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**Emerson Park Development Corporation and International Institute of
Metropolitan St. Louis Awarded \$400,000 in Unrestricted Funding Through
Neighborhood Excellence Initiative® Awards from the Bank of America Charitable
Foundation**

Nonprofits, Local Heroes and Students Recognized at Local Event

St. Louis, MO – The Bank of America Charitable Foundation today announced two St. Louis area nonprofits, Emerson Park Development Corporation and International Institute of St. Louis, as recipients of the prestigious *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* (NEI) Neighborhood Builder awards. Five community leaders and five local high school students were also recognized for making a difference in the St. Louis community. Neighborhood Builder winners receive \$200,000 in unrestricted grants. Bank of America has committed more than \$2.2 million in NEI awards in St. Louis.

“Bank of America has long held the belief that a healthy community is a healthy place to do business, and we are committed to creating real impact in the St. Louis community,” said Patricia Mercurio, St. Louis President at Bank of America. “The Neighborhood Excellence Initiative underscores our belief that investing in leadership is a sound practice, whether building the capacity of our nonprofit organizations, developing current and emerging community leaders, or preparing our youth for the future.”

NEI honors awardees in three categories: **Neighborhood Builders**™ – local nonprofit organizations working to promote vibrant communities; **Local Heroes**™ – community leaders who contribute significantly to the health of our neighborhoods; and **Student Leaders**® – exemplary high school junior and seniors with a passion for improving our communities. **St. Louis’ 2008 NEI award recipients** are as follows:

Neighborhood Builders – each receives \$200,000 in unrestricted grant funding, and the executive director and an emerging leader from each organization participate in a leadership development program sponsored by Bank of America to enhance their strategic skills with other nonprofit leaders across the country and London.

- **Emerson Park Development Corporation**, based in East St. Louis, boasts an impressive track record in the development of affordable housing in East St. Louis’ Emerson Park neighborhood. The organization will use their Bank of American grant to continue helping residents achieve their full human potential by developing, implementing and evaluating programs and services in the areas of community

building, education and job training and housing and economic development.

- **International Institute of St. Louis**, based in St. Louis, is being recognized as a leader in the area of business development, especially for St. Louis area immigrants and refugees. In addition to a successful financial literacy program, their microloan and technical assistance programs have generated \$77 million dollars for the city—in less than ten years. The organization will use the grant from Bank of America to continue revitalizing local neighborhoods through the innovative use of asset building and economic development programs.

Local Heroes – each directs a \$5,000 donation from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation to an eligible nonprofit of their choice.

- **Janet Becker**, of St. Louis, will donate to Beyond Housing, Inc.
- **William Hutchinson**, of St. Louis, will donate to Northside Community Housing, Inc.
- **Tom McNeely**, of St. Louis, will donate to City Academy, Inc.
- **Jack Orchard**, of St. Louis, will donate to Extra Hands for ALS, Inc.
- **Fran Pieper**, of St. Charles, will donate to St. Louis Crisis Nursery

Student Leaders – each participated in a paid, eight-week internship with a local nonprofit organization and in a weeklong leadership summit in Washington, D.C. designed to increase their understanding of how nonprofits, businesses and government partner to create positive change, and to encourage them as future leaders.

- **Crystal Cates**, of St. Louis, attends E. H. Lyle College Prep Academy
- **Melanie Gilmore**, of Brentwood, attends Brentwood High School
- **Danielle Hladky**, of Wentzville, attended Wentzville Timberland High School
- **Kathleen McGlynn**, of Belleville, attended Althoff High School
- **Adam Thompson-Harvey**, of St. Louis, attended Whitfield School

Bank of America is one of the few corporations in the U.S. that provides unrestricted grant funding to nonprofit organizations. This practice is based on Bank of America's belief that corporate philanthropy works best when it sustains community efforts that are based on partnership, leadership development and flexible funding.

Including this year's awardees, Bank of America's *Neighborhood Excellence Initiative* has recognized, nurtured and rewarded more than 400 organizations and over 2,000 individuals. In 2008, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation will commit \$20 million globally to the initiative, which operates in 45 of the bank's major markets, bringing the total commitment under the program to more than \$90 million by the end of this year.

Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy

Building on a long-standing tradition of investing in the communities it serves, Bank of America will embark in 2009 on a new, ten-year goal to donate \$2 billion to nonprofit organizations engaged in improving the health and vitality of their neighborhoods.

Funded by Bank of America, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation gave more than \$200 million in 2007, making the bank the most generous financial institution in the world and the second largest donor of all U.S. corporations in cash contributions. Bank of America approaches giving through a national strategy called "neighborhood excellence" under which it works with local leaders to identify and meet the most pressing needs of individual communities. Through Team Bank of America, bank associate volunteers contributed more than 650,000 hours in 2007 to enhance the quality of life in their communities nationwide. For more information about Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy, please visit www.bankofamerica.com/foundation.

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