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**‘Little House’ star Melissa Gilbert helps build Habitat for Humanity house as kickoff for national ‘Little House on the Prairie: The Musical’ tour**

**NEW YORK CITY (August 3, 2009)** – “Little House on the Prairie: The Musical” star Melissa Gilbert helped build a house with fellow cast members at a Habitat for Humanity - New York City build site. The special build in the South Bronx was part of an announcement of a nationwide effort between Habitat for Humanity International and “Little House on the Prairie: The Musical” to raise awareness about the need for affordable housing.

“Habitat for Humanity is truly one of the most important, most wonderful organizations in this country and around the world,” said Ms. Gilbert. “An enduring message of ‘Little House on the Prairie’ – the importance above all of a home and a strong family -- is exactly the mission of Habitat. There couldn’t be a more perfect match between a show and an organization. As we travel across the country during the next year, we are looking forward to getting involved in a variety of ways in each city to do our part to aid in Habitat’s mission to bring affordable housing to those in need.”

The musical begins its 34-week, 25 city tour in October, and will make a minimum donation of \$1,500 per market to the work of Habitat for Humanity through June 2010. In addition, the cast and crew will help local Habitat for Humanity affiliates build homes in each location.

“Habitat for Humanity New York City is tremendously blessed to partner with Melissa Gilbert and the cast of ‘Little House on the Prairie: The Musical’, as they launch the newest version of this classic story -- and help build Habitat-NYC's Big Co-op in the South Bronx,” said Josh Lockwood Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity-New York City. “Today, decent shelter is as critical to families as it was to the Ingalls family so many decades ago and this alliance furthers our mission to provide affordable housing and sustainable communities for families worldwide.”

Melissa Gilbert, who played the lead role of “Laura Ingalls” in the hit television series based on the beloved children’s books by the same name, continues her legacy on the prairie and will now be playing the role of Ma Ingalls.

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“We are extremely grateful to Melissa Gilbert, the cast and producers of ‘Little House on the Prairie: The Musical’ for supporting our mission and engaging audiences across the country to build greater awareness of the need for affordable housing,” said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. “The Ingalls family’s struggles in difficult conditions parallel the challenges many families face today in trying to secure better futures for themselves and their children. It’s our hope this new interpretation of an ageless classic will remind fans both young and old of the importance of a safe, simple and decent home.”

“Little House on the Prairie” has remained a celebration of early Americana for over 70 years. The musical premiered at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis in a developmental production in August 2008.

#### **About Habitat for Humanity – New York City**

Habitat for Humanity - New York City transforms lives and our city by building quality homes for families in need and by uniting all New Yorkers around the cause of affordable housing. With the help of thousands of volunteers every year, Habitat-NYC has built more than 180 affordable homes in the five boroughs of New York City. Learn more at [www.habitatnyc.org](http://www.habitatnyc.org).

#### **About Habitat for Humanity International**

Habitat for Humanity International is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 300,000 houses worldwide, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1.5 million people. For more information, visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org).

#### **About Little House on the Prairie: The Musical**

***LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE***, a new musical based on the beloved Laura Ingalls Wilder series of classic American books is the uplifting story of an American family forging a new life amidst the mighty challenges, heartbreaks, joys and triumphs that face them in the newly-settled heartland. Melissa Gilbert, who rose to fame as a child playing ‘Laura’ in the hugely successful NBC television series “Little House on the Prairie” during the 1970’s, now continues her legacy ‘on the prairie’ by taking on the role of Ma. This celebration of the pioneering spirit and the core values on which this country was founded will travel throughout the U.S. on a 25 city tour which culminates in spring 2010, following a month-long engagement at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, NJ which begins September 10. For ticket information please visit [www.littlehousethemusical.com](http://www.littlehousethemusical.com).