



Vermont Housing Finance Agency

news release

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VERMONT'S HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTERS RECEIVE 2010 HOUSING HERO AWARD

BURLINGTON—The state's non-profit network of **NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Centers of Vermont** (HOCs) received the 2010 Housing Hero award. Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Executive Director **Sarah Carpenter** presented the award to six HOC representatives at yesterday's 2010 Vermont Statewide Housing Conference held at the Hilton in Burlington.

The award recognizes individuals or organizations whose leadership, vision and actions have brought about positive and lasting change in the way their community or the state regards housing.



“This award recognizes the Homeownership Centers for delivering pre-purchase education and delinquency and foreclosure prevention assistance that’s been so vital during the mortgage crisis. By working with borrowers before they buy their home and after they close, they’ve helped keep Vermont’s foreclosure rate so low,” according to Carpenter.

As of June 30, 2010, only 2.05% of Vermont home loans were delinquent by 90 or more days. That’s less than half the national rate of 4.54%.

“Also award-worthy is their invaluable partnership with VHFA creating affordable housing from foreclosed, dilapidated properties through the Housing Acquisition & Rehabilitation Program (HARP).

“Finally, that they’ve performed so well during the nation’s worst economy since the Great Depression — and in the wake of substantially reduced budgets — makes the award all the more appropriate,” she adds.

The HOCs serve Vermonters with orientation sessions, workshops, and individual counseling for future homebuyers; and continuing education, energy efficiency loans and other improvements for current homebuyers through seven locations: Central Vermont Community Land Trust, Barre; Champlain Housing Trust, Burlington and St. Albans; Gilman Housing Trust, Lyndonville; HomeOwnership Center, Springfield; NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, West Rutland; and Windham Housing Trust, Brattleboro.

They’re affiliated with NeighborWorks® America, a national non-profit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts.

Every two years, representatives from a variety of housing organizations select the Housing Hero to be honored at Vermont’s biennial conference. Past winners include: **Melinda Bussino**, Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center (2008); **Michael Richardson**, honored posthumously (2006); **Upper Valley Housing Coalition** (2004); and **Sen. Pat Leahy, Sen. Jim Jeffords** and **Rep. Bernie Sanders** (2002).

The next Vermont Statewide Housing Conference will be held November 2012.

For more information about the HomeOwnership Centers of Vermont go to:
<http://www.vthomeownership.org>.

Photo caption: (From left) VHFA Executive Director Sarah Carpenter; Emily Higgins, Champlain Housing Trust; Chandra Pollard, Central Vermont Community Land Trust; Cathy Semans, Windham Housing Trust; Donna Reay and Darlene Kelly, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont; and George Mathias, Gilman Housing Trust.