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Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DJJ's, Wells Fargo's "First Nail Ceremony" Signals Beginning of Third Habitat House Build

Columbia, S.C. – The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice has been framing, building and lifting (over fences) Habitat for Humanity houses since 2011. Monday, October 6, we will be at it again, for a third time, during our *Habitat House Building Blitz First Nail Ceremony*.

About First Nail:

This year, we have partnered with Wells Fargo Bank, Friends of Juvenile Justice (FJJ) and Habitat, as some 80 community and corporate sponsors, employees, staff, volunteers and DJJ youth drive the first nails into the frame of the house. *First Nail* signals the beginning stages of construction of the outer structure of the building, which will take place at DJJ's Broad River Road complex. Once the framing is complete, the house will be moved to its permanent location in Chapin. We are excited to continue "The House that DJJ Built" legacy with a deserving family. If construction goes as scheduled, the homeowner and her children could be in their new home in time for the holidays.

About the Homeowner:

Habitat for Humanity personnel describe Rebecca as 'a model candidate and partner' because of her diligence in doing all things required to obtain her new home. She entered the Habitat for Humanity program in September, 2013, and has moved quickly through the stages, including nearing completion of the total 350 hours of sweat equity and processing donations and helping customers in Habitat's ReStore. She has even become familiar with swinging a hammer on the build site.

However, reaching this point in life has not been easy. Rebecca grew up in Tanzania and the Congo. She and her son, who is ten and loves football, and her daughter, who is four and enjoys gymnastics, immigrated from Africa to Lexington four years ago through a church program for refugees. Her husband still lives in Africa. Rent for her current two-bedroom apartment, where her children must share a room, is "high" and leaves little breathing room for other expenses.

Moving into a Habitat house will enable Rebecca "to provide a stable, safe life for her and the kids," commented a Habitat representative. She is excited to finally have her own independence, saying, "To meet new people and to own my own home will be very special to me." She has been through many struggles to get where she is today. Through it all, though, she has maintained a positive attitude, a willingness to help others, and there is never a time a smile is not on her face.

About the Event:

Monday, October 6, 10:00am

DJJ Campus, 4900 Broad River Rd. Columbia, SC 29212

Program participants, homeowner available for interviews at end of ceremony

We look forward to seeing you!

About DJJ

--- As the state agency responsible for providing rehabilitation and custodial care for the state's juveniles who are on probation, incarcerated, or on parole for a criminal or status offense, DJJ actively seeks partnerships that foster its mission. DJJ's mission is to protect the public and reclaim juveniles through prevention, community services, education, and rehabilitative services in the least restrictive environment.

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