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For Immediate Release

Habitat for Humanity Kansas City AmeriCorps Members Assist in Iowa Flood Recovery

500 AmeriCorps Members to Erect 20 Homes during Habitat AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (June 12, 2009) Four AmeriCorps members and one staff member from Habitat for Humanity Kansas City will join more than 500 Habitat for Humanity AmeriCorps*State, AmeriCorps* National and AmeriCorps VISTA members and alumni as they help build 20 Habitat for Humanity houses, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This trip takes place June 13 through June 20, 2009, as part of the annual Habitat for Humanity AmeriCorps Build-A-Thon. These homes will be built in partnership with families affected by the floods that devastated much of Iowa in 2008.

“This Build-A-Thon is a powerful way to highlight the need for affordable housing for victims of the Iowa flooding while also celebrating the many contributions AmeriCorps members make to Habitat and other organizations in thousands of communities throughout the country every day,” said Jonathan Reckford, CEO, Habitat for Humanity International. “We are so grateful to these hard-working AmeriCorps members for their commitment to eliminating poverty housing and we applaud them for their service.”

The AmeriCorps members from Habitat Kansas City will join other members and alumni from across the country to work in partnership with Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity and 20 low-income families. The 2009 Build-A-Thon celebrates 14 years of AmeriCorps members helping Habitat for Humanity affiliates and partner organizations build affordable houses and eliminate substandard housing.

“As a person who has lived in poverty, I understand how something as simple as a decent place to live can profoundly change a family,” says Mary Williams-Neal, AmeriCorps member serving in the Family Services department at Habitat Kansas City. “Our Habitat families don’t run ... they fly! They become engaged in their community; their children do better in school; they plan and save for their future; the entire family is elevated -- all because they have a safe and affordable place to lay their head at night. That’s pretty powerful.”

The first day of the Build-A-Thon marks the first anniversary of the day water from the Cedar River crested, leaving nearly ten square miles of Cedar Rapids under water. The need for affordable housing is especially great in the Cedar Rapids area, where nearly 4,000 homes were damaged by fast-rising water during last year’s devastating floods. While 90 counties were declared federal disaster areas, Cedar Rapids was the most significantly affected region. Most of these homeowners did not have flood insurance.

“Last year’s Build-a-Thon was incredible and is the whole reason I signed up for a second term with AmeriCorps,” explains Brittani Martin, AmeriCorps member serving in Habitat KC’s volunteer department. “For an entire week you are immersed in the lives and conditions of the families you are there to help. You work harder than you ever thought you could and at the end of the day you don’t get to go home to your cozy bed and prime time TV. You are surrounded by hundreds of like-minded people who have also heard the call to serve. It is the most trying and tiring thing you might ever do ... and it is so worth it.”

For more information about how you can get involved with Habitat for Humanity Kansas City, please visit www.habitatkc.org.

More information about Habitat for Humanity Kansas City:

Habitat for Humanity Kansas City is the seventh affiliate of Habitat International and one of three affiliates operating in the metro area. Habitat Kansas City was founded in 1979 by John and Mary Pritchard as a Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating substandard housing within the urban core of Kansas City, Missouri. Through volunteer labor and both monetary and material donations, Habitat KC builds and rehabilitates basic, decent houses with the help of partner families in need. The houses are then sold to these partner families at no profit with a no interest mortgage. In 30 years, Habitat Kansas City has built more than 200 houses and rehabilitated many more, providing quality housing for hundreds of families in our community.

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.

About Habitat for Humanity National Service Programs:

Since 1994, Habitat for Humanity AmeriCorps*State and National, AmeriCorps*VISTA members have performed more than 5 million hours of service, engaged hundreds of thousands of volunteers and helped build more than 8,500 Habitat houses throughout the across the United States. For information about AmeriCorps programs, visit www.americorps.gov

About the Corporation for National and Community Service:

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation engages four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

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