Homes for Working Families, Inc.
1150 18th Street, NW, #775
Washington, DC 20036
t: 202.580.6220; f: 202.223.7617
www.homesforworkingfamilies.org

Homes for Working Families Honors 14 Employers with 2008 Pioneer Award for Leadership in Employer-Assisted Housing

Award Recipients Featured in New Guidebook That Will Help More Employers Make Affordable Homes a Reality for Working Families

WASHINGTON, February 11, 2008 – *Homes for Working Families* today announced the recipients of its 2008 Pioneer Awards for leadership in employer-assisted housing (EAH) at an event on Capitol Hill. The 14 award recipients hail from a diverse array of communities all across the United States and represent a variety of business sectors.

As policy-makers seek solutions to the current short-term housing crisis facing millions of middle-income families, employer-assisted housing programs can be a powerful tool to help eligible workers gain access to safe, good-quality homes. EAH is a term used to describe a range of housing benefits that employers can offer to help their employees afford homes. Benefits can include homeownership education and counseling, financial assistance for homebuyers or renters, investment in new construction and more.

"Given the current challenges that middle-class families face to find safe, decent homes, we applaud these private companies and institutions for their employee-friendly programs," said Beverly L. Barnes, executive director of *Homes for Working Families*. "EAH has proven successful for employers and employees across the country, and we hope this public recognition of our 2008 award recipients serves to increase awareness among other employers about the business benefits and cost-effectiveness of EAH programs."

Homes for Working Families is a national nonprofit organization focused on improving home affordability for families earning between 60 percent and 120 percent of area median income. The organization is honoring the following employers with 2008 Pioneer Awards for their EAH programs located in the cities and states indicated below:

- Aflac – *Columbus, Ga.*
- Applied Materials, Inc. – *Santa Clara, Calif.*
- Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP (Formerly Hatch & Parent) – *Santa Barbara, Calif.*
- Citizens Financial Group, Inc. – *Providence, R.I.*
- City of Columbia, *S.C.*
- City of Seattle, *Wash.*
- CVS Caremark – *Washington, D.C.*
- Harley-Davidson Motor Company – *Milwaukee, Wis.*
- Johns Hopkins University – *Baltimore, Md.*
- Northrop Grumman Corporation – *Long Island, N.Y. & Pascagoula, Miss.*
- The Schwan Food Company – *Marshall, Minn.*
- System Sensor/Honeywell – *St. Charles, Ill.*
- UNITE HERE Local 226 – *Las Vegas, Nev.*
- University of Chicago and University of Chicago Medical Center – *Chicago, Ill.*

CVS Caremark, which is headquartered in Woonsocket, R.I., launched its employer-assisted housing program, Prescriptions for Homeownership, in Washington, D.C., in 2005, and in Los Angeles in 2007,

and so far has helped more than 50 employees close on their homes. The company plans to expand the successful program to Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit this year.

"We're proud to be able to help our employees take their first big steps toward homeownership," said Steve Wing, director of workforce initiatives for CVS Caremark. "Innovative programs such as Prescriptions for Homeownership provide us the opportunity to support our workforce, promote employee recruitment and retention, and improve the communities in which we do business."

Details of each of the 2008 Pioneer Award recipients' EAH programs, including compelling first-hand perspectives from the employers and employees who have participated in their programs, are laid out in a new guidebook, also being released today by *Homes for Working Families,* titled *Understanding Employer-Assisted Housing: A Guidebook for Employers.*

Understanding Employer-Assisted Housing is among the first resources of its kind. It provides a straightforward examination of employer-assisted housing options and gives employers practical guidance on how EAH programs work. The guidebook also includes a detailed how-to section to help employers begin to create their own EAH programs.

The guidebook was developed with the assistance and expertise of the Metropolitan Planning Council, a Chicago-based policy organization that provides employer-assisted housing technical assistance nationwide.

Immediately following today's event on Capitol Hill, representatives from CVS Caremark and Harley-Davidson Motor Company will participate in a congressional staff briefing hosted by the National Housing Conference titled "Employer-Assisted Housing: Expanding Opportunities for Homeownership, Business and Community Development." The briefing will provide insights into employer programs and local implementation, as well as information on pending federal legislation that would provide federal tax credits to employers offering EAH programs.

An electronic copy of *Understanding Employer-Assisted Housing* is available on the Homes for Working Families Web site at www.homesforworkingfamilies.org.

About *Homes for Working Families*
Homes for Working Families is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing policy changes that make safe, good-quality homes affordable for America's working families. For more information visit www.homesforworkingfamilies.org.

About the *Metropolitan Planning Council*
The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan group of business and civic leaders committed to serving the public interest through development, promotion and implementation of sound planning and development policies so all residents have access to opportunity and a good quality of life, the building blocks of a globally competitive greater Chicago region. For more information about MPC, visit: www.metroplanning.org.

Contact Information: Kathryn St. John
202-580-6224
kstjohn@homesforworkingfamilies.org

###