



# Maricopa County Attorney

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Unique Partnership Turns “Crack House” into Dream House

PHOENIX, AZ (January 17, 2012) - The Alvarado family of Phoenix will get the keys to a beautiful new, environmentally-friendly home today, built on the site of a house that had been a magnet for criminal activity and an eyesore to the neighborhood. At a ceremony in front of the home, representatives from the City of Phoenix, Maricopa County and Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona hailed the unique public-private partnership that led to the property’s remarkable transformation.

“Using Arizona’s asset forfeiture laws, we were able to take this property away from criminals and give it to community stakeholders who worked together to turn it into the beautiful family home you see today,” said Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery. “This project is a shining example of how government and the private sector can work together to address specific public safety concerns with solutions that benefit an entire neighborhood,” he added.

Located on the northeast corner of Madison Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Phoenix, the original home was the site of frequent illegal drug sales dating back to 2007. According to police reports, the homeowner continued to sell crack cocaine from the residence despite repeated arrests and complaints from neighbors. Authorities soon realized they could not “arrest” their way out of the problem and turned to the County Attorney’s Office for assistance.

Working in partnership with the City of Phoenix and the Phoenix Police Department’s South Mountain Precinct, the County Attorney devised a legal strategy by which the property could be seized and then donated to the non-profit Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona, which has a mission of building affordable homes in partnership with families in need. The original home was demolished in November 2010 and construction of the new residence began. The Alvarado family was selected to become the new owners and contributed “sweat equity” by participating in the construction process.

“This is a great example of government and families working together to improve the quality of community life,” stated Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox.

The majority of the new residence was built by YouthBuild Phoenix, a community development program that helps out-of-school Phoenix youth obtain their high school diplomas or GEDs while gaining occupational

training in the construction industry. The project also received in-kind donations from Dow, Hunter Douglas, Square D – Schneider Electric, Valspar, Waste Management of Arizona, Whirlpool and Yale.

“Today we celebrate not just a new home, but a new future for a young family and a new chance for a neighborhood that was plagued by crime and blight on this street corner,” remarked Phoenix City Councilman Michael Nowakowski. “None of this would have been possible without the commitment and cooperation of our public and private sector partners, and I commend each of them for the lasting contributions they have made to this neighborhood and our city,” he added.

Outfitted with numerous energy efficient features, including roof-mounted solar panels, the new residence is a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-Certified Platinum level home.

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