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Press Release

Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) Prepares for Renewed Fight for Change

Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. today announced an organizational realignment to better fight inequities in housing access and opportunities.

“Hurricane Katrina showed the nation that real inequalities continue to exist in housing access. We have the same problems here. We have to engage Virginia in a more aggressive conversation about housing access and equality. We’ve accomplished great things in the past, but we can’t rest on our laurels,” said Connie Chamberlin, President and CEO of HOME.

HOME will now be comprised of three Housing Centers, The Center for Housing Advocacy, The Center for Housing Education, and The Center for Housing Leadership.

According to HOME, the decision to realign is a response to ongoing changes in the housing environment. These include growing challenges, such as the explosion of credit, an exponential increase in abusive lending practices, and a rapidly decreasing supply of affordable housing.

“We can’t continue with business as usual”, said Chamberlin. “because new barriers are going up that are keeping people from finding and keeping homes in safe neighborhoods with good schools. Equality means that everyone has good housing choices.”

HOME was founded in 1971 to stop discrimination in housing access. HOME has won several significant victories, setting legal precedents and providing national impact.

However, inequities in housing access are still widespread.

The realignment is an additional step in implementing HOME's strategic plan, a process that began in 2000 and is based on research and study of Virginia's housing environment.

"It is not enough to protect and defend the housing opportunities we have. We must create new opportunities, and help people learn how to take advantage of those opportunities," says Chamberlin.

The three centers make this possible. Programs in the Center for Housing Education will expand housing opportunities for individuals, emphasizing financial literacy and credit recovery, and promoting and protecting homeownership. The Center for Housing Advocacy will continue HOME's well-known work protecting the housing rights and choices of all people from housing discrimination and unfair housing practices. The Center for Housing Leadership will work at the policy level to create change in housing systems that drive economic, educational, and social opportunities.

The Centers will help HOME focus on its seven major objectives, or, as Chamberlin says, "the seven stepping stones to equality". They include the elimination of housing discrimination, lowering the mortgage default rate, lowering the concentration of poverty and reducing segregated housing patterns, increasing the availability of affordable housing, increasing the homeownership rates, and eliminating the racial and ethnic disparities in homeownership rates. "We are setting some very ambitious, very long term goals," according to Chamberlin, "but unless these changes happen, true equality in housing is just a myth."

The entire community will benefit from HOME's efforts in these areas, which will lead to access to better schools and a better educated workforce, lower crime rates as the concentration of poverty is reduced, an increase in the tax base with increased homeownership, and economic growth as people build useable equity in their homes.

For more information on HOME, visit www.phonehome.org