Fourth Annual Whirlpool(R) Building Blocks Program Kicks Off Community Build in Atlanta With Habitat for Humanity

250 Volunteers Start Five-Day, Eight-Home Blitz Build

ATLANTA, Aug. 31 /PRNewswire/ -- As the sun rises over the Atlanta skyline today, 250 volunteers are picking up hammers, shovels and ladders to help eight Habitat for Humanity partner families achieve their dreams of homeownership. Over the next five days, Whirlpool brand, Habitat for Humanity International, Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity and volunteers from across the country are joining together for the fourth annual Whirlpool® Building Blocks program.

Affordable housing is one of the most crucial needs in this country - in fact, one in three American families spends more than 30 percent of their income on housing, and one in seven spends more than 50 percent.* The Whirlpool® Building Blocks initiative is a signature program created by the appliance brand to help raise awareness of the need for more affordable housing.

"Four years ago, the Whirlpool® Building Blocks program set out to support Habitat's efforts to help eliminate substandard housing, and today we're continuing that mission in Atlanta," said Wes Pringle, vice president of brand business teams, Whirlpool Corporation. "Proper shelter is a basic need. In five days, we'll help make that necessity, as well as the dream of homeownership, a reality for eight Habitat partner families."

This year's build takes place in The Avery neighborhood, a brand-new housing development in the Clayton County area of south metro Atlanta. Atlanta is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country, yet suffers from a deficit of 85,000 affordable homes, according to a 2007 Georgia Tech study. The 2009 build features enhanced green elements as well as energy-efficient construction techniques and materials to reduce the footprint of the build and help the families maintain low utility bills.

"The eight homes built during the Whirlpool® Building Blocks program will be a tremendous boost to The Avery neighborhood and help address the great need for affordable housing throughout our metro area," said Larrie Del Martin, executive director, Atlanta Habitat for Humanity. "In addition, all of the houses are built green with quality, energy-efficient construction techniques that ultimately save homeowners money."

Each year, the Whirlpool® Building Blocks program recognizes an outstanding Habitat for Humanity affiliate in the United States by organizing a weeklong neighborhood blitz build in the affiliate's community. The program kicked off in Nashville in 2006, moved to Phoenix in 2007 and continued to Dallas in 2008.

"The 2009 program is unique as it showcases collaboration between Atlanta Habitat for Humanity and Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity affiliates," said Brenda Rayburn, executive director, Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity. "With the help of 250 volunteers, this partnership is building more than homes - it is changing lives and demonstrating the powerful impact Whirlpool can have in communities across the nation."

Whirlpool Corporation is one of Habitat for Humanity's largest corporate partners, donating a range and ENERGY STAR® qualified refrigerator to every new Habitat home built in North America, totaling more than 100,000 appliances to date. Every year, thousands of Whirlpool employees volunteer their time to Habitat builds around the world. Whirlpool Corporation plans to support every new Habitat home built globally by 2011, through product donations, cash or volunteerism.

To join the Whirlpool® Building Blocks community on Facebook, connect with volunteers past and present, and stay up-to-date on the 2009 build, go to www.facebook.com/whirlpoolbuildingblocks.

**According to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies*

About Whirlpool Brand

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of major home appliances with 2008 sales of approximately $19 billion and 70,000 employees. Whirlpool brand recognizes that consumers lead busy, active lives and

continues to create solutions that help consumers optimize productivity in the home. In addition to designing appliance solutions based on consumer insight, Whirlpool brand is dedicated to creating ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances like the Duet® Steam washer, which uses up to 74 percent less water and 80 percent less energy than conventional washers manufactured before 2004 - helping consumers save money and natural resources. Whirlpool is one of Habitat for Humanity's largest corporate partners, donating a refrigerator and range to every new Habitat for Humanity home built in North America. For more information on Whirlpool brand, please visit www.whirlpool.com. Additional information about the company can be found at www.whirlpoolcorp.com.

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 Atlanta Habitat for Humanity

Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, one of over 1,600 U.S. affiliates of Habitat for Humanity International, is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing affordable housing to Atlanta's working families. Since 1983, volunteers from corporations, faith-based and civic organizations have worked in partnership with qualified homebuyers to construct quality, affordable, green homes in Atlanta, which are then purchased through no-interest, no-profit mortgages. Now able to serve families in 10 counties, Atlanta Habitat celebrated the completion of its 1,000th and 1,001st houses in 2008, its 25th anniversary year. For more information about Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, please visit www.atlantahabitat.org or call 404-223-5180.

About Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity

Southern Crescent Habitat for Humanity is a locally governed, locally managed non-profit housing ministry, serving Clayton, Fayette and Henry counties for over 20 years. The affiliate has built more than 95 homes locally and funded an additional 51 homes outside the US through tithes. The selected families must complete a rigorous screening process which includes financial qualifications as well as motivational indicators. Partner families earn between 25% and 60% of area median income so the assistance being provided is for those who are not candidates for traditional mortgages. Southern Crescent Habitat homeowners contribute a minimum of 250 hours of sweat equity in addition to the other program requirements, such as the required 50 hours of homeowner education. Their comprehensive homeownership program has proven to ensure long term, successful homeownership.

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