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SUMMARY: UNIVERSITY PARK ALLIANCE AND HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PARTNER TO BUILD FIRST LEED CERTIFIED HOME FOR UA EMPLOYEE

Akron, Ohio, September 12, 2011 – University Park Alliance and Habitat for Humanity of Summit County announced that construction is underway on the first Habitat home in Summit County to be certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) by the U.S. Green Building Council. The future home of a University of Akron employee is located on Johnston St. in University Park and is sponsored by UPA. LEED certification provides third-party verification that the house is designed and built using strategies intended to improve performance in metrics such as energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

“This house is especially significant to UPA in that it not only supports the sustainable urban living mission of our organization but also because its ownership by a university employee supports our Anchor Institution strategy,” said Eric Johnson, executive director for University Park Alliance. “UPA works to leverage the resources of our Anchor Institutions to develop more businesses, jobs and, ultimately, residents in our geography. Area Anchor Institutions employ a total of more than 14,000 but only a little more than 18% reside in University Park. This house is an example of how we can create quality affordable housing for these employees as well as work together to achieve our shared vision of creating a thriving urban community in University Park.”

The homeowner, Sharon Smothers, has been employed by The University of Akron since 2009, is a single parent of three, and is actively pursuing her Bachelors degree. Qualified lower-income families in need of affordable housing purchase Habitat homes and also help with construction. UPA made a \$90,000 donation to Habitat for Humanity of Summit County required to finance construction of the home and will provide to the homeowner a \$10,000 down payment assistance loan.

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“We are pleased to have the support of great partners like University Park Alliance,” said Rochelle Fisher, president & CEO of Habitat for Humanity of Summit County. “We are also proud to contribute to the redevelopment of the University Park neighborhood through the construction of this groundbreaking LEED certified home. Habitat uses LEED for the healthy home -- better indoor air quality + less pollutants = healthier families. We use energy efficiency as less energy used = more money toward better living monthly and less to utilities. And, we use sustainability because a house that lasts longer, serves families longer.”

About University Park Alliance

University Park Alliance a non-profit community development corporation dedicated to the revitalization of University Park, the 50-block urban neighborhood surrounding The University of Akron. UPA's comprehensive urban reinvestment strategy is rooted in the importance of "placemaking," a holistic approach to community revitalization that plans and designs communities based on the needs of people. UPA's efforts are focused on four programmatic areas: real estate development, economic development, social and human capital development, and community/civic engagement development. UPA receives major funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and its partners include The University of Akron, City of Akron, Summa Health System, Akron Beacon Journal, Akron Children's Hospital, Akron General Health System, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, Greater Akron Chamber, Akron Public Schools, and the University Park residential and business community. For information about UPA, call 330-777-2072 or visit www.upakron.com.

About Habitat for Humanity of Summit County

Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry, works in partnership with people in need to improve the condition in which they live. Habitat challenges people of compassion to provide the initial capital - through gifts and no-interest loans - to build simple, decent homes with the inadequately sheltered. For information about Habitat for Humanity of Summit County, call 330-745-7734 or visit www.hfhsummitcounty.org.