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**MEDIA NOTE: Attached are jpegs of the CHIP logo and two photos of a healthy home rehabilitation project in process.**

## **Free event on Jan. 21 to promote healthy homes in Newtown/North Sarasota**

A free Healthy Homes event will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21, from 10 a.m.-noon at the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex, 1845 34th St., Sarasota. Organized by the local Newtown/North Sarasota community in partnership with Home Depot, the event is designed to help residents learn how to keep their homes dry, ventilated, maintained, clean, pest-free, contaminant-free and safe using the principles from the National Center for Healthy Housing. A home in the Newtown community that is in the process of being rehabilitated will be showcased at the event.

This grassroots effort is being spearheaded by the Newtown/North Sarasota Community Health Action Team's (CHAT) environmental health committee. This group has worked with the Sarasota County Health Department's Office of Environmental Health Services to use a national model called Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health or PACE-EH. PACE-EH is a tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to identify and address environmental health concerns within communities.

Last year, the environmental committee identified property maintenance and its relationship to the health of the home as a key area of concern in the Newtown/North Sarasota community.

Many people do not know that there is an important connection between health and housing. A study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) showed that the average person spends about 90 percent of his or her time indoors. The EPA has also noted that indoor levels of pollutants may be two to five times higher, and occasionally more than 100 times higher, than outdoor levels. (<http://www.epa.gov/air/basic.html#indoor>)

Research has shown that people living with a respiratory condition like asthma may experience increased asthma attacks by being exposed to dust mites, cockroach droppings and mold. According to research cited in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical

Care Medicine, controlling exposure to indoor allergens and environmental tobacco smoke could prevent 65 percent of asthma cases among elementary school-age children.

One of the goals of the Newtown/North Sarasota PACE-EH group is to increase awareness about the public health concerns associated with distressed properties in the Newtown/North Sarasota community. The group already has made some headway by taking steps to rehabilitate the home of Ms. Queen Ousley of 2731 Goodrich Ave., Sarasota.

The group is continuing to raise funds to improve the environmental quality of the home and make the Ousley residence a "Healthy Home." The funds will go toward installing a new roof and air conditioning unit as well as upgrading windows and interior structures.

For additional information on healthy housing in the Newtown/North Sarasota community, contact Katie Leonard at the Sarasota County Health Department or check out the Newtown CHAT group's Facebook page, "Newtown/North Sarasota Supports Healthy Homes." The Newtown CHAT operates under the leadership of the Community Health Improvement Partnership or CHIP, which has been a catalyst for engaging communities throughout Sarasota County in efforts to create a healthier community.

To inquire about making a financial contribution for the Ousley home, contact Easter Seals of Southwest Florida, 350 Braden Avenue Sarasota, FL 34243 or call 941-355-7637.

For more information, visit the following websites:

National Center for Healthy Housing: Seven Principles of Healthy Homes:  
<http://www.nchh.org/What-We-Do/Healthy-Homes-Principles.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Healthy Homes:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/>

Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/CEHA/>  
<http://www.myfloridaeh.com/programs/PACE-EH/PACE-EH.htm>

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