



LONDON PARTNERSHIP HELPS LOCAL FAMILY REALIZE DREAM OF HOME OWNERSHIP

LONDON, November 22, 2011 – A London family received the keys to their new home today at an event to mark the completion of the city's third Home at Last project partnership.

The Gonzalez/Lopez Family are celebrating the completion of their newly renovated Huron Street home following extensive renovations including the house's move, which began in July, 2011.

"Community-based partnerships like Home at Last play a vital role in creating opportunities for families while building stronger communities. By working together we can help ensure London families have a safe, affordable place to call home," said Susan Truppe, Member of Parliament for London North Centre, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Home at Last is a partnership made up of the London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR), Habitat for Humanity London Inc., CMHC and the City of London. The goal of this partnership is to help families currently residing in rental housing achieve their dream of homeownership and to improve the existing housing stock in the City of London. The Home at Last partnership received the 2011 Pillar Community Innovation Award under the community collaboration category.

Mayor Joe Fontana shared his support for this important initiative. "Safe and affordable housing is central to a healthy community. The Home At Last partnership has made this a reality. We have come together because our first priority is to take care of people," said Mayor Fontana.

"LSTAR, like its fellow Ontario real estate associations, subscribes to a Quality of Life philosophy, one of the principles of which is providing affordable housing opportunities. Home at Last is one way REALTORS® improve life in our community," said Jack Lane, President of LSTAR.

The project is also supported by the Canadian REALTORS Care Foundation, established to showcase the volunteer work and community involvement of REALTORS® from coast-to-coast, as well as the Ontario Real Estate Association REALTORS Care Foundation, which supports shelter-related charities across the province. "Ontario REALTORS® raise money for our provincial Foundation, which then reinvests it back into those communities," explained Betty Doré, Chairman of the REALTORS Care Foundation and Executive Vice-President of London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®. "As for Home at Last, our members have been involved in every aspect of this initiative, from fundraising to working with the family. We couldn't be prouder of them or of the great job they've done."

“There is a real need for more affordable housing in our community. The Home at Last project is one way to address that need and is intended to remove obstacles to homeownership while providing hope and opportunity for this family,” said Jeff Duncan, CEO, Habitat for Humanity London Inc. “We are delighted to celebrate the successful completion of this third HAL Project with our partners and our new Habitat family. We wish them all the best on their new journey as homeowners,” added Jeff Duncan.

“TD is a long time Habitat supporter and home builder. This fall, 50 TD employees volunteered their time at the Huron Street, Home At Last project to build a home and strong sense of community for a Habitat family. We’re proud to be part of the creation of new beginnings and strong foundations in London,” said Yvette Scrivener, TD Community Relations Manager, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

The Gonzalez/Lopez Family are looking forward to moving into their new home.

“Thanks to the help and support Habitat for Humanity gave us, we are thrilled and grateful that we finally have a new home. All we can say is at last we can say home sweet home,” said the Gonzalez/Lopez Family.

Special thanks goes to the City of London for their contribution to this project as it was instrumental to its success beginning with the donation of the Ridgewood Avenue home. The City covered the cost of relocating the home to its current address and coordinated key players, London Hydro and London Police in the process. As well, CMHC employees contributed funds raised through charitable activities.

Habitat for Humanity London provides a hand-up, not a hand-out through its affordable homeownership program. It provides a safe, decent and affordable home that the family purchases at fair market value and they repay an interest-free mortgage based on their income. Families also invest 500 hours of “sweat equity” and participate in a series of workshops to prepare them for homeownership.

The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) is one of Canada’s fifteen largest real estate associations, representing 1,500 REALTORS® working in Middlesex and Elgin Counties, a trading area of 500,000 residents. LSTAR adheres to a Quality of Life philosophy, supporting growth that fosters economic vitality, provides housing opportunities, respects the environment and builds good communities and safe neighbourhoods.

CMHC has been Canada's national housing agency for more than 65 years. CMHC is committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, environmentally sustainable, affordable housing solutions, while making vibrant, healthy communities and cities a reality across the country.

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