

Habitat for Humanity Montreal gives two low-income families the key to their new home

Montreal, November 20, 2007 – Today, Habitat for Humanity Montreal gave the key to their new home to the Gagné-Beaulieu and Lahaie-Spencer families, two low-income families from the Mercier—Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough in East Montreal.

“This project could not have been completed without the generosity of our founding sponsors,” emphasized Stephen Rotman, president of Habitat for Humanity Montreal. Genworth Financial Canada, a leading mortgage insurance provider, retailing giant Home Depot Canada, and MCAP, Canada’s largest independent mortgage and equipment financing company will give 360,000 dollars to Habitat for Humanity over the next three years for housing projects such as the one we completed this year. “Thanks to their generous donation,” added Rotman, “Habitat for Humanity was able to buy this plot, as well as the one next to it. These three companies are also sponsoring the first of the two houses we have built this year.”

The happy homeowners are Isabelle Lahaie and Kieran Spencer, who will occupy the first floor of the house with their four children: Mathieu, 13, Karolane, 12, Marianick, 10, and 6 year-old Carrie-Anne. Proud homeowners Benoit Gagné and his wife Nadine Beaulieu will occupy the ground floor and basement. with their four children: Alexandre, 14, Sabrina, 13, Mylène, 12, and Frédéric, 7.

The first criteria for selecting a Habitat family is the place of residence, since experience has shown it’s preferable not to move them outside their neighbourhood. Habitat tries to keep families on their home territory. Then, present living conditions are considered as the selected family must be in need of a home at the time of applying. The family must also be able to pay off an interest-free mortgage, and must be ready to work with Habitat for Humanity by putting in 500 hours in “sweat equity” on the construction of their own home or on that of another family.

Habitat houses are built in partnership with recipient families, with the help of donations from companies and individuals, and thanks to the work of many volunteers. Houses are sold to the families at no profit, with no down payment or interest on the mortgage, which is calculated according to the families’ capacity to reimburse. Mortgage payments are deposited in a revolving fund, to provide for the future construction of additional homes. The Habitat for Humanity program promotes homeownership as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty.

About Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity Montreal (www.habitatmontreal.qc.ca) was founded in 1998 and is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity Canada. The organization was founded in 1985, consists of 30,000 volunteers and 70 affiliate organizations from coast to coast, and is a member of Habitat for Humanity International which spans 100 countries, has built over 200,000 homes, and is now building a new home every 24 minutes.

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