



## Media Release

### **NRH Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Return of *Welcome Home Niagara***

NIAGARA REGION, May 7, 2012 - Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) is celebrating ten years as administrator of affordable housing for Niagara Region with the return of the popular *Welcome Home Niagara* Homeownership Program.

*Welcome Home Niagara* was introduced in 2006 to help renters become homeowners through down payment assistance in the form of a forgivable loan for the purchase of a home in Niagara. A total of 181 Niagara households were able to purchase homes through this program until funding ran out in 2010. Of these 181 new homeowners, more than 40 were tenants who had been living in subsidized housing, which made much-needed units available to others on the Affordable Housing Wait list. Currently, there are more than 5,500 households waiting for affordable housing in the region.

This year, as part of their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, NRH is bringing back this program, which has received enthusiastic reviews from participants. "The *Welcome Home Niagara* Program has made the dream of homeownership a reality for me. Now I have stability in my housing and am able to focus on staying well", said Dave Lewis, who received funding in 2010 for a 2 bedroom detached home. Lewis had struggled with addiction issues for many years before becoming addiction-free and finding employment in Niagara.

"In the current economy, it is more difficult than ever to buy your own home. At some income levels, the cost of the downpayment can be the difference between renting and buying. This program allowed recipients to make an investment that will change their lives. It also helped us reduce our waiting list", said Maryellen MacLellan, NRH Manager of Housing Operations. "We're delighted to reinstate *Welcome Home Niagara* as part of NRH's anniversary celebrations.

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