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Media Contact:

Kristen Forbriger
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School
Main: 215-627-8671 ext. 46
Mobile: 610-585-4819
kforbriger@youthbuildphilly.org

Students Celebrate Home and Life Makeover with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

YouthBuild Philadelphia and Resources for Human Development Partner to

Provide a Home to Family in Need

Philadelphia, Pa – June 16, 2009 – More than 200 people celebrated the dedication of a newly rehabilitated home in North Philadelphia with a ribbon cutting ceremony held today by YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School and Resources for Human Development (RHD). Funding support for the project was provided by the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD).

"One of the most important symbols of the American Dream has always been owning your own home," said Sarah Duncan, property coordinator for RHD's Affordable Housing program. "We celebrate today another successful renovation of a house that raises the hopes of our community and our city, through a program that provides high-quality, sustainable and affordable housing to first-time home buyers who otherwise could not afford a home of this caliber."

YouthBuild students – all former high school dropouts – rehabilitated the home at 3231 N. Newkirk St. as part of their vocational training program, which they complete while earning their high school diploma.

“This home represents a year of hard work and perseverance,” said Simran Sidhu, executive director of YouthBuild Philadelphia. “Our students had to overcome many obstacles to make this celebration possible, and we are proud of everything they accomplished for the local community over the last year.”

Students took the home through every phase of reconstruction and incorporated green building techniques, such as weatherization, a high efficiency heating system, and recycling of demolition materials. During the ceremony, student Robin Knight shared her experience rebuilding homes with YouthBuild.

“I never thought I would work on a construction site, but it’s changed my life,” said Knight. “I gained back pride in myself, and now I see what we can accomplish as a team with enough determination.”

As part of the dedication, the new residents also received a refurbished laptop from students in YouthBuild’s technology program, and the school’s nursing students presented a welcome basket with first aid and cleaning supplies.

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School is a not-for-profit organization that provides out-of-school youth in Philadelphia the broadest range of tools, supports and opportunities available to become self-sufficient, responsible and productive citizens.

YouthBuild Philadelphia offers an innovative program, which blends a rigorous academic curriculum with 900 hours of community service experience and on-the-job training in construction, technology or nursing.

Students at YouthBuild Philadelphia can earn their high school diplomas and make successful transitions to full-time jobs and post-secondary educational programs. For more information, visit www.youthbuildphilly.org.

Resources for Human Development is a comprehensive human services organization based in Philadelphia, Pa. Its mission is to empower the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society as they build the highest level of independence possible. RHD oversees and supports 150 locally managed programs in 13 states. These innovative and effective programs specialize in helping people who have mental illnesses or developmental disabilities, homeless individuals and families, people rejoining society after incarceration, and people with histories of substance abuse so that they may all build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities.

Press Resources

Website: <http://www.youthbuildphilly.org>

Online Media Kit: <http://www.youthbuildphilly.org/kit.html>

For event photos, contact: kforbriger@youthbuildphilly.org

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