



Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

NEWS RELEASE

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Habitat for Humanity Founder Millard Fuller to Speak At LSSI's "Hammering Out A Partnership" Dinner/Auction

Millard Fuller, founder of Habitat for Humanity International and the Fuller Center for Housing, will be the guest speaker at the fourth annual "Hammering Out a Partnership" dinner and auctions on April 8, at the Carbondale Civic Center at 200 South Illinois Avenue in Carbondale. The event will benefit *Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives*, a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) where incarcerated juveniles and adults build components for homes for low-income families.

Prior to the dinner, Fuller, who heads the Fuller Center for Housing, will be available for a book signing between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m.

Jane Otte, executive director of LSSI's Prisoner and Family Ministry, says, "A conversation with Millard in 1991 led to the creation of *Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives*. From that time on, Millard has spoken about the value of prisoners building for Habitat for Humanity. Millard has said 'Yes' to every initiative that has led to ways that prisoners can become Habitat volunteers, including building frames for homes on the Gulf Coast. Millard is the personification of what people can do when they come together with a common mission, and he is a fantastic speaker."

With numerous achievement awards and more than 50 honorary doctorate degrees for his outstanding leadership in eliminating poverty housing worldwide, Fuller is internationally known for his ability to make things happen through partnership. "This program of LSSI is ... a true win-win-win deal," Fuller says. "The prisoners will benefit. LSSI lives up to its ideals. The program benefits Habitat for Humanity affiliates and other housing providers. And, of course, the homeowners benefit and are blessed for a lifetime. God's love is revealed in remarkable ways through this magnificent initiative."

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Fuller and his wife Linda founded The Fuller Center for Housing in the spring of 2005, as a way to continue their dream of eliminating poverty housing. The center provides funds and support for low-income housing providers and Habitat for Humanity affiliates. Most recently, The Fuller Center is working with the Shreveport, La., Habitat affiliate to build 60 new homes for the Hurricane Katrina evacuees in Shreveport. Four of the first six homes built included frames constructed by inmates at Illinois' Taylorville and Centralia Correctional Centers for the *Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives* program.

Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives is a nationally recognized program where inmates in construction classes at 18 Illinois prisons build wall sections, trusses, cabinets and storage sheds used in the construction of Habitat for Humanity homes or by other not-for-profit groups to build affordable housing. Last year, the program celebrated its 10th anniversary and contributed to the building of its 300th home. About 1,400 inmates have been involved in the program since its start in 1995.

Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives is a joint effort between LSSI, which provides funds for construction materials; the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), which provides teachers and sites at prisons for construction classes; and Habitat for Humanity, which uses the components.

Volunteers and employees of LSSI and IDOC organized the dinner and the live and silent auctions, which will feature items made by prisoners throughout Illinois. Items will include original paintings and craft items created by inmates, as well as plants and flowers cultivated by horticulture class participants at the prisons. Proceeds from the event and auctions will be used to purchase lumber and other construction materials.

Founded in 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with more than 100 program locations, including its foster care and adoption programs in Marion.

For further information on this event or to buy dinner tickets, contact Jane Otte at 618/997-9196, ext. 821. For more information on LSSI, please visit www.LSSI.org.

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