



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Charlie Maier 301-424-4141
Lise Tracey, 301-520-1587
Susan Yancy 240-773-9060

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

The 19th annual Affordable Housing Summit includes an awards ceremony to award \$22,500 to three first-time homeowners in the annual “Break the Barrier to Home Ownership” Contest.

North Bethesda, MD – A government worker, a nurse, research assistant and a bookkeeper have been chosen as winners in the 2010 “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 three winners will receive a total of \$22,500 to help them purchase their first home in Montgomery County.

The awards will be formally announced at the 19th annual Affordable Housing Conference which will be held on Monday, May 3, 2010 from 8a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, North Bethesda.

The award winners are: Ana Bolanos, Ana Ruiz, Naomi Mwangi and her husband Zakayo Kabuga. They each will receive a gift of \$7,500 to help with closing costs when they purchase their new homes.

The Conference is grateful to its 2010 closing cost assistance sponsors: \$5,000 sponsored by HSBC Bank, USA, PNC Bank and Norman Dreyfuss of IDI Group Companies, \$3,000 from GCAAR, and \$2,500 from Amanter Philanthropy and MCT Federal Credit Union.

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:

Ana Bolanos: Ms. Bolanos is an administrative support specialist with NIST – Department of Commerce in Germantown. She has two daughters, ages 3 and 4. She is deeply appreciative of the financial assistance provided through the Conference’s closing cost assistance program.

“Home Ownership is my dream. To me, it means progress and stability and is a sure step towards a better future for my family.”



Ana Bolanos (left), her daughters and Lise Tracey, Affordable Housing Conference Executive Director.

Ana Ruiz: Ms. Ruiz is a nurse for International Pediatrics in Rockville and a single mother of two pre-teenage kids. Home ownership is a clear goal for her. She inherited her mother’s determination, work ethic and dedication to the family and is trying to raise her children in a stable home just like her Mom did for her and her seven siblings. Ms. Ruiz states “Finding the right home, with careful planning, my kids will have stability.”



Ana Ruiz (left) shown with Lise Tracey, AHC Executive Director

Naomi Mwangi and Zakayo Kabuga: Ms. Mwangi is a research assistant with Westat and Mr. Kabuga is a bookkeeper with Bloom Grocery Store. They emigrated from Kenya in 2006 and have two sons, ages 7 and 14.

Ms. Mwangi states “Growing up in Kenya, I never thought I would ever have an opportunity to buy a house in which I could permanently settle, and call my home. Due to the nature of my father’s job, my family was commonly known in our community as “nomads” because until my father retired, we never lived in the same house more than two years.”



Naomi Mwangi (left), her husband Zakayo Kabuga and Lise Tracey, AHC Executive Director

The AHCMC “Break the Barrier to Homeownership” contest has become an annual event at the county’s Affordable Housing Conference. To date, the contest has awarded \$142,500 to first-time home buyers, making it possible for 21 families to purchase homes in Montgomery County. All 2010 awardees (and their families) will be present at the Affordable Housing Summit on Monday, May 3, 2010 to receive their awards during a 12:30 p.m. luncheon.

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