

Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity

1006 Eighth Avenue South ♦ Nashville, TN 37203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Ashley Webster
969-2373 cell, 599-2575

NASHVILLE AREA HABITAT WINS CLARENCE JORDAN AWARD FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (December 21, 2009) – Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity has recently received the 2010 Clarence Jordan Award for Creativity and Innovation for the development of delinquency management processes that enabled the agency to reach and maintain a very low delinquency rate.

The Clarence Jordan award is presented to Habitat affiliates that demonstrate creativity or innovation in affiliate operational areas including home design, fund-raising, and volunteer recruitment. It is also important that the innovation can be replicated in other affiliates.

The award honors the legacy of Clarence Jordan, the founder of Koinonia Farm, a religious community in southwest Georgia. Known as the spiritual father of Habitat for Humanity, Jordan believed in helping the poor.

In March 2009, Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity reported an all-time 24-year low mortgage delinquency rate of 1.59 percent. Just 30 days later, the agency broke that record with an unprecedented .95 percent delinquency rate. In June the rate fell to .63 percent, and in September, Nashville Area Habitat set another all-time 24-year record with a zero percent delinquency rate. The rate averaged one percent and less for all of 2009.

Leaders at Nashville Area Habitat attribute this success to the diligence of Habitat homeowners and the teamwork among Habitat's delinquency committee, HomeWORKS staff and volunteers, and the accounting staff. HomeWORKS trainers prepare partner families for homeownership through a series of courses designed to teach new skills and encourage new habits. The delinquency committee developed the processes and procedures that have led to the continuous improvement in delinquency rate since 2002. Accounting staff member Tommy Braswell works with individual families as problems arise and directs the delinquency management function at the agency.

"Habitat for Humanity affiliates look for innovative ways to make life better for the families we serve," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. "The Clarence Jordan Awards allow us to recognize vision and compassion and enable us to thank those who so faithfully carry out our mission."

"This award is a testament to the spirit of service embodied by the Nashville community," said president and CEO Chris McCarthy. "This honor and the fiscal responsibility of our families acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the volunteers and donors who continually work to eliminate substandard housing."

Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity (NAHFH) is an ecumenical Christian ministry that provides the life-changing opportunity for people to purchase and own quality, affordable homes. In its 26-year history, Nashville Area Habitat has built more than 600 homes, including 182 overseas. To date, the agency has served more than 1,450 family members, including more than 930 children.

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The agency consistently ranks in the top one percent of all Habitat affiliates and has earned honors including:

- The ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year award in 2008 and 2009 from EPA and HUD
- The 2009 HOPE Leadership Award for making a significant difference in minority homeownership
- The Habitat International Clarence Jordan Award for Creativity and Innovation, for strategies that resulted in record low mortgage delinquency rates

In 2010, Nashville Area Habitat will construct homes in three neighborhoods: Timberwood and Park Preserve in Nashville and Maple Valley in Dickson.

Prior to becoming homeowners, Habitat partner families must complete up to 470 hours of "sweat equity" at the build site and in the classroom before purchasing their homes. To request an application or to receive more information about NAHFH, call 615-254-HOME (4663) or visit www.habitatnashville.org. For information on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity go to www.hud.gov/offices/fheo or contact the local HUD office.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 300,000 houses worldwide, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1.5 million people. For more information, visit www.habitat.org.

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