

NEWS RELEASE

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Lovejoy District Neighborhood Revitalizations Services Inc. and HomeFront Inc. Set to Merge

Consolidation will enhance services and programs for new homeowners

BUFFALO, NY – Lovejoy District Neighborhood Revitalizations Services (NRS) and HomeFront Inc. have filed a Plan of Merger with the State Attorney General. Lovejoy District NRS is moving its office to HomeFront's offices on Delaware Avenue in the city of Buffalo. The former Lovejoy District NRS location, located on Walden Avenue in Buffalo, has been put up for sale. The merger is pending approval from the State Attorney General and State Supreme Court, which is anticipated in early November.

This merger was assisted by the Not For Profit Resource Center, an initiative of the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County, which provided technical assistance and funding for merger expenses.

All staff from Lovejoy District NRS have transferred to HomeFront. To ensure continued service for Lovejoy District NRS's neighborhood residents, many services continue to be available by telephone. In addition, HomeFront will have office hours in neighborhood community centers for those who need assistance in person.

Support from local policy makers such as Lovejoy District Councilman Richard A. Fontana and the City's Office of Strategic Planning also helped to facilitate the merger.

"We thank the United Way for their role in the merger and are confident this move means better and more efficient services for the people of the Lovejoy area," said Councilman Fontana.

"HomeFront is the homeownership center for the City of Buffalo," said Timothy E. Wanamaker, Executive Director of the Office of Strategic Planning. "The merger of Lovejoy District Neighborhood Revitalization Services with HomeFront will only benefit the neighborhood by offering all the services new homeowners need under one roof. The merger is a win-win for everyone."

The two agencies are enthusiastic about the mutual endeavor of helping families realize the dream of home ownership, make home improvements, helping assist small business owners, and making neighborhoods better places in which to live.

"Lovejoy District NRS has always been a strong community development agency in spite of the capacity issues it has always faced. HomeFront from the beginning appreciated the impressive track record it had amassed in such a short period of time, and the quality of services the agency provided to the community. Making sure that those services could continue was most important," said Bryan M. Cacciotti Executive Director at HomeFront.

"This merger is an example of how not-for-profit community development organizations can work collaboratively to enhance services and programs for residents. This merger will allow the continuation and future expansion of services and programming to Lovejoy District residents and small business owners," said Denise Herkey-Jarosch, Executive Director for Lovejoy District NRS.

HomeFront Inc. is a community development agency that has been working to promote healthy neighborhoods in the region for over 30 years. It offers a variety of services aimed at giving potential homeowners the tools they need to finance and purchase affordable housing such as classes on personal finance and the home buying process as well as a property listing search. The agency also works with other organizations and community groups to address problems facing local communities like aged housing stock and socioeconomic issues.

The Lovejoy District NRS is also a community development corporation that has been the sole housing agency administering the City of Buffalo Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) within the Lovejoy District. The agency's mission is to promote and assist the stabilization and revitalization of the economic, housing, and esthetic conditions, and otherwise promote a higher quality of life and social existence within and affecting the Lovejoy Councilmanic District.

The Not For Profit Resource Center, an initiative of the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (UWBEC), provides technical assistance to and builds collaborations among not-for-profit organizations. The Not For Profit Resource Center has served 100 agencies through referrals, group purchasing, distance learning, business school interns and collaboration facilitation. Through *Community Care* support, UWBEC contributed \$23,000 toward supporting the merger through legal, moving and accounting expenses as well as numerous hours of staff time to facilitate the joining of the two agencies.

Richard Gold, Executive Vice President at M&T Bank and Chair of the Not For Profit Resource Center, is hopeful that other non-profits see the Lovejoy - HomeFront merger as a good example of two organizations who have similar missions realizing that they can deliver better services for the same cost.

"United Way, through the Not For Profit Resource Center, has been supporting this kind of consolidation for some time now. In an environment where multiple agencies are often working to fulfill very similar missions, it just makes sense to facilitate, and financially support, agencies whose leaders see the value in capitalizing on their similarities. When the resources of two or more organizations can be combined and applied to meeting the same needs, the quality of service increases – and ultimately, that's what matters," he said.

HomeFront Inc. may be contacted at 856-2952, info@homefrontbflo.org, or by visiting HomeFront's web site at www.homefrontbflo.org.

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The merger became final on December 8, 2006.