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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Habitat Buffalo Dedicates First Home in Cheektowaga in Partnership with Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC)

Buffalo, New York (January 19, 2019) — Habitat for Humanity Buffalo will dedicate a new home on Saturday, January 19, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The house is located at 11 Normandy Avenue in Cheektowaga.

This is the first home built by Habitat Buffalo in the Town of Cheektowaga, and is the first home the organization acquired in partnership with the Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation (BENLIC). The house was rehabbed by Habitat Buffalo volunteers over the last ten months.

"We are excited to continue our partnership with Habitat Buffalo," said Jocelyn Gordon, Executive Director of BENLIC. "We can do more together, and we are enthused to make a bigger impact in improving the quality of housing in our community through this collaboration."

For more than 30 years, Habitat Buffalo has constructed more than 300 houses in the City of Buffalo. Nearly two-thirds of Habitat Buffalo's projects have been rehabbed houses that were donated to the organization or purchased at a low cost. As property values increase, Habitat Buffalo has looked to community partners and other municipalities for new construction opportunities. The organization is positioned to build 20 homes each year sustainably by 2020.

"We have become more innovative and collaborative in order to serve more families," said Teresa Bianchi, Executive Director of Habitat Buffalo. "We are thankful for this collaboration with BENLIC and with the Town of Cheektowaga. Because of this partnership, a distressed home has been repaired and added back to the tax rolls, and another family will achieve their dream of homeownership."

The house on Normandy Avenue will be dedicated to Mr. Byaombe Shabani & Mrs. Marie Etonyemya. The couple has been in Habitat Buffalo's Homebuyer Program since 2015, and has worked 500 hours of "sweat equity" in order to purchase their house. Mr. Shabani and Mrs. Etonyemya will live in the home with their five children.

Saturday's dedication will be attended by the new homeowners, their family, Habitat Buffalo staff, and Habitat volunteers. Ms. Bianchi, Ms. Gordon, and Mr. Shabani will be available for interviews.

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Habitat for Humanity Buffalo works to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through homeownership. Habitat Buffalo was established by a group of dedicated volunteers, concerned about the lack of affordable homes in the City of Buffalo. Seeking to create homeownership opportunities for low income families, Habitat Buffalo subsidizes the cost of homes through donations (both, monetary and materials) and volunteer labor. Families that purchase homes through our program are required to first contribute 500 hours of "sweat equity", working alongside community volunteers to construct their home and the houses of other families in the program. Once approved, families purchase their homes from Habitat Buffalo by paying a low-interest, affordable monthly mortgage. For more information, visit www.habitatbuffalo.org.