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For Immediate Release

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South County Habitat for Humanity aims to improve home affordability in Washington County through new national advocacy campaign

Habitat organizations across the country are mobilizing to influence policy and system changes at the federal, state and local levels

Charlestown, R.I. Nearly 19 million households across the United States are spending at least half of their income on a place to live, often forgoing basic necessities such as food and health care to make ends meet. In Washington County, 62% of households cannot afford the median priced home which is currently a staggering \$312,000. The stability that housing should bring continues to remain out of reach for many people.

On Wednesday, South County Habitat for Humanity joined Habitat organizations across the country to launch a new national advocacy campaign aimed at improving home affordability for 10 million people in the U.S. over the next five years.

Marking significant growth in Habitat's commitment to ensuring that everyone has a safe and decent place to call home, the Cost of Home campaign seeks to identify and improve policies and systems through coordinated advocacy efforts at the local, state and federal levels.

Cost of Home focuses on improving housing affordability across the housing continuum in four specific policy areas: increasing supply and preservation of affordable homes, equitably increasing access to credit, optimizing land use for affordable homes, and ensuring access to and development of communities of opportunity.

South County Habitat for Humanity already has taken several steps toward these goals. Recently SCHH joined the Housing Network of Rhode Island for a rally at the state house to bring attention to the ever increasing need to invest in affordable housing opportunities. SCHH has also begun conducting 'advocacy trainings' to train volunteers, staff and supporters how to effectively advocate with local and state officials.

"Our goal with advocacy efforts such as the Cost of Home campaign is to shed light on the severe shortage of affordable housing, particularly in Washington County. The number of cost-burdened families applying to our homeownership programs has tripled in the past year. There needs to be a greater emphasis on affordable housing at the State and Federal levels so we can start working together towards a solution," remarked Colin Penney, Executive Director of South County Habitat for Humanity.

More details about Habitat's Cost of Home policy platform and campaign activation are available at habitat.org/costofhome. For more information or to speak to South County Habitat for Humanity about the campaign, please contact Alicia Johnson at Alicia@southcountyhabitat.org or 401-213-6711 x300.

About South County Habitat for Humanity

South County Habitat for Humanity is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. For more general information, call 401-213-6711 or visit our website at www.southcountyhabitat.org.

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