

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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HABITAT REACHES OUT TO HOMEOWNERS IN NEED OF HOME REPAIR OR REMODELING

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (April 24, 2008) – While Habitat for Humanity is known worldwide for its program to build new houses for purchase by hard-working, low-income families, Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity has extended its services well beyond first-time homeowners and brand-new homes.

Among the agency's newest initiatives is a program called ReBuild, which serves low-income homeowners who are in need of affordable home repairs. It is a "needs-based" program, meaning that the repairs are necessary to maintain a healthy, safe and accessible home. Just like the agency's program for first-time homeowners, ReBuild repairs are not free. The agency offers zero-interest loans for the projects, and participants are expected to complete "sweat equity" hours based on the size of each project.

"Low-income homeowners often struggle to make ends meet and do not always have the resources available to make necessary major home repairs or to remodel their homes for energy efficiency," said Randy Cortner, vice president of retail and ReBuild operations. "This causes the situation to become worse over time, and due to their limited income these homeowners are often the target of predatory lenders who charge high interest rates on home equity loans. We see the same things with elderly and disabled people, many of whom wish to 'age in place' and remain independent for as long as possible. These homeowners may need adaptations such as ramps or other changes to promote accessibility to things like cabinets and sinks."

ReBuild seeks to help underserved low-income homeowners who, because of age, disability, place of residence, geographic location, race, sex, or socioeconomic status, have not historically sought, been eligible for, or received assistance, including elderly and disabled persons.

On Sunday, April 27, at 1:00 p.m. agency staff and volunteers will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of ReBuild's first project, for single mother Iris Mays and her 9-year-old son, who has autism.

Iris' home was in great need of ReBuild repairs. The ReBuild program will replace parts of the home that have been damaged by water and add a lockable water valve to prevent future accidents. These replacements will improve the quality of life for the Mays family because there was mold in the home due to the water damage. The home will have some environmental improvements installed as well, including recycled fiber carpeting and programmable thermostats.

The ReBuild project for Iris is funded by The Madison Grant, and volunteers were provided by Woodmont Hills Family of God. Volunteers also donated an activity room for Iris' son and provided storage and organizational materials for Iris.

Those interested in applying for or contributing to ReBuild may call 615-254-4663, ext. 275, or go to www.habitatnashville.org and click the link for ReBuild on the left-hand side of the home page.

About Iris Mays

Iris grew up in Nashville, and her parents still live in the house on 14th Avenue that she grew up in. She had one older sister, who passed away in 2006. Iris is still close to her 17-year-old niece. The inspiration in Iris's life is her great-grandmother, who is 86 years old and still very active.

Iris attended Glencliff High School and Nashville Tech for two years, studying special education. Iris works for Metro Nashville Public Schools at Park Avenue Elementary as an education assistant. She would like to eventually finish her degree and become a teacher.

Most of Iris's free time is spent with her son. He enjoys playing outside, and they often visit a park around the corner from their house. They also attend 15th Avenue Baptist Church, where she heard about Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity's ReBuild program.

About Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity (NAHFH)

NAHFH is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian organization committed to providing families with the life-changing opportunity to purchase and own 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. The agency built a record 55 homes in 2007 -- 40 locally and 15 abroad. In 2007, more than 1,100 family members, including 750 children, were served by NAFH. 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 \$500 per month, including taxes and insurance. NAFH builds ENERGY STAR Certified energy efficient homes. To request an application or to receive more information about NAFH, call 615-254-HOME (4663) or visit www.habitatnashville.org.



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