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Councilmember Ervin, Congresswoman Edwards Join Housing Forum to Prevent Foreclosure

ROCKVILLE, Md., July 20, 2009—Montgomery County Councilmember Valerie Ervin, Congresswoman Donna Edwards, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs Director Rick Nelson, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Outreach Liaison Edith Jenkins, Housing Counselor Ernest Matthews, Financial Advisor Lanta Evans-Motte and Housing Opportunities Commission Director Les Kaplan will participate in a panel discussion about preventing housing foreclosure on Saturday, July 25, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring.

The discussion, sponsored by Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church and the Theta Omega Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., will be preceded by breakfast at 9:15 a.m. and followed by free private consultations with attorneys and financial advisors.

The goal of the forum is to prevent housing foreclosures in the area by providing homeowners with legal assistance, financial counseling and advice about contacting lenders and information about the resources available to them. The forum will also dispel myths about foreclosure and educate the public about their rights.

“It’s essential that we do everything we can to prevent our homeowners from becoming victims of foreclosure,” said Councilmember Ervin. “Montgomery County isn’t immune from the housing crisis. Stabilizing our housing market is critical for stabilizing the regional economy.”

In addition to providing information about how to prevent foreclosure, panelists will discuss federal stimulus funding, new relevant laws, loan options, restoring credit and being financially literate.

“Home foreclosures continue to take a serious toll on far too many working families throughout our region,” said Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards. “Housing forums such as this one are important so individuals who are facing the threat of foreclosure receive the advice and tools they need to keep their homes. I thank everyone who helped organize this event and look forward to working together to address this serious issue.”

“Mt. Jezreel is pleased to co-sponsor this forum on behalf of the community in an effort to thwart the threat of homelessness manifested in home foreclosures,” said Reverend Eldridge Spearman. “We want to prevent anything that might undermine the stability of our community and disrupt the lives of our families and especially the lives of our children.”

“The goal is to empower homeowners, and therefore communities, to gain access to resources available and to learn how to make informed and thoughtful decisions in this turbulent housing market,” said Cassandra Barnes, Theta Omega Omega Connections Chairman for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Attendees are advised to bring all paperwork related to their mortgages, including their loan application, settlement paperwork and lender statements, all foreclosure notices and their monthly household budget. Those planning to attend the forum can pre-register and guarantee their free personal consultation by calling 202-487-7521 or sending an email to notstressed@hotmail.com.



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Montgomery County's Housing Opportunities Commission recently received \$4 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to acquire, renovate and rent foreclosed homes to County residents. The County is seeking to acquire properties in areas with the some of the highest foreclosure rates, including Wheaton, Aspen Hill, Gaithersburg, Montgomery Village and Germantown. The County also has a \$3.5 million partnership with Habitat for Humanity to purchase and renovate homes for families.

"The bottom line is we want to keep as many families in their homes as possible, and this event is a wonderful resource to help local residents do just that," said Councilmember Ervin.

The event is being co-sponsored by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Housing Initiative Partnership and HIP Service, Inc., the Association of African American Financial Advisors, Civil Justice, Inc., the Pro Bono Resource Center and the Literacy Institute for Financial Enrichment.

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