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Former U.S. President Carter Announces Los Angeles as Host City for Habitat for Humanity's 2007 'Jimmy Carter Work Project'

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles kicks off three-year campaign to build and repair homes; raise awareness of affordable housing issues

LOS ANGELES (March 31, 2007) – Today, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter formally announced Los Angeles as the host city for Habitat for Humanity's Jimmy Carter Work Project (JCWP) 2007. During the annual, five-day event, thousands of volunteers will build and repair 100 homes in Los Angeles.

Additionally, Habitat for Humanity's Greater Los Angeles affiliate announced the kick-off of its "Building a Greater Los Angeles" campaign, a three-year commitment to build an additional 150 homes. The campaign will incorporate ongoing programs and events that actively address the region's affordable-housing crisis.

During the JCWP, 30 new Habitat homes will be built at two sites including: 11130 S. Vermont Ave. in South Los Angeles, and at its Harborside Terrace subdivision at 308 N. Palos Verdes St. in San Pedro. An additional 70 homes belonging to low-income families will be repaired in communities throughout those areas.

While initial preparation work for the build will start immediately, the official build will take place Oct.28 - Nov. 2, 2007. Volunteers participating in the week-long event will come from across the country and around the world. Celebrities and elected officials are also expected to take part in the build.

"The first step to solving the affordable housing crisis in Los Angeles, and for that matter throughout the world, is to shine a spotlight on the problem and implore all Americans to confront the issue," said President Carter. "Rosalynn and I are incredibly pleased that Los Angeles has agreed to host the project in 2007. We hope our efforts, and those of the thousands of Habitat volunteers who join us, will raise not only walls but awareness of the power we each have to create significant and substantive change in communities throughout California, our country and the world."

President Carter was joined at the press conference by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Los Angeles Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

"Los Angeles is faced with a housing crisis that leaves many of our residents unable to reach the American Dream of homeownership," said Mayor Villaraigosa. "I am proud to be working with President Carter to roll up our sleeves and face this challenge together."

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Erin Rank, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles' president and CEO, also spoke about this opportunity to inspire people into action to address the lack of affordable housing in Los Angeles through the Jimmy Carter Work Project and continuing with the "Building a Greater Los Angeles" three-year campaign.

"It is an honor to host Habitat for Humanity's highest-profile annual event, which will not only help families in our communities, but also send the message that safe and affordable housing is an important part of a families' security and well-being," said Rank. "We are also proud to launch our three-year initiative, 'Building a Greater Los Angeles,' which expands our capacity to transform lives and strengthen communities by providing tangible solutions to the affordable housing crisis countywide."

The "Building a Greater Los Angeles" campaign will actively address the region's affordable-housing crisis by implementing multiple programs aimed at people from all walks of life to become proactive on this issue. Specifics of the campaign include Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles' "A Brush with Kindness" program, which will repair homes for low-income families; "Nickels for Nails," which encourages Los Angeles-area school children to raise funds for Habitat; a housing symposium that will bring together community leaders to address Los Angeles-area housing issues; along with additional outreach, education, volunteer and fundraising initiatives.

"Today, the median income of renter households in Los Angeles is \$34,456, while the median price for a home is \$535,000, making decent, affordable housing all but out of reach for hard working people of modest means," said Rank. "Additionally, less than three percent of new units built in Los Angeles County are considered affordable housing. These are statistics we want to change, and between the JCWP and the Building a Greater Los Angeles' campaign, we hope to unify Angelenos to actively engage in a solution to the affordable housing crisis in this area.