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NEWS RELEASE

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First Homes, housing agencies sponsor photojournalism exhibit

A photojournalism exhibit that reveals the challenges faced by Minnesota's lowest-income families as they manage life and work with less than decent housing conditions is being hosted this month at the Rochester Art Center by area housing agencies.

The agencies – including the First Homes initiative of the Rochester Area Foundation, Dorothy Day Hospitality House, Rochester Area Habitat for Humanity, Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Rochester, Olmsted Community Action Partnership, Olmsted County Housing and Rehabilitation Authority, Rochester/Olmsted Community Housing Partnership, Salvation Army Transitional Housing, Southeastern Minnesota Association of Realtors, Three Rivers Community Action and Women's Shelter Inc. – will host a reception for the exhibit at the art center from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 12.

Rochester is the second site in Minnesota that has installed the exhibit, sponsored by the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, a non-profit organization that supports affordable housing in areas of economic vitality outside the metro area around the state. GMHF has provided valuable technical and financial assistance to First Homes since its inception five years ago, as well as other area housing organizations.

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“Portraits of Home: Families in Search of Shelter in Greater Minnesota” is curated by George Slade of the Minnesota Center for Photography and includes the work of the following contributing award-winning photographers: Ben Garvin of the St. Paul Pioneer Press; Carlos Gonzalez, Stormi Greener and Brian Peterson of the Star Tribune of Minneapolis; Twin Cities free-lancer and homeless advocate Kathy TenBroeke; and Eric Hylden of the Grand Forks (N.D.) Herald.

The captions accompanying each of the photographs on display offer heart-rending stories and provide a visual to support Gov. Tim Pawlenty’s \$20 million initiative to end long-term homelessness in Minnesota. The issue has special relevance to Rochester as leaders and community members work to provide housing with appropriate supports for its homeless population.

Persons who wish to attend the reception on Tuesday, July 12, should call First Homes at (507) 287-7117 or send an e-mail to RSVP@FirstHomes.org for reservations. Light refreshments will be served.