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Contact: Bob Hume  
[bob.hume@stpaul.gov](mailto:bob.hume@stpaul.gov)  
651-266-8518  
651-247-0768

## **Mayor Coleman, Habitat CEO ‘Raise Wall’ on New Affordable Housing in Frogtown**

*Project to bring hope and opportunity to Invest Saint Paul Area*

SAINT PAUL – Mayor Coleman announced today that Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity will be constructing seven new affordable townhomes in the heart of one of the city’s Invest Saint Paul areas. Habitat for Humanity, a trusted nonprofit community developer with a long history of success in delivering affordable homeownership, is partnering with lead sponsors Thrivent Builds and Wells Fargo on the project.

Mayor Chris Coleman joined Habitat for Humanity International CEO Jonathan Reckford, business leaders, Twin Cities Habitat President Sue Haigh and new homeowners on Tuesday, April 29, at noon at 644-656 Dale Street in Saint Paul for a ceremonial wall-raising of the townhomes. In addition to partnering on the project, the City has committed to providing volunteers to help staff the building phase of the townhomes.

“Safe, affordable housing is key to healthy, vibrant communities. We are working through our Invest Saint Paul initiative to address the foreclosure-related issues that disproportionately affect certain areas of our city,” said Mayor Coleman. “I want to thank Habitat for Humanity for recognizing the need for affordable housing in our neighborhoods and stepping up to the plate with the resources and people power necessary to make these townhomes a reality.”

“Homeownership rates are declining, fragile neighborhoods are decimated by boarded and vacant homes, and job losses are real, particularly for the working poor. I can’t think of a time in recent history where the need for safe, decent and affordable homes has ever been more acute.” said Susan Haigh, president of Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity (TCHFH).

Haigh said that the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation asked Habitat to purchase land it owned and build the homes. Despite the mortgage foreclosure crisis, Haigh said the need for affordable housing is still greater than the supply.

“The vast need for decent, affordable housing across the U.S. and around the world requires a collaborative response on many different levels, from both the public and the private sectors. And one of the beauties about Habitat for Humanity is that there’s room for everyone at the table. Everyone is needed and everyone can play a vital role in the solution Habitat is helping build the world over,” Reckford said.

The Dale Street townhomes reflect the trend of Habitat for Humanity's work in urban areas where scarce available land means building multi-unit homes. Building townhomes results in more complicated projects and designs, requiring multiple partners to get the job done.

"Like many cities across the country, the Twin Cities is being called upon to think and work differently when it comes to affordable housing," said Gerald Stenson, executive vice president of Wells Fargo, and vice chair of Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity's board of directors. "Through corporate and community partnerships, we can do more than build homes; we can transform neighborhoods. The Dale Street project is a prime example of how our collaborative efforts can pave the way for revitalization, reinvestment and rebuilding in our communities."

Lead sponsors for the Dale Street project include Thrivent Builds and Wells Fargo. Key community partners include AmeriCorps, the City of St. Paul, Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation, Minnesota Housing, and the Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (S.H.O.P.).

This is the third year of Twin Cities Habitat's involvement with Thrivent Builds, a \$125 million, four-year alliance between Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Habitat for Humanity International. Thrivent Builds will sponsor eight homes this year through the Twin Cities affiliate.

"Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity is real proof that two unique organizations can multiply their impact when they come together to improve communities," said Jeff Hahn, senior director of the Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity alliance. "We're making a difference house by house and family by family--and the impact grows community by community."

This year, Wells Fargo is lead sponsor for nine TCHFH homes – four at Dale Street, four in the City of Ramsey and the 2008 WomenBuild home in St. Paul.

In addition to Habitat's homeownership program, it also will rehabilitate Frogtown area homes through its "A Brush With Kindness" program which is a neighborhood outreach service offering painting, landscaping and repair to homes for existing low-income homeowners. Wells Fargo is sponsoring five homes through "A Brush With Kindness."

The mission of Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity is to eliminate poverty housing from the Twin Cities and to make decent, affordable shelter for all people a matter of conscience. Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity builds community, helping people to be successful homeowners, because homes and families are the foundation of successful communities. The organization achieves this by: building simple, decent and affordable homes and selling them with zero percent interest mortgages; helping low-income homeowners repair and maintain their homes; and offering Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention counseling.

For more information on Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, visit [www.tchabitat.org](http://www.tchabitat.org).

For more information on Mayor Coleman's Invest Saint Paul initiative, visit [www.stpaul.gov/mayor](http://www.stpaul.gov/mayor).

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