

## ***Urbana Raises \$15,000 for Habitat for Humanity***

### ***Youth to benefit in more ways than one***

*Ottawa, Ontario* –The fourth annual URBANA gave Habitat for Humanity’s 2009 Youth Build a spectacular start with a fundraising boost and heightened awareness.

Organized by Dharma Developments and held on April 24, 2008 in the National Archives Library of Canada, the fundraising event raised \$15,000 for Habitat for Humanity’s latest project – the first Youth Build to happen in Ottawa.

This year’s party featured a live, perspective altering performance, ***If Walls Could Talk***, with poet and author, Oni the Haitian Sensation. Oni wrote poems based on real stories of low income working families who are living in Habitat for Humanity homes. The poems were performed by six young people, reminding the audience of the hardship endured by the working poor and the impact it has on all members of the family, including children.

Habitat for Humanity gives families the opportunity to own a home, which changes their lives and helps to break the cycle of poverty. For children of these families, a Habitat home provides stability and security, and the chance to have a bedroom they can call their own.

“My room has a soul a boundary against intrusion.  
Moving from place to place caused me much confusion.”

Elizabeth Rock, President of the National Capital Region Habitat for Humanity pointed out that \$15,000 is roughly the cost of three bedrooms, meaning that three more kids in this region will have a room they can call their own, a refuge, and a place where happy childhood memories can live.

While the importance of cause took centre stage, guests were rewarded for their support with a truly enjoyable evening – mingling to the sounds of Rumbavant while their taste buds enjoyed the aromatic cuisine of Central and South America from Mambo Restaurant. One lucky guest won a trip for two to Whistler, BC courtesy of WestJet and Uniglobe Travel, while another took home a gift basket courtesy of Bridgehead coffee. “It was a fun evening for a very worthwhile cause,” said guest Edward Vlasblom. Akash Sinha, President of Dharma Developments said, “I couldn’t be happier with the success of this year’s event. Every year tops the last.”

The event was supported by major sponsor, Gowlings; community sponsor, Direct Energy; media partner, Metro News; catering sponsor, Mambo Nuevo Latino Restaurant with donations from Bel Fiore, Bridgehead and Vision2Voice Communications. Dharma Developments hosts URBANA every year as an opportunity to bring friends and colleagues together to support families less fortunate with their housing needs.

### **About Oni the Haitian Sensation**

Oni the Haitian Sensation has been called, Canada's foremost mistress of Slam' and, 'Ottawa's poetry diva'. Her message is full of wit, wisdom and wonder and she brings her poetry to life with performances that are sultry, steamy and full of passion and energy.

Oni uses her words to empower, educate and entertain. Never shy to tackle the toughest issues, her work is inspired by her personal experience, the world around her, and her belief that she can change the world of poverty.

A citizen of the world, Oni was born in Canada, is of Haitian decent, and was shaped (in part) by the violent, drug infested streets of Los Angeles. Her travels through Europe and Australia have brought her international acclaim. Here in Canada, she has been a featured performer at the National Arts Centre's Fourth Stage and has been commissioned to write poetry for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the CBC, the Bytowne Museum and Ottawa's Winterlude Festival.

### **About Habitat for Humanity's 2009 Youth Build**

Habitat for Humanity National Capital Region (Habitat NCR) builds simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with low-income working families, sponsors and volunteers. The goal is to promote affordable housing and home ownership with an interest-free, long-term mortgage as a means to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The 2009 project will be the first time Habitat NCR will undertake a Youth Build. Youth Build uses the talents of about 400-500 young people between the ages of 16 and 29. Under the guidance and mentorship of skilled trades' people and seasoned volunteers, they will learn new technical and leadership skills. The goal is to promote career opportunities in building trades to help meet the demand for skilled labour.

### **About Urbana**

In its fourth year, Urbana is an annual party that showcases outstanding local artists and provides support to families in Ottawa in their struggle to find decent, safe, affordable housing. Dharma Developments owners Akash and Katy Sinha have been hosting Urbana every year since their company's launch in 2005, as a means to give back to the community in which they have been supported. Since then, Urbana has raised \$65,000.

For more information about the event, Habitat for Humanity's 2009 Youth Build and Urbana, visit [www.dharmadevelopments.com](http://www.dharmadevelopments.com).

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