

Community Heroes

Good Neighbors Make Good Neighborhoods

(NAPSA)—It takes time and energy to help shape and promote the community values that make for better neighborhoods. Happily, there are many in small towns and large cities across the country who think it's worth it. A good example of this is the real estate professionals of the National Association of Realtors, who initiate community projects that help to improve the quality of life in communities across the country, neighborhood by neighborhood.

One such community project is an ongoing partnership they have with Habitat for Humanity to help families realize the dream of owning a home. For the past several years, Realtors have built a Habitat house in each of the cities hosting its annual conference. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast, Realtors' support for rebuilding the Gulf Coast began immediately. More than \$4.6 million in financial assistance was distributed directly to hurricane victims in need. The association put even more muscle behind its commitment to help the Gulf Coast rebuild by sending supplies and volunteer labor; and Realtors continue to dedicate themselves to helping the region in its rebuilding and revitalization efforts.

To help Gulf Coast families find a new place to call home, each of the nation's 54 state and territorial Realtor associations is sponsoring and building a new home in the Gulf Coast region, dubbed the



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Realtor-Habitat Partnership for Gulf Coast Recovery program. Through the program, Realtors will contribute more than \$4 million in additional funds, as well as volunteer their time and labor to help build the homes. Of the 54 Realtor homes being built, seven will be constructed in the Musicians' Village in New Orleans, a community for displaced New Orleans musicians. All 54 homes will be under construction through 2007.

Realtors nationwide, not just in the storm-affected Gulf Coast, initiate many volunteer projects to improve our neighborhoods. Proof of that is in the community improvement projects that Realtors operate, the homeownership workshops they sponsor and the thousands of community-run programs to which they contribute. To learn more about how Realtors support their communities, visit www.realtor.org.