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Spring Breakers Forgo Vacation for Habitat

Lee County, FL; March 18, 2009 – Students around the country are trading in spring break to serve with Habitat for Humanity of Lee County. This week the nonprofit's Lehigh construction sites are packed with students from Minnesota State University and the University of New Hampshire. Next week, spring breakers will travel from Central Connecticut State University to help house needy families and learn some life lessons along the way.

Habitat for Humanity annually sends more than 12,000 students to volunteer in more than 200 locations through its alternative break program. This year, through the Collegiate Challenge program, students from 47 states and six Canadian provinces will volunteer in more than 200 Habitat locations during their school breaks. Locally, Habitat for Humanity of Lee County will see 160 students from Vermont, Ohio, Colorado, New Hampshire, Minnesota, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

"I wanted to do something truly enriching over spring break. I chose Habitat for Humanity because I wanted to gain some perspective on the blight housing situation. With school, we get so wrapped up in homework; it's difficult to grasp the magnitude of the economy. Lee County's Habitat affiliate is one of the largest in the world, so I decided to come here," say Joey Bainett, Vermont Law School student.

Throughout the program's 20-year history, more than 166,000 Collegiate Challenge volunteers have raised more than \$15.5 million to build Habitat houses. This year, Collegiate Challenge participants will contribute \$1.8 million to the housing ministry.

Habitat for Humanity of Lee County is a non-profit organization dedicated to eliminating substandard housing in the community. Since 1982, the affiliate has provided 1000 families a safe and affordable place to live. Through the use of volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds simple, decent housing for families who otherwise could not afford it. **Homes are sold to the homeowners at no profit on an interest-free mortgage**, making homeownership an affordable reality.

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