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Providence Park: A Model in Affordable Housing and Community Forestry

Sponsored by The Home Depot Foundation

Nashville, Tenn. – Providence Park is a model affordable housing community in southeastern Nashville-Davidson County-developed by Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity (NAHFH). With 138 homes, Providence Park has been built by 35,000 volunteers for Nashville Area Habitat for Humanity across the past four years (and finished a year ahead of schedule). The 43-acre site is the largest all-Habitat community in the country built by volunteers and represents the largest land donation - from Centex Corporation - ever given to NAHFH during its 22-year history and one of the largest to Habitat for Humanity International. NAHFH received its Energy Star certification in 2006. Providence Park is a showcase of the positive impact homeownership and the establishment of a community can have on individuals, families, neighborhoods, and cities.

As with many newly constructed neighborhoods, there are very few trees, particularly in homeowners' yards. Though Providence Park was built with lots of open space, including a five-acre park, the planting of additional trees will be a big improvement, buffering noise from the nearby interstate, helping prevent excessive stormwater runoff, reducing energy requirements with the addition of shade, and providing cleaner air for residents' health.

The Tennessee Environmental Council, in partnership with NAHFH and Nashville Civic Design Center (NCDC) will plant 100 trees, utilizing 200 volunteers, including current residents of Providence Park, to maximize the benefits of trees. Residents will receive tree care training at the time of planting, and can participate in a follow-up training to be held around Tennessee's Arbor Day in March.

Healthy neighborhoods grow best when nurtured by healthy relationships between people, environment, and economy. The urban forest is critical to healthy communities: trees connect us to our neighbors, make our neighborhoods safer, impact our health, and increase property values. The project will be designed for future replication across the state with Habitat affiliates and partners.

On October 21, to celebrate the work of over 35,000 volunteers in the Nashville community that built 138 homes in less than 4 years, over 500 volunteers will gather, including the Mayor, The Home Depot Foundation, Tennessee legislators, Metro Council members, representatives from the Governor's office, TN Housing Development Agency, U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Tennessee Department of Energy, Habitat for Humanity International, The Housing Trust Fund, and the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee to plant a ceremonial tree as part of the dedication ceremony to announce the planned planting of 100 trees in the neighborhood on November 3, 4, 10, and 11. DeAnn Fordham, Program Manager of The Home Depot Foundation will be at the event to talk about the value of trees and recognize the positive works of the Tennessee Environmental Council, Habitat for Humanity, and Nashville Civic Design Center.

NeighborWoods Month is sponsored through a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation. "National NeighborWoods Month offers a unique opportunity for people to understand the contributions of trees to the health, beauty and livability of their communities," said Kelly Caffarelli, Vice President of The Home Depot Foundation. "By partnering with ACT and local NeighborWoods organizations like Tennessee Environmental Council, The Foundation is able to further its goals of investing in the overall health and success of our communities."

More information at: <http://calendar.neighborwoodsmoonth.org> or www.tecn.org

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