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**REBUILDING TOGETHER OAKLAND RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE Y&H SODA FOUNDATION
For Year-round Home Modification Program Helping Seniors in Need**

OAKLAND, CA, —September 18, 2006—Rebuilding Together Oakland (RTO) announced today that it has received a \$50,000 grant over two years from the Y&H Soda Foundation to start a year-round home modification program for elderly and disabled homeowners in Oakland. This new “Safe-At-Home” program targets seniors and disabled persons in need of minor home repairs such as grab bars and railings, required due to a debilitating illness or other life changing event. In the first year, RTO expects to serve approximately 50 low-income seniors and disabled persons.

According to John Caner, Executive Director of RTO, “We are delighted to have the Y&H Soda Foundation funding for our new year-round “Safe-At-Home” program. Many seniors--due to a recent illness--cannot wait until our April Rebuilding Program for these types of repairs. Nor do they need the extensive home repairs of our April Program. Moreover, this program provides an opportunity for dedicated volunteers to get involved on a year round basis.” For example, John Bongiovanni, who recently retired from Sun Microsystems, is the volunteer Program Manager for this program.

The Y&H Soda Foundation is equally excited about the Safe-At-Home program. According to Judith Murphy, “*Safe at Home* may be new for RTO, but it has demonstrated success with Rebuilding Together affiliates across the country. RTO’s commitment to providing comfort and safety to seniors and disabled people who choose to live independently is well aligned with our funding priorities, which includes helping seniors to age in place.” Murphy added, “We also like the leveraged impact of our funding, through the use of volunteers, discounted and donated materials, and excellent partnerships with referral agencies, corporations, businesses, and nonprofit organizations.”

The Y&H Soda Foundation grant is providing the seed funding for the program. In the first year, RTO plans to service approximately 50 homeowners, growing to 100+ in the second year and beyond. Initial scope of work will be limited to relatively simple upgrades such as grab bars, railings and easy to hold door and cupboard handles. With a successful launch, RTO expects to obtain additional funding from other foundations, agencies, and corporate sponsors to expand the program to include more homes and a larger scope of projects including wheel chair ramps and other major home repair projects.

There is a clear need for these types of services in the Oakland community. It is difficult for homeowners and social service agencies to find reliable handymen and women to do these types of projects. Many seniors are particularly fearful of letting strangers that are not associated with a trustworthy organization into their home. RTO has already identified several social service agencies that will refer qualified clients in need, including Center for Elders Independence, BACS, and Alameda County Public Health. Caner states, "By working with these agencies, we can leverage our dollars and volunteers' time by focusing on what we do best—home repairs, while the agency can do the leg work in identifying the clients."

About Rebuilding Together Oakland

Rebuilding Together (formerly Christmas in April) is the largest volunteer rehabilitation organization in America, providing free services to low-income homeowners, particularly the elderly, disabled and families with children. In 1988, Christmas in April USA was founded as a national organization with 13 affiliates serving 18 states. The organization has grown to include 865 cities and towns in all 50 states. The cumulative effort through 2006 was a total of 2.5 million volunteers who worked over 25 million hours to rehabilitate over 105,000 houses and nonprofit facilities, delivering over \$1 billion in market value.

The Rebuilding Together Oakland (RTO) affiliate was established in 1994. Since then RTO has renovated 319 homes of low-income elderly and disabled persons, and 45 community facilities throughout the City of Oakland, utilizing over 16,500 volunteers and creating almost \$7,000,000 in project value. In 2006, RTO plans to renovate 33 homes and 12 community facilities with its April Rebuilding and October Block Building programs, with over 3,000 volunteers and creating over \$1,000,000 in project value. For more information on Rebuilding Together Oakland please visit www.rtoakland.org.

About The Y & H Soda Foundation

The Y & H Soda Foundation makes charitable contributions to organizations established and operated as non-profit entities with Federal 501(c)3 tax exempt status serving Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The Foundation, through its charitable activities, seeks to enhance the quality of life for the economically disadvantaged, disabled, elderly and youth; to promote their health and welfare; to provide opportunities for education and to support those organizations whose religious philosophy strengthens the spiritual and temporal well being of those they serve.