



# PRESS RELEASE

Contact:  
Taryn Holowka, USGBC  
[tholowka@usgbc.org](mailto:tholowka@usgbc.org); 202.243.8743  
Virginia Miller, Make it Right  
[vmiller@e-bmf.com](mailto:vmiller@e-bmf.com); 504-524-3342

## **USGBC at Clinton Global Initiative Honors Make It Right as the ‘Largest and Greenest Single Family Community in the World’**

*U.S. Green Building Council President Rick Fedrizzi Lauds Brad Pitt-Led Katrina-Rebuilding Effort*

NEW YORK CITY (Sept. 24, 2009) – U.S. Green Building Council President, CEO & Founding Chair Rick Fedrizzi today declared that the neighborhood being built by Make It Right New Orleans, the post-Katrina housing initiative launched by actor Brad Pitt, is the “largest and greenest community of single-family homes in the world” at the annual Clinton Global Initiative meeting in New York.

Make It Right, which was announced as a “commitment” at the 2007 CGI meeting, has already LEED Platinum certified 13 homes and is building at least 150 sustainable, storm-resistant LEED Platinum homes in a Lower 9th Ward neighborhood of New Orleans wiped out by the Hurricane Katrina and that was nearest to the disastrous breach of the Industrial Canal levee.

“In transforming the Lower 9th Ward, Make It Right is showing us how we can transform those parts of our nation that have fallen behind the most, whether through neglect, poverty or disaster,” President Clinton said. “Make It Right offers a blueprint for how to build homes that instill pride and combine to form communities of hope and opportunity. By following the Make It Right model, we can generate the green collar jobs our economy needs to move forward and advance building practices that reduce carbon emissions, while at the same time growing neighborhoods where families can thrive.”

“Through Make It Right we are reminded that our work is not about buildings, but rather about the people within them,” said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & Founding Chair, U.S. Green Building Council. “In facing our nation’s unprecedented economic and environmental crises, we must change the way the places in which we live, work, learn and play are built and operated. What we’re seeing with green building goes beyond energy-efficiency to a transformation of entire communities – and the lives of the people who live there. Make It Right has proved that green building can be both affordable and high performing.”

“While Katrina gave us the opportunity to think creatively about how to make green homes affordable for the low-income families who need them the most, it shouldn’t take a hurricane to make that happen in other cities,” said Pitt said. “Our plan is to take what we have learned in New Orleans and help other communities build healthy, safe and affordable green homes. Our hope is to make these homes the norm, not the exception.”

“The devastation caused by Katrina and delay in rebuilding created an opportunity to turn tragedy into a turning point in home building in New Orleans and other cities,” said Tom Darden, Executive Director, Make it Right. “We did not want to repeat the mistakes of the past, but to build homes that were green and affordable, strong enough to weather the next storm and made from sustainable materials.”

Fedrizzi presented a LEED plaque to Pitt, Darden and Make It Right resident and Katrina-survivor Deidre Taylor in recognition of the initiative’s 150+ planned and 13 already certified LEED Platinum homes. No other community comprises as many LEED Platinum certified homes. LEED Platinum is the highest possible green building certification.

"We are honored to accept this official designation on behalf of every homeowner, builder and the 22 architectural firms who helped turn this concept into a community," Darden added.

Also today, President Clinton; Pitt; Fedrizzi; Darden, Taylor; Architect William McDonough, Principal, William McDonough + Partners; and Dr. Nawal Al-Hosany, Director of Sustainability, Masdar City, UAE International, addressed the progress Make It Right has made, as well as how green building should play a role in revitalizing the nation's economy and tackling environmental challenges, in a session moderated by White House Domestic Policy Adviser Melody Barnes.

Make It Right is a collaboration between actor Brad Pitt, Steve Bing, Graft Architects, Cherokee Gives Back and William McDonough + Partners. Make it Right will have 50 homes by December 2009 and 150 by December 2010.

The USGBC's LEED green building certification system is the leading program in the U.S. for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. Its residential LEED for Homes certification system promotes the design and construction of high-performance green homes. Green homes use less energy, water and natural resources, create less waste, and are more durable and comfortable for residents. More than 3,000 homes have been certified since the system's inception two years ago, and fully 40% of those homes qualify as affordable housing.

The USGBC comprises 20,000+ member companies and organizations, 78 local chapters and affiliates and nearly 132,000 LEED Credentialed Professionals, and leads an industry that is projected to increase to \$60 billion by 2010.

The green and energy-saving features of Make It Right homes include solar power, geothermal heating and cooling systems, tankless water heaters, ENERGY STAR appliances, superior insulation, and efficient lighting. In addition to being the "largest green community in the world," the neighborhood is also home to the largest congregation of high-design homes created by different architects working on the same project. Twenty-one acclaimed local, national and international architects have contributed designs to the project.

Make It Right homes include storm-resistant features like: 5' or 8' elevations to protect the home from flooding, impact resistant glass or hurricane fabric to protect windows, rooftop access, and mold-free paperless dry wall.

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, flooding 80 percent of the city of New Orleans and killing 1,577 in Louisiana. Hardest hit was the Lower 9th Ward, where more than 4,000 homes were destroyed by the storm and the surge of water caused by the breach in the Industrial Canal levee. Today, according to the New Orleans Data Center, close to 80 percent of residents have returned to the city. In the Lower 9th Ward, which in addition to being hardest-hit by Katrina was one of the city's poorest areas, only 19 percent of residents have come home. Make It Right is working to address the reasons residents have not returned – building housing, increasing neighborhood sustainability and investing in infrastructure repairs and improvements.

At the 2006 Clinton Global Initiative Conference, USGBC committed to launching the first program in a comprehensive yearlong campaign to educate consumers about the benefits of green homes. The Green Home Guide [greenhomeguide.org](http://greenhomeguide.org) is an educational Web site for consumers to learn about the benefits of a green home and connect with green home professionals. For more information on USGBC and the LEED for Homes program visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

###

## **U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL**

2101 L St NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20037 · Phone 202 828-7422 · [USGBC.org](http://USGBC.org)