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WORLD MONUMENTS FUND LAUNCHES NEW FIELD SCHOOL IN NEWBURGH, NEW YORK

WMF PARTNERING WITH CITY OF NEWBURGH, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GREATER NEWBURGH, AND NEWBURGH PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION ON SIX-WEEK PROGRAM TARGETED AT LOCAL HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS

For Immediate Release—New York, July 9, 2009 . . . Bonnie Burnham, president of the World Monuments Fund (WMF), announced today that WMF, in partnership with the City of Newburgh, the National Park Service, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh, and the Newburgh Preservation Association, is launching a field school for high-school students this summer in Newburgh, New York. The 12 students will learn preservation arts while working on Newburgh’s Dutch Reformed Church, designated a National Historic Landmark in 2001. The six-week program will build community interest and support for both the church and the other historic resources of Newburgh.

“In 2006, we placed the Dutch Reformed Church on the World Monuments Watch, our biennial list of 100 most endangered sites, recognizing the importance of this great building owned by the City of Newburgh and the threat to it that is posed by the city’s limited resources,” said **Bonnie Burnham, World Monuments Fund president**. “Long forgotten, the church was rapidly deteriorating, its roof in urgent need of repair, and so we stepped in to support the design of the roof restoration. But we soon realized that the church needed new life, not just physical repair, to ensure its future. We hope this hands-on field school will be successful in a city like Newburgh, which needs to provide jobs and career options for its young people. We hope that, through this program, the church will once again become a valuable asset and educational resource for its diverse community.”

“We are so honored to be chosen by the World Monuments Fund for this field school, and, in particular, to be a part of the restoration of a historic landmark—the Dutch Reformed Church,” said **Yaniyah Pearson, director of human services, City of Newburgh**. “The students we have selected are very excited and there is a high level of motivation. They are participating in the beautification of the City of Newburgh and serving as positive role models for other youth in the city. To be amongst those working on World Monuments Fund projects across the globe is certainly a big deal for us. Perhaps one day the students will want to visit some of the other World Monuments Fund projects—the Great Wall in China would be a great trip!”

(more)

“Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh appreciates the opportunity to host the Field School as part of our commitment to community development,” said **Deirdre Glenn, executive director of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh**. “This summer will provide a wealth of new ideas and opportunities for the students in Newburgh.”

“Newburgh Preservation Association is proud to combine the restoration of one of Newburgh’s premier historic jewels with an innovative education effort,” said **Stuart Sachs, chair of the DRC Committee for the Newburgh Preservation Association**. “We see job training in historic preservation as Newburgh’s home-grown economic stimulus package.”

The Field School participants will be juniors and seniors in the fall at the Newburgh Free Academy. The full-day Field School classes will meet Mondays through Fridays from July 13 through August 21, and will be led by instructors from the National Park Service. Under supervision, students will make repairs to fire-damaged portions of the church, and repair and restore windows and exterior architectural details. Students who maintain 100 percent attendance will receive a \$200 weekly stipend.

Dutch Reformed Church in Newburgh

Sited on a bluff with its imposing portico of Ionic columns overlooking the Hudson River, the Dutch Reformed Church was designed by one of America’s most prolific 19th-century architects, Alexander Jackson Davis (1803–1892). Built between 1835 and 1837, the church is an outstanding example of the Greek Revival style. As Newburgh fell into economic decline in the mid-20th century, the church was abandoned by its congregation and, left unoccupied, has been rapidly deteriorating. World Monuments Fund placed the church on the 2006 Watch to draw local, national, and international attention to the plight of the church. WMF is currently supporting roof design work that will go into construction later this year.

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world’s most treasured places. For over 40 years, working in more than 90 countries, our highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, we inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. www.wmf.org

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Newburgh

Habitat Newburgh is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International and builds houses for very low income families in need. We seek to restore a sense of community with dignity through homeownership. We have completed 36 homes in the City of Newburgh and are currently working on 5 additional homes and a mixed-income neighborhood of 24 new houses in downtown Newburgh, NY. www.habitatnewburgh.org

Newburgh Preservation Association

Newburgh Preservation Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to economic development through historic preservation. This education program is an integral part of that mission. www.preservenewburgh.org