First Ever “Women in Wood” Build Day a Success; Benefits Ottawa First Nations Family

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Ottawa, ON – The Sustainable Forestry Initiative® and Habitat for Humanity National Capital Region have joined forces for the first-of-its-kind “Women in Wood” Build Day, helping to change the lives of an Ottawa-area family. The special day, involving 20 volunteers, included a “Wall Raising” and building the framework of a brand-new home.

The “Women in Wood” team, led by SFI President and CEO Kathy Abusow, included a diverse team of volunteers – Ottawa women and SFI volunteers who work not only in the forest industry but in various government, business, environmental and social sectors, including: Donna Hicks, CEO, Habitat for Humanity National Capital Region (NCR); Joanne Laskoski, Editor-in-Chief, Capital Woman magazine; Kirsten Vice, Vice President, Canadian Operations, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement; and Pamela Miles, Director at CUSO International.

Despite being from different fields, all of these women share the common passion of making a difference in their communities and in the work force. “There are all sorts of amazing jobs in the natural resource, conservation, and forest products supply chain and it just makes me happy to have so many women in leadership positions joining in this cause,” said SFI President & CEO Kathy Abusow. She went on to express how important it is for SFI to be involved in projects like this. “As an organization, SFI takes great pride in seeing wood certified to the SFI standard being used in today’s homes. But beyond our dedication to promoting responsible forestry it’s incredibly important for us to be involved in community building, Aboriginal engagement and on-the-ground collaboration.”

“On a national level, Habitat for Humanity has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Assembly of First Nations,” says Donna Hicks, CEO, Habitat NCR. “Part of our mandate is to help urban Aboriginal families purchase their homes with an interest-free, long-term mortgage through our Homeownership Program.”

The project will have a transformational effect in the lives of Ida Kakekagumick and her three grandchildren. As members of the Ojibwa-Cree First Nation, they are one of the first Ontario Aboriginal families to be helped through a Habitat for Humanity project.

“We wish the Kakekagumick family all the best in their new home,” said Abusow during the presentation of an Irving Tissue gift basket. The company has generously donated a six-month supply of tissue and bathroom products certified to the SFI standard to the family. Much of the wood used for this Build Day is certified to the SFI Standard, including a significant donation of oriented strand board (OSB) from LP Building Products. The home will also be the first in the Ottawa area to be certified as a Built Green Canada home.

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Since 2008, SFI has partnered with more than a dozen various Habitat for Humanity builds across Canada and the U.S. Through these partnerships, more than 4,000 volunteer hours and significant supplies of certified building materials (panel products, lumber, and engineered wood products) have been donated. Currently there are more than five million acres of forest lands managed by or for First Nations communities that are certified to the SFI forest management Standard.

**About Sustainable Forestry Initiative:** SFI Inc. is an independent, nonprofit organization that is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) program. Across Canada and the United States, nearly 100 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard. In addition, the SFI program’s unique fiber sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers’ lands. SFI chain-of-custody (COC) certification tracks the percentage of fiber from certified forests, certified sourcing and post-consumer recycled content. SFI on-product labels identify both certified sourcing and COC claims to help consumers make responsible purchasing decisions. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally. SFI board members include Chief David Walkem of the Cooks Ferry Indian Band, the former Dean of Forestry at University of Toronto, the COO of Habitat for Humanity Canada, the President of Bird Studies Canada, the President & CEO of Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Executive Chairman of West Fraser. Learn more at [http://www.sfiprogram.org/](http://www.sfiprogram.org/) and [http://sfiprogram.org/BuySFI](http://sfiprogram.org/BuySFI).

**About Habitat for Humanity NCR:** Founded in 1993, Habitat for Humanity National Capital Region (NCR) is a volunteer, non-profit organization that builds simple, decent, affordable homes and sells them with long-term, no-interest mortgages to hard-working, low-income families seeking an affordable home in which to raise their children. People of all faiths and cultures are warmly welcomed by Habitat for Humanity NCR. To learn more, visit [www.habitatncr.com](http://www.habitatncr.com).

**About Built Green Canada:** Founded in 2003, this national industry-driven organization is committed to working with builders interested in responsible sustainability practices in the residential building sector. Committed to the integrity of its programs—Single Family, High Density and Renovations—Built Green Canada provides learning opportunities that encourage continuous improvements to building practices, participation affordability and third-party certification, which requires builders to contract Certified Energy Advisors to assess the effectiveness of the systems in the home. While energy efficiency is a fundamental component of these programs, integrating the EnerGuide label through Natural Resources Canada, Built Green Canada goes beyond energy efficiency toward a more holistic approach to sustainable building practices. For more information, visit [www.builtgreencanada.ca](http://www.builtgreencanada.ca).

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