

The National Association of Realtors®, “The Voice for Real Estate,” is America’s largest trade association, representing 1.2 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

Remarks Prepared for Charles McMillan
2009 NAR President
Ambassador for Cities
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Houston, TX

Introduction

Good morning! It’s wonderful to be here today with all of you to celebrate an outstanding partnership between REALTORS and the city of Houston.

The word “ambassador” is actually from the Latin word “ambactus,” which means servant. Most people associate the term with high-ranking officials than represent a country’s interests abroad. But, today, we join together in the true meaning of the word – to serve this community, and its residents.

Realtors Build Communities

Realtors have a long tradition of building communities – not with bricks and mortar, but through programs, partnerships and funding that help make more homes available to more people.

In 2002, NAR launched our Housing Opportunity Program, designed to help REALTORS serve even more families. During the past seven years this program has grown to include numerous initiatives and partners, including our Habitat for Humanity home builds, homeownership counseling and education workshops through our friends at NeighborWorks, the Home from Work Program, and the Ambassadors for Cities partnership.

Although these programs work in different ways, they all share a common spirit and purpose – to build strong communities through homeownership and affordable housing.

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Houston HOPE

The Houston HOPE Program is a shining example of how REALTORS can work with mayors and other partners to become true Ambassadors in our communities.

Through this program, the Houston Association of REALTORS and the city of Houston are working together to achieve two very important goals.

First, you are helping more families in this great community achieve homeownership by providing substantial downpayment assistance. By making those funds available specifically for homes in nine Houston neighborhoods, you are helping to promote revitalization in areas that need it most.

I want to personally thank The Houston Association for it’s role in this program and for creating an online map to help potential homeowners search listings in the Houston HOPE program. When it comes to innovation in the REALTOR organization, HAR is second to none.

I also want to personally congratulate the City of Houston and Mayor Bill White for all you are doing to keep this city strong and growing, especially in the current economic environment.

Conclusion

As this city’s namesake, Sam Houston once said: “A leader is someone who helps improve the lives of other people or improve the system they live under.”

You have certainly accomplished that here in Houston and I am certain you will inspire others to follow your lead.

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I look forward to joining Len Ferber, Chair of NAR’s Housing Opportunity Committee, and Dave Gatton, with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, to present the Ambassador designation award to the City and the Houston Association of REALTORS a little later in the program.

Thank you, again, for your work. I am truly honored to be here today.