharry how much this means to me and my family," said Smith. "This is truly a wonderful experience, and I can't believe that someone would do this for me."

About Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity

NAHFH is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian organization committed to providing families with the life changing opportunity to purchase decent, affordable homes. The agency consistently ranks in the top one percent of all Habitat affiliates and has grown by seven times in size since 2002. NAFHH will build a record 55 homes in 2007 - 40 locally and 15 abroad. As of July 2007, 1106 family members, including 729 children have been served by NAFHH. Prior to becoming homeowners, Habitat partner families must complete up to 475 hours of "sweat equity" at the build site and in the classroom to earn their homes. Mortgage payments at zero percent interest range between \$350 and \$450 per month, including taxes and insurance. NAFHH builds ENERGY STAR Certified energy efficient homes. To request an application or to receive more information about NAFHH, call 615-254-HOME (4663) or visit www.habitatnashville.org.



About Meharry Medical College

Meharry Medical College is the nation's largest private, independent historically black institution dedicated solely to educating minority and other health professionals. The College is particularly well known for its uniquely nurturing, highly effective educational programs; emerging preeminence in health disparities research; culturally sensitive, evidence-based health services; and significant contribution to the diversity of the nation's health professions workforce. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education's* ranking of institutions annually lists Meharry as a leading national educator of African Americans with M.D. and D.D.S. degrees, and Ph.D. degrees in the biomedical sciences.

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