



## **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY GREATER SAN FRANCISCO OBSERVES AFFORDABLE HOUSING WEEK WITH DEDICATION OF EIGHT HOMES**

**Marks third major development and more than 50 affordable homes built in Redwood City**

**REDWOOD CITY, Calif., May 11, 2009** -- Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco will dedicate eight new homes in Redwood City as part of Affordable Housing Week in San Mateo County, May 10-16. The homeowners who will receive the keys to their new Habitat homes are working families who have been unable to afford homeownership in the local market.

While housing affordability has increased somewhat due to the recent housing downturn, Habitat Greater San Francisco's service area reaching from San Mateo County to San Francisco and Marin continues to be the most expensive in the state, where the median home price for an entry-level home still requires a minimum income of more than \$100,000.\* Families with low incomes, including many local teachers, construction workers, day care providers, and others, typically make much less than that -- underscoring the substantial need here for more affordable housing. Habitat continues to meet this need with seven homes currently under construction and many more in the pre-development stage.

**Habitat Greater San Francisco's dedication will be held on Saturday, May 16th, at 136 Lincoln Avenue in Redwood City. The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will include featured speakers Ira Ruskin, California State Assembly member representing District 21, and Roseanne Foust, Mayor of Redwood City.**

Affordable ownership housing helps retain diversity in communities and allows working families to live near their jobs and contribute to their communities. For Lincoln Avenue homeowner Maria, her new home solidifies her family's place in the community.

"I feel blessed that we are going to be able to have our own home and plant our roots," said Maria. "I will be able to rest assured that my children will have the chance to grow up in a secure home, never having the fear of being uprooted by life's circumstances of being a renter. Finally, stability and safety."

The Lincoln Avenue development was built on land donated by Redwood City's Redevelopment Agency and brings the total number of homes built by Habitat in the city to 51. Habitat Greater San Francisco and Redwood City's partnership to provide affordable ownership housing began in the late 1990s and paved the way for previous developments on Rolison Road and Hope Court.

The Lincoln Avenue development includes seven three-bedroom townhomes and one two-bedroom, wheelchair-accessible townhome, all with two-car garages. The development was built using "green" building practices, including solar photo voltaic panels installed on the roofs to produce clean energy that will help save each family approximately \$500 a year in energy costs. The solar paneling is provided through a grant from PG&E's Solar Habitat Program, representing an investment of about \$15,000 per Habitat home. The development is also transit-orientated, with a close proximity to the Sequoia CalTrain station and bus routes.



Habitat provides a hand-up, not a hand-out for families in desperate need of improved living conditions. Habitat homeowners invest 500 hours of "sweat equity" to help build their own homes as well as additional time for homeownership trainings on topics such as home repair, maintenance, and financial literacy. Houses are sold to partner families at no profit and are financed with affordable, zero interest mortgages. The families selected for the Lincoln Avenue development all currently reside in Redwood City, meet Habitat's income guidelines, have good credit, and are able to make monthly mortgage payments.

"Our family has been waiting for this moment for a long time," said new homeowner Nabil. "Since we arrived in Redwood City, it was our dream to have a home here. We have our jobs here, and our relatives and friends. But it was impossible to own a home in this area with our income, even with special programs for first-time home buyers."

Construction on the Lincoln Avenue development started in February 2008 with the help of more than 3,500 volunteers working alongside the partner families and providing more than 90 percent of the labor needed to build each home - a total of nearly 50,000 volunteer hours. Habitat relied heavily on grants and charitable giving from individuals, businesses, civic organizations, faith groups and private foundations to make the development possible, including sponsors such as Coldwell Banker Residential Community Foundation, Abbott Laboratories Fund, Amgen Foundation, Wells Fargo, Lockheed Martin Employees Foundation, Oracle, and PG&E.

#### **About Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco**

Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International that partners with working families and the community to build affordable ownership homes in Marin, San Francisco and the Peninsula. Formed through the merger of Peninsula Habitat for Humanity and Habitat for Humanity San Francisco in August 2008, Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco provides a unique solution to the local housing crisis and has enabled nearly 150 families to purchase affordable housing since 1989.

*\*California Association of Realtors, First Time Buyer Housing Affordability Index, February 18, 2009.*

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