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**Paul's Place and Harford Habitat for Humanity Awarded \$400,000 to Provide Low-Income Families with Food, Housing and Education**

*Bank of America Charitable Foundation's Neighborhood Excellence Initiative® invests \$20 million to strengthen communities across the country*

**BALTIMORE, MD.** – The Bank of America Charitable Foundation today announced its continuing support of nonprofits in the Baltimore community, providing more than \$400,000 in unrestricted funding to address critical social issues through the bank's *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* (NEI). The program, which is helping to sustain nonprofits during this challenging economic time and increase their long-term viability, is investing \$20 million globally this year in addition to the more than \$90 million committed over the last five years.

Paul's Place and Harford Habitat for Humanity have been named 2009 Baltimore Neighborhood Builders® through which they will each receive \$200,000 in unrestricted grant funding and participate in Bank of America's Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program® with other nonprofit leaders from 45 communities across the country and London.

Paul's Place offers more than 20 programs that respond to the needs of the Washington Village/Pigtown neighborhood and surrounding Southwest Baltimore communities, which collectively have the seventh-greatest concentration of urban poverty in the nation. The organization provides access to education, job skills building, housing and healthcare. In the past year, Paul's Place has served more than 60,000 meals for neighbors and supported the creation or renovation of 18 homes in the neighborhood.

Harford Habitat for Humanity is also strengthening the community by providing affordable, quality housing for low-income families in Baltimore. The organization partners with low-income families and the community to build, renovate and repair homes, creating homeownership opportunities for families that would otherwise not have access to them.

"Bank of America is supporting the Baltimore community through the *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* and other lending, investing and community development programs that address critical social issues and align with our corporate social responsibility efforts," said William Couper, Mid-Atlantic President at Bank of America. "In our current

economy, communities need our support more than ever, and this program is designed to give that support through the effective combination of partnership, leadership development and flexible funding.”

NEI honors two other categories of community leaders: **Local Heroes**, who contribute significantly to the health of their neighborhood, will direct a \$5,000 donation from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation to an eligible nonprofit of their choice, and **Student Leaders®**, who are exemplary high school juniors and seniors with a passion for improving their communities.

**2009 Baltimore Local Heroes are:**

- **Susan Baker**, funds will be donated to My Sister’s Circle, Inc.
- **Sharon Black**, funds will be donated to People’s Rights Fund, Inc.
- **Robert Cradle**, funds will be donated to Rob’s Barbershop Community Foundation, Inc.
- **Barbara Kornblatt**, funds will be donated to Learning Inc
- **Harry Rhodes**, funds will be donated to Chesterwye Foundation

Earlier this year, 230 Student Leaders from across the country participated in paid, eight-week summer internships (five Baltimore students interned at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore) and in a weeklong Bank of America student leadership summit in Washington, D.C. to learn about national service/civic engagement, financial education and how nonprofits, businesses and government partner to create positive change.

**2009 Baltimore Student Leaders are:**

- **Adele Hart**, of Bel Air, is a senior at Notre Dame Prep
- **Kiauhna Hayes**, of Baltimore, is a graduate of Baltimore Polytechnic Institute
- **Nannette Omolaja**, of Odenton, is a senior at Meade Senior High School
- **Moriah Smalls**, of Baltimore, is a graduate of Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School
- **Natalie Francis**, of Baltimore, is a senior at Towson High School

All 2009 Baltimore NEI winners will be honored at a special awards event this fall.

**WHEN:** Thurs., Oct. 22, 2009

**WHERE:** The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, Druid Hill Park

**TIME:** Remarks begin at 6:30 p.m.

*Editor’s note: Event is open to news media, and interviews can be scheduled in advance.*

**About the Neighborhood Excellence Initiative**

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation's *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* annually recognizes organizations, individuals and students who have shown a commitment to improving their communities. In its sixth year, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation has committed more than \$110 million globally to the NEI program since its inception.

By the end of 2009, more than 800 leaders from the nonprofit awardees will have participated in the Neighborhood Excellence Leadership Program®, which builds a network of community leaders across the country to share learning and insight in areas including strategic communications, financial management, succession planning, and long-term development. Through NEI, Bank of America has also encouraged community leadership at the grassroots level by recognizing more than 1,200 high school students and 1,200 community leaders over the last six years.

### **Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy**

Building on a long-standing tradition of investing in the communities it serves, Bank of America this year embarked on a new, ten-year goal to donate \$2 billion to nonprofit organizations engaged in improving the health and vitality of their neighborhoods. Funded by Bank of America, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation gave more than \$200 million in 2008, making the bank the most generous financial institution in the world and the second largest donor of all U.S. corporations in cash contributions. Bank of America approaches investing through a national strategy called "neighborhood excellence" under which it works with local leaders to identify and meet the most pressing needs of individual communities. Bank associate volunteers contributed more than 900,000 hours in 2008 to enhance the quality of life in their communities nationwide. For more information about Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy, please visit [www.bankofamerica.com/foundation](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation).

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