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Contact:

Habitat for Humanity – Greater Columbus

Beverly Martin at 614-580-6272

Beverly.Martin@MartinMarketingLLC.com

American Home Shield

Shelley Thomas or Nicole Ritchie

901-597-8336

Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus Wins 1st Place in National Online Competition for \$25,000 Award

Award from American Home Shield Funds a Habitat Home ReBuild Project

COLUMBUS, Ohio. (February 4, 2011) – It's official! Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus earned the \$25,000 top prize nationally in the recent online voting contest sponsored by American Home Shield (AHS). The online contest was competitive from the very start of the four-month voting period. Support for the Greater Columbus affiliate was strong throughout the competition as the real-time vote totals showed multiple lead changes and last minute resurgences. In the end, Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus surged ahead and finished atop the 15 affiliates in the AHS Challenge for Change online voting competition, receiving more than 72,000 votes for a 5,458-vote margin over the 2nd place winner and earning \$25,000 to assist in local neighborhood restoration.

“Our supporters are the best! Through a consistent grassroots effort initiated by our staff and replicated by our supporters, we were able to reach not only our regular stakeholders but thousands of friends of friends who joined in the voting. The word got out and the support for us kept adding up,” E.J. Thomas, CEO, Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus said. “We are so appreciative of this amazing show of dedicated support from throughout central Ohio and across the country, including votes for our affiliate from as far away as Hawaii. We are very grateful to American Home Shield for making this possible and awarding us \$25,000.”

The American Home Shield Challenge for Change, which began in late October 2010 and ended January 31, 2011, featured 15 select Habitat affiliates from across the nation rallying supporters to help win one of three prizes totaling \$50,000 by voting daily at AHSChallenge.com.

“We believe strongly that home ownership and proper home maintenance go hand-in-hand with building strong neighborhoods,” said Dave Crawford, President and CEO of American Home Shield, one of the nation's leading home warranty companies. “Habitat for Humanity shares this commitment, and American Home Shield is pleased not only to have helped raise awareness about the great work that they're doing across the nation, but to now also invest in the work of these three affiliates.”

The second and third place awards of \$15,000 and \$10,000 went to Habitat of Tacoma/Pierce County (WA) and Habitat of Maumee Valley (OH), respectively. Each award will benefit the affiliate's ongoing Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, an effort to improve local housing conditions by partnering with other community organizations to provide services such as home repair and weatherization that enhance the quality of life in struggling neighborhoods.

For more Information, including participating affiliates and official vote totals, visit www.ahschallenge.com.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

[Habitat for Humanity International](#) (HFHI) 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, rehabilitated, repaired or improved 400,000 houses worldwide, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 2 million people. For more information, or to donate or volunteer, visit Habitat.org.

[Habitat for Humanity - Greater Columbus](#) (HFHGC) works throughout Franklin County, Ohio and has built more than 225 homes since 1987. The Greater Columbus Affiliate, through tithing to HFHI, has also helped to build more than 230 homes in developing countries throughout the world.

HFHGC is one of the only housing agencies in Franklin County targeting families who earn 30-60% of median income. HFHGC partner families are chosen after a careful review process during which Habitat assesses their need for housing; their ability to repay a zero-interest, no-profit mortgage and their willingness to partner with Habitat through sweat equity. All partner families are first-time homebuyers who earn 30-60% of the median income for Franklin County and currently live in substandard housing. Every partner family must perform a minimum of 200-250 hours of sweat equity, which includes working on their own house and those of other Habitat families, attending homeownership classes and providing Habitat program support. Every family also assumes a no-interest, no-profit mortgage with payments based on family income. Because HFHGC holds and services these mortgages, Habitat has a long-term relationship with the homeowners and the communities in which they live.

Also supporting HFHGC is [Habitat's ReStore](#), a resale store that accepts and sells reusable home improvement materials to the general public. Revenue from sales directly offsets 100% of Habitat's administrative costs and assists in both eliminating substandard housing and creating homeownership in Greater Columbus. Habitat's ReStore is located at 3140 Westerville Road, 3 miles southwest of Easton; 2 miles south of Morse Road. The store is open to the public Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 12 – 5 p.m.

About American Home Shield

American Home Shield helped found the [home warranty](#) industry in 1971 and remains an industry leader, servicing 1.4 million customers across 49 states. The Memphis-based company operates three customer service centers, employs over 1,700 employees and over 11,000 approved, independently insured contractors nationwide. American Home Shield is part of the ServiceMaster family of brands, one of the world's largest and most versatile service networks. The company's brands include TruGreen, TruGreen LandCare, Terminix, American Home Shield, ServiceMaster Clean, Merry Maids, Furniture Medic, and AmeriSpec.

About ServiceMaster

With a network of more than 5,100 company-owned and franchise locations, Memphis-based ServiceMaster is one of the world's largest residential and commercial service networks. The company's high profile brands are TruGreen, TruGreen LandCare, Terminix, American Home Shield, ServiceMaster Clean, Merry Maids, Furniture Medic and AmeriSpec. Through approximately 27,000 corporate employees and a franchise network that independently employs over 31,000 additional people ServiceMaster's family of brands serve more than 8.5 million customers every year and hold market-leading positions in residential and commercial lawn

care and landscape maintenance, termite and pest control, home service contracts, furniture repair, home inspections, residential and commercial cleaning and disaster restoration. More information about ServiceMaster can be found at www.servicemaster.com.

Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus, 3140 Westerville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224

(614) HABITAT or (614) 422-4828 or www.habitatcolumbus.org.

Habitat's ReStore, 3140 Westerville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43224

(614) RESTORE or (614) 737-8673 or www.habitatcolumbus.org/restore

We hope that you enjoy receiving news about Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus and Habitat's ReStore. Should you wish to be removed from the Habitat mailing list, please send an email to beverly.martin@martinmarketingllc.com