

For Immediate Release

Reporters May Contact:
On Behalf of Bank of America
Alyssa Tran
atran@webershandwick.com
310.854.8270

**Bank of America and Families Forward Partner to Increase Access to
Affordable Housing in Orange County**

*Neighborhood Builders® will help Families Forward increase its impact in the community
through leadership development and \$200,000 in flexible funding*

IRVINE, CALIF – Bank of America has named Families Forward the 2015 Neighborhood Builder. Families Forward is being recognized for its work helping Orange County families in need achieve and maintain self-sufficiency by assisting them with finding realistic solutions to affordable housing.

The [Neighborhood Builders award](#) combines leadership development resources for the nonprofit's executive director and an emerging leader within its organization, along with \$200,000 of flexible funding intended to help increase the nonprofit's capacity and impact in Orange County. Since 2005, 17 nonprofits throughout Orange County have been awarded a cumulative total of \$3.4 million in Neighborhood Builder grants. This long-term investment in nonprofit leadership development and capacity building is the largest philanthropic investment of its kind.

"We recognize that nonprofits and their leaders are on the frontlines as they tackle tough community issues that are vital to Orange County's economic growth," said Allen Staff, Orange County market president, Bank of America. "Families Forward already provides vital services that help Orange County families regain economic independence and through Neighborhood Builders we hope to help grow and expand its services so that they can do even more in our community."

With the high cost of living, particularly in the Orange County region, one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population is working families with children. More than 30,000 school-age children are homeless or housing-insecure. Families Forward assists these families by placing them into stable housing and providing them food, counseling, education, and other support services to help maintain their self-sufficiency.

Established in 1984 with just five rented apartments, Families Forward now has access to more than 90 housing units across the county. This past year, the organization served 126 families, a growth of 40 percent over the year prior and anticipates serving 175 families in the coming year. The Neighborhood Builder award will help Families Forward expand the number and type of reasonable options for families, continue the aggressive growth in the number of families served, and maintain the high quality and success rate of their programs.

"Families Forward is extremely humbled and grateful to be chosen as Bank of America's 2015 Neighborhood Builder grant recipient. Every day families come to us with nowhere else to turn, desperate to provide stability for their children. Through this partnership with Bank of America,

we can ensure that more families will have hope in the face of homelessness by increasing access to affordable housing and the critical services they need to succeed. It is an affirmation of our mission to receive such a prestigious honor and we thank Bank of America for this uniquely impactful opportunity.”

Neighborhood Builders is just one example of Bank of America’s broader corporate social responsibility efforts to build vibrant communities and economies. By advancing partnerships with nonprofits addressing needs related to community development, basic human services and workforce development and education, Bank of America is working to increase financial stability and help individuals and families find the pathways out of poverty.

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