



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

News Release

Contact: Rose Lindsay (W) 612.673.5015; (C) 612.250.8661

City of Minneapolis and Partners Launch *Houses for Heroes*, a New Affordable Housing Program for Active Military and Veterans

May 19, 2014 (Minneapolis, MN) – On Tuesday, May 20, the City of Minneapolis will kick-off a new affordable housing program designed for active military and veterans and their families purchasing homes in Minneapolis. The event will take place at 5200 Penn Avenue North, Minneapolis, 55430 – a new home, available for purchase now, designed with a veteran and their family in mind by the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC) as part of the City of Minneapolis’ Green Homes North initiative.

The kick-off event will take place at 10:30 a.m. and feature a brief program with comments by City of Minneapolis Council President Barb Johnson, City of Minneapolis Residential & Real Estate Development Senior Project Coordinator Cherie Shoquist, Reserve Aid Executive Director Polly Weidenkopf, and President of Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation Carolyn Olson.

“The City of Minneapolis is committed to ensuring our military and veterans have a place to call home,” said Minneapolis City Council President Johnson. “Through great partnerships with national organizations like Reserve Aid and local nonprofits like Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation and others, Minneapolis is able to provide more military and veterans with access to affordable homes; after all they have sacrificed for us, helping them come home to their own home is the least we can do.”

According to Hennepin County Veteran’s services, over 12,000 Reservist and National Guard members have returned to Minnesota since 2007. The need for affordable housing options continues to grow as these veterans complete school, marry and start families.

“I am lucky to own a good home in North Minneapolis,” said Sergeant John Hoff, an Afghan War vet who also served stateside during the First Gulf War. “I am invested in my community and want the same thing for my fellow veterans. Access to affordable housing, the opportunity to belong to and participate in their community – for all that they’ve given, who deserves it more? I wrote to Council President Johnson about starting some like this, something that

provided affordable homes to soldiers back when I was stationed in Afghanistan. I am very excited the City is launching Houses for Heroes.”

Minneapolis Houses for Heroes is a down payment and closing cost assistance program to provide active military or veterans of the Global War on Terror with affordable homeownership opportunities in Minneapolis. The program offers up to \$20,000 in the form of a zero-percent interest deferred loan that is forgiven at the end of five years. Priority for the program will be given to Reservist or National Guard members of the Global War on Terror who are currently deployed or have recently returned from deployment.

Reserve Aid, a national nonprofit organization that assists military families who have a Reservist or National Guard member on full-time deployment or who have recently returned from deployment or a combat zone or homeland security position, has committed \$200,000 in funding for the program in 2014. Funds will be administered through GMHC on behalf of the City of Minneapolis. First time homebuyers participating in the Houses for heroes program will be encouraged to participate in homeownership education and counseling. Homeownership counseling services will be available through the Minnesota Homeownership Center, Home Stretch, or Framework.

“Reserve Aid is honored to be a partner in the Minneapolis Houses for Heroes program,” said Reserve Aid Executive Director Polly Weidenkopf. “As service members transition back into civilian life, home ownership is an important part of their future success. We are pleased that we can play a role in that success.”

Other program partners include Hennepin County Veteran Services, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

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Attached: 5200 Penn Avenue North, Green Homes North home built by Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation as part of Green Homes North program for veteran and family (Photo by City of Minneapolis)