



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA ADVISORY

**FOUR COUNTY RESIDENTS WIN CASH TO BUY THEIR FIRST HOMES IN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY; \$22,500 TO BE GIVEN OUT**

18th Annual Affordable Housing Summit to Award Winners of the “Break the Barrier to Home Ownership” Contest; Top Winner to Receive \$7,500; Three Winners to Receive \$5,000.

DATE: Friday, May 8, 2009
TIME: 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center
5701 Marinelli Road (off Rockville Pike)

North Bethesda, MD – A Montgomery County Public School teacher, a registered nurse, a medical coder, and a working couple – one works as a case manager for developmentally disabled residents and one works for the FDA as an information specialist -- have won cash awards to purchase their first home in Montgomery County.

As winners in the “Break the Barrier to Home Ownership” contest, an annual competition sponsored by the Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County, three winners will each receive \$5,000 and one winner will receive \$7,500 to be used toward the purchase of their first home.

The awards will be formally announced at the 18th Annual Affordable Housing Conference, which will be held on Friday, May 8, 2009 from 8a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, North Bethesda.

About the Sponsors

The \$7,500 first prize is being sponsored by the Affordable Housing Conference and Montgomery County Teachers Federal Credit Union; one \$5,000 award is sponsored by Norman Dreyfuss of IDI Group Companies; one \$5,000 award is sponsored by PNC Bank and another \$5,000 award is sponsored by Amanter Fund and Buffy and William Cafritz.

About the Winners

The cash awards are given annually to the winners of an essay contest sponsored by the Affordable Housing Conference to help Montgomery County residents afford their first home. The “Break the Barrier to Home Ownership” contest asks each applicant to state in 200 words or less what home ownership means to them.

The award winners are: **Sommer Copley** who won the \$7,500 first prize; **Gloria Lopez, Helen Seide and Edwin and Diane Jackson** each won \$5,000 prizes. The money is to be used to help each family with closing costs on the purchase of their new homes.

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More than 120 people applied for the award this year. The winning essays are chosen by members of the Affordable Housing Conference planning committee.

Included below are brief bios of each winner and excerpts of their winning essays:

Sommer Copley: teaches 3rd grade at Wheaton Woods Elementary School. She is grateful to her two aunts who encouraged her to get a teaching degree. She is deeply appreciative of the ability to finally buy a home so that she and her daughter each have their own bedroom. She intends to be a good role model and very involved in her new community. Ms. Copley wrote "I have worked hard to overcome adversity and have been fortunate to have supportive loved ones who have believed in me throughout my journey. God has blessed me with this amazing opportunity" to buy a home I can call my own.



Gloria Lopez: Gloria has three children ages 8, 6, and 1. She works for Washington Hospital Center as a registered nurse. She has lived in subsidized rental housing all her life and views her experience as a stepping stone to something better. She is very excited to buy her first home in Montgomery County.



Helen Seide: Helen grew up in a military family that moved a lot when she was younger. She and her children have lived in transitional housing for the past two years at Crossway Community in Kensington, which offers support services and housing for lower income families in Montgomery County. Her experience at Crossway has taught her the values of stability and consistency. She feels that nothing compares to owning her own home and she is ready for this responsibility. Helen has three children ages 12, 10 and 9 and works as a medical coder. Ms. Seide wrote: "Owning a home would mean that we as a family will have our feet strongly rooted in the foundation and the soil of this land. Having a strong foundation means providing an environment of stability, and less chances of getting knocked down by any 'storm' that might come along".



Diane and Edwin Jackson: Diane is a record management specialist with the FDA and Edwin is a case manager who works with developmentally disabled persons at CSS, Inc. in Gaithersburg. They have lived in a rented townhouse in Olney for a number of years and are looking forward to buying their first home for their family of three boys ages 7, 4, and 3. The Jacksons understand that being a homeowner involves being part of a greater community that looks out for each other every day. In their essay, Edwin wrote that "It takes financial, physical and mental preparation to be a homeowner."



The AHC "Break the Barrier to Homeownership" contest has become an annual event at the county's Affordable Housing Conference. To date, the contest has awarded \$115,000 to first-time home buyers, making it possible for 18 families to purchase homes in Montgomery County. All 2009 awardees (and their families) will be present at the Affordable Housing Conference on Friday, May 8, 2009 to receive their awards during a 12:30 p.m. luncheon.

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