Whirlpool and Habitat for Humanity To Build 9 Homes in 5 Days To Help Eliminate Poverty Housing in Phoenix

Entertainment Icon Reba McEntire Helps Unveil Details of the 2007 Whirlpool® Building Blocks Project

PHOENIX, Jan. 11 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/-- Today, Whirlpool and Habitat for Humanity announced the second annual Whirlpool® Building Blocks project, a signature program created by the appliance brand to raise awareness of the affordable housing crisis and to help eliminate substandard housing in the United States. The nine homes in the Whirlpool® Building Blocks project will be built from May 14 - 18, 2007, on a recently donated piece of land in Guadalupe, a small community land-locked between Phoenix and Tempe, Arizona. Entertainment icon Reba McEntire, a long-time supporter of Habitat for Humanity, announced this year's program at a press conference this afternoon from Guadalupe's City Hall.

Reba was joined by Mayor Bernadette Jimenez of Guadalupe, Whirlpool's Jeff Terry, and the Valley of the Sun Habitat for Humanity affiliate. Together, they unveiled details about the event.

"The Whirlpool® Building Blocks project is an amazing example of organizations and individuals working together to help improve lives in communities all over the country," said Reba McEntire. "We kicked off this program in my hometown of Nashville, and I'm honored to help the residents of Guadalupe achieve their dreams with our 2007 build."

"Whirlpool® Building Blocks is about bringing people together from all over the country to build homes in partnership with families in need," said Jeff Terry, Director, Corporate Commitments & Strategic Relationships, Whirlpool Corporation. "Our goal is to get people to experience the life- changing work of Habitat for Humanity and to create urgency and energy among consumers to join us to help eliminate poverty housing in this country."

Roughly 300 volunteers will descend on the Phoenix metropolitan area for Whirlpool® Building Blocks, including Whirlpool employees from across the country, national Habitat affiliates and those representing the Phoenix community. From start to finish, the volunteers will raise walls, raise roofs, landscape, paint and perform all other tasks to complete the nine homes in just five days. This year, the Whirlpool® Building Blocks program is seeking volunteers from across the country. Application information is available at www.whirlpool.com/habitat.

"Whirlpool has been a worldwide Habitat partner for years. We feel grateful that the time has come to bring their generosity to our community, and together, we will celebrate with the people of Guadalupe," said Christine Odom, CEO for Valley of the Sun Habitat for Humanity. "The response of Whirlpool to our need is both timely and life changing for our residents."

Arizona is growing three times faster than the rest of the nation. The recent building boom in Phoenix cannot keep pace with the need for decent, affordable housing for low-income families and it has created an affordable housing crisis in the city. The Phoenix metropolitan area must produce 9,000 units of affordable homes a year simply to maintain status quo, but current production is only 1,800 homes per year, according to the Community Development Coalition of Arizona.

And according to census studies, the median price of an existing home in Guadalupe is $58,900 and homes are about 25 years older than those in Phoenix, with many lacking plumbing, kitchen facilities, or phone service. The median wage in Guadalupe is $15 per hour, pricing its 5,500 residents out of Phoenix market homes. Whirlpool employees, customers, and Habitat volunteers will work together to make the dream of ownership a reality for families who would otherwise be priced out of a decent home.

In November 2006, Whirlpool introduced the first Building Blocks project in Nashville, Tennessee. In the Providence Park community, volunteers from every state in the country joined forces to build homes with 10 partner families. In each subsequent year, starting with Phoenix, Whirlpool® Building Blocks will recognize an outstanding Habitat for Humanity affiliate in the United States and its relationship with its local community by organizing a similar weeklong building blitz.

Whirlpool is one of Habitat for Humanity's largest corporate partners. The company donates a refrigerator and range to every new Habitat for Humanity home built in North America. Every year, thousands of Whirlpool employees volunteer their own time to Habitat builds around the country. The partnership began in 1999, and Whirlpool plans to support every new Habitat home built globally by 2011, either through product donations, cash or home sponsorship.

Reba McEntire first partnered with Habitat for Humanity in Nashville. She sponsored an all-women build in 1994, 1995 and 1996. Whirlpool brought Reba into the partnership with Habitat for Humanity in 2004 to help raise awareness for the work of the organization.

About Whirlpool Corporation

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances, with annual sales of more than $19 billion, more than 80,000 employees and more than 60 manufacturing and technology research centers around the world. The company markets *Whirlpool, Maytag, KitchenAid, Jenn-Air, Amana, Brastemp, Bauknecht* and other major brand names to consumers in nearly every country around the world. Additional information about the company can be found at http://www.whirlpoolcorp.com.

About Valley of the Sun Habitat for Humanity

Serving metropolitan Phoenix since 1987, Valley of the Sun Habitat for Humanity is a grassroots ecumenical housing organization whose mission is to eliminate substandard housing. The mission is to build affordable housing and community partnerships that promote spiritual values and individual responsibility. The Valley of the Sun affiliate is one of the most active of the Habitat affiliates and is responsible for the building of more than 400 new homes. Currently the affiliate is active in South Phoenix, as well as, Chandler, Mesa, Glendale and the Capitol Mall area.

Habitat for Humanity International, based in Americus, Georgia, is an ecumenical Christian ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty housing. Habitat dedicated its 200,000th house last summer and has more than one million people living in Habitat homes they helped build and are buying through no-profit, zero-interest mortgages. Additional information is available at: http://www.habitataz.org.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International, based in Americus, Ga., is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since 1976, Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses in nearly 100 countries, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1 million people. For more information, visit www.habitat.org.

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