



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Stephanie N. Kessler  
Senior Associate, Marketing  
Phone: 717-393-2351, ext. 112  
[skessler@commfirstfund.org](mailto:skessler@commfirstfund.org)  
Daniel Betancourt, CEO  
Cell Phone: 717-330-5818

**Press Release:** November 12, 2009

**COMMUNITY FIRST FUND WELCOMES NATIONAL SPEAKER AND HONORS  
LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS AND SUPPORTERS AT ITS ANNUAL AWARDS EVENT**

*2009 Friends of the Fund Celebration to be Largest in Organization's History*

Lancaster, PA... Community First Fund is holding its annual Friends of the Fund awards event on Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at the Lancaster County Convention Center. The event begins at 11:30 am with a networking and registration followed by lunch and remarks by keynote speaker Julius Walls, Jr., recent past President and CEO Greyston Bakery. The event will also serve as a venue to recognize those who have helped Community First Fund in achieving its success, and honor those who have benefited from its services.

Presented at the lunch are the James Hyson Awards, given to clients and advocates who exemplify the vision of Community First Fund's founder. The 2009 James Hyson Entrepreneur Award recipient is Johanny Cepeda-Munroe, owner of Mi Casa Su Casa Café located in Reading. Cepeda-Munroe was selected for the award because of her dedication to her community and spirit of entrepreneurship. "Community First Fund made it [securing a loan] so accessible and attainable for me," said Cepeda-Munroe. "This award means so much to me...it means victory, it means success...I am so appreciative," she added.

Receiving the Community Development Award is Community First Fund's customers and developers of the Lancaster Arts Hotel. The Award will be accepted by Bill Stull, John deVitry, and Peter Egan. The Arts Hotel was selected for the award because of the impact that it has made in the northwest corridor of Harrisburg Pike and the economic development it has spurred. Serving as an employer of 60+ low- to middle-income persons is yet another reason that Community First selected the hotel for the award. "Community First Fund is common sense business lending...Community First Fund has the ability to make things happen," said Stull.

The James Hyson Advocate Award recipient is the U.S. Small Business Administration's Philadelphia District Office, accepted by District Director David C. Dickson for the SBA's continued support of Community First Fund and its clients. "Community First Fund does what we need done throughout the United States. The lending that you do is incredible," said Dickson.

--MORE--

## **COMMUNITY FIRST FUND'S ANNUAL EVENT**

### **PAGE 2**

The James Hyson Contributor Award is presented to Stephen M. Drizos, Executive Director of the Center for Private Financing at the PA Department of Community and Economic development for his exceptional financial support of Community First Fund. "My work in bringing PCD Bank and Community First Fund together allows me to have a hand in encouraging the business growth I believe is vital to the future of Pennsylvania; obviously Community First Fund believes the same," said Drizos.

Keynote speaker Julius Walls is the former President and CEO of Greyston Bakery, where he grew the business to a \$7 million for-profit bakery owned by the non-profit Greyston Foundation. The bakery is driven by a social mission with the tagline: "We don't hire people to bake brownies. We bake brownies to hire people." All Do-Goodie Brownie profits go to the Greyston Foundation to support jobs, child care, health care, and housing for the underprivileged. Brownies from the bakery will be served at the lunch. Walls has recently changed career paths and is now the Executive Minister for Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church, a 5,000 member church in Mount Vernon, New York.

Local entrepreneur Charlie Crystle urges "Lancaster business leaders of faith should take Greyston Bakery's remarkable success as a call to action to leverage their own businesses for dearly needed social change here. He said, "The poverty rate in the city can only be eliminated by our own commitments to create sustainable, living-wage jobs for the least fortunate among us."

Community First Fund President and CEO Daniel Betancourt' speech will focus on the organization's fiscal year 2009 successes, its overall financial strength, and its commitment to the entrepreneurs and community developers and in an uncertain economy. Betancourt's address will reflect the event's theme – the story of a renaissance and demonstrate the impact that the organization has made across central Pennsylvania's small cities and towns in its 17 years of existence.

Community First Fund is a non-profit loan fund that provides business financing, training, and one-on-one counseling to entrepreneurs of all sizes, affordable housing and commercial real estate developers, and community groups in under-served communities. Community First Fund's impact is felt throughout the 13 counties in central Pennsylvania that it serves as evidenced by the more than 800 loans that the organization has disbursed since inception, totaling more than \$32 million.

###