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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Habitat for Humanity and Thrivent Financial launch 'build mobile' to rally Americans on poverty housing

Experiential exhibit to crisscross the United States to educate people about substandard housing

MINNEAPOLIS and AMERICUS, GA. (Sept. 8, 2005) – Poverty housing—with its corresponding sights, sounds and feel—will soon be rolling into a neighborhood near you. Literally.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Habitat for Humanity International today unveiled a mobile education center (a 67-foot semi-trailer) that will crisscross the nation, traveling to many communities over the next three years to give visitors a powerful, interactive experience of substandard housing and help them learn what they can do to address this problem.

The truck, called the “Thrivent Builds Mobile,” is part of a unique alliance between two national nonprofit organizations aimed at combating the chronic problem of substandard housing. More than 13 million American households pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing. Millions more live in overcrowded conditions or reside in housing with severe physical deficiencies, such as having no hot water, electricity or toilet.

The Thrivent Builds Mobile features stirring testimonials using images and graphics with sets punctuated by dramatic lighting and sound, moving doors and video screens. Says a young woman in a real-life video testimonial: “It’s cold in here, ’cause if the temperature drops, there’s no way to heat the house.” Says another woman living in substandard housing: “Every time someone upstairs goes to use the restroom, it comes down here into this tub – their waste. Everything down here is rot.”

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The 12-minute experience connects visitors—physically and emotionally—with substandard housing and how safe, decent, affordable housing can be developed. The experience also illustrates the emotional impact of substandard housing as well as the hope and dignity that is a byproduct of decent, affordable housing. The experience is designed to motivate people to take action to help eliminate substandard housing.

Called Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity, the alliance—a four-year, \$100-million commitment by Thrivent Financial—includes plans to construct an additional 500 Habitat homes per year, engage thousands of volunteers in Habitat builds, promote short-term Habitat home building trips abroad, provide large grants to measurably improve substandard housing in specific neighborhoods, and supplement gifts from Thrivent Financial’s nearly 3 million members to Habitat for Humanity International. The new alliance makes Thrivent Financial Habitat’s largest ally in the organization’s 30-year history.

“We can talk about substandard housing until we’re blue in the face,” says Paul Leonard, chief executive officer of Habitat for Humanity International, “but sometimes words just aren’t enough to cause people to care. When people visit this one-of-a-kind mobile education unit and experience substandard housing firsthand—when they see what it looks like and feel what it feels like—I believe visitors will be forever changed and motivated to take action.

“We are grateful to Thrivent Financial for developing the Thrivent Builds Mobile and allowing thousands of people across the nation to learn more about this important issue,” Leonard added.

“The Thrivent Builds Mobile will be a rallying point that spurs thousands of people nationwide to take action to reduce substandard housing,” said Bruce Nicholson, Thrivent Financial chairman, president and chief executive officer. “We believe the Thrivent Builds Mobile will help people realize that they can personally make a dramatic difference in people’s lives where they live and raise their families.” The first section of the exhibit incorporates the look and feel of substandard housing as well as testimonials of those who have lived in such housing (e.g., housing that is drafty, bug-infested, having leaky roofs, broken fixtures, exposed electrical wires, and more). The exhibit also provides information, statistics and context for why some people find themselves in this situation.

Doors then open to another section of the truck that display the sights, sounds and feel of hope. Images and testimonials of volunteers and Habitat homeowners predominate here, together with the sights and sounds of laughter and celebration as Thrivent Builds Mobile visitors experience Habitat housing being constructed and dedicated. This section of the truck puts a human face on what can be achieved through collaboration and service and shows how homeowners and volunteers are transformed and empowered by the experience.

Finally, the truck provides information about how individuals and organizations can address substandard housing through advocacy, donations and volunteerism with emphasis on new opportunities to get involved through Thrivent Financial's 1,362 chapters nationwide. "A decent, affordable home is the foundation of economic stability for most Americans," said Nicholson. "Thrivent Financial's members recognize that something isn't right when many American families find themselves living in substandard housing, enduring overcrowded conditions or paying more than half of their income for their housing. The Thrivent Builds Mobile is an expression of our commitment to help our members and the general public understand the plight of people in substandard housing while literally opening the door to opportunities to offer their neighbors a hand up."

The Thrivent Builds Mobile was constructed in Atlanta by Mobile Media Enterprises Inc. and is operated by a three-person road crew in conjunction with a local site coordination team comprising staff and volunteers affiliated with Thrivent Financial's regional financial offices and chapters and Habitat's local affiliates. The truck has four pull-out sections, giving the vehicle the interior space needed for realistic displays of substandard housing and new housing as well as the accompanying technology necessary to support the experience.

The stories of both Habitat for Humanity homeowners and volunteers are central to the Thrivent Builds Mobile experience. Families selected to partner with Habitat for Humanity are among the millions of American households who are forced to pay more than half of their income for housing, endure overcrowded conditions or live in houses with severe physical deficiencies. Habitat partner families are hardworking people who do not qualify for conventional home loans and need a hand up, rather than a hand out.

Habitat for Humanity does not give away houses. Rather, it offers homeownership opportunities to families whose income is typically 30 to 50 percent of the area's median income. In most cases, prospective U.S. Habitat homeowner families make a \$500 down payment and contribute 300 to 500 hours of "sweat equity" on the construction of their home or someone else's home. Because Habitat homes are largely built using donations of labor, mortgage payments are kept more affordable.

Thrivent Financial and its members have worked with Habitat for Humanity since 1991. Together, they have built more than 500 homes, raised more than \$25 million and contributed more than 1.4 million volunteer hours in homebuilding time.

For information about the Thrivent Builds Mobile, visit www.thriventbuilds.com.

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since its founding in Americus, Ga., in 1976, Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses in nearly 100 countries, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than one million people. For more information, visit www.habitat.org.

About Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, with main offices in Minneapolis and Appleton, Wis., is a not-for-profit Fortune 500 financial services organization helping nearly 3 million members achieve their financial goals and give back to their communities. Founded to help Lutherans care for and support one another in time of need, Thrivent Financial is a faith-based membership organization guided by Christian principles, and is called to improve the quality of life of its members, their families and their communities by providing solutions that focus on financial security, wellness and caring for others. Thrivent Financial is organized into 1,362 local volunteer groups, called chapters. Chapters meet regularly to carry out a variety of volunteer efforts, fundraising projects and educational programs to help their communities and people in need. Thrivent Financial and its members provide approximately \$200 million annually for programs and activities that support congregations, schools, charitable organizations and needy individuals. For more information visit www.thrivent.com.

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For photos or b-roll of the Thrivent Builds Mobile, contact Dave Rustad (612-340-7037) or Duane Bates (229-924-6935 x2541) or visit www.thriventbuilds.com/media/index.html.