



For Immediate Release
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Media Advisory

FOUR COUNTY RESIDENTS WIN CASH AWARDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The 20th annual Affordable Housing Summit includes an awards ceremony to give a total of \$24,000 to four first-time homeowners in the annual “Break the Barrier to Home Ownership” Contest. Since 2000, The AHCMC closing cost assistance program has awarded \$189,000 to first-time home buyers, making it possible for 28 families to purchase homes in Montgomery County.

This year, an assistant property manager, multimedia technician, housekeeper, consultant, nurse and grant management specialist have been chosen as winners in the 2011 “Break the Barrier to Home Ownership” Closing Cost Assistance Contest. The contest is an annual competition sponsored by the Affordable Housing Conference of Montgomery County.

The 2011 Closing Cost Awards will be formally announced at the 20th annual Affordable Housing Conference Summit which will be held on Monday, May 9, 2011 at the 12:45 pm Luncheon Awards Ceremony at Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, North Bethesda.

The 2011 award winners are: **Chantel Reid, Taye Woldemicheal** and his wife **Meaza Afework, Vivian Ramirez** and her daughter **Daniela Gott** and **Gilberto Castillo**. Ms. Reid will receive \$7,500 and the three other recipients will each receive a gift of \$5,500 to help with closing costs when they purchase their new homes.

The Conference is grateful to its 2011 closing cost assistance sponsors: PNC Bank, Norman Dreyfuss of IDI Group Companies, GCAAR, and Wiencek + Associates Architects + Planners.

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.

More than 100 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:



Chantel Reid: Ms. Reid is an assistant property manager with CMC Management at Kentlands in Gaithersburg. She has one son, Cayden, age 1. She is deeply appreciative of the financial assistance provided through the Conference's closing cost assistance program. "Home Ownership is my dream. It will provide my son with a stable future and a place where he can always come to."



Taye Woldemicheal and Meaza Afework: Mr. Woldemicheal works for Verizon as a multimedia technician and Ms. Afework is a housekeeper for Washington Sport Club. They emigrated from Ethiopia in 2005. Home ownership is a clear goal for both of them. They would really like to buy a home so that each of their two children, Beemnet (15) and Dagem (12) can have "separate rooms they can craft and call theirs". Mr. Woldemicheal states "Home is a zone of real comfort and love".



Vivian Ramirez and Daniela Gott: Ms. Ramirez is a consultant with Inter American Development Bank and Daniela Gott (25) is a nurse with a local doctor's office. Ms. Ramirez emigrated from Bolivia 10 years ago with her two daughters. Ms. Ramirez says "Growing up in developing countries taught me to appreciate things more deeply rather than superficially." Home Ownership is her life-long dream to accomplish for herself and for the future of her two daughters.



Gilberto Castillo: Mr. Castillo is a grants management specialist for the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, MD. He came from the Dominican Republic to Montgomery County as a young child with his parents. Mr. Castillo is the first in his family to graduate from college. Due to unforeseen circumstances and economic turmoil his parents have still not been able to reach their goal of home ownership, but Mr. Castillo promised his parents that one day he would own a place to call their own and finally make their dream of home ownership a reality. His determination is an inspiration to all.

All 2011 awardees (and their families) will be present at the Affordable Housing Summit on Monday, May 9, 2011 to receive their awards during a 12:45 p.m. luncheon.

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