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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Oct. 21, 2009

**Contact:** Habitat for Humanity of Missoula, 406-549-8210; Adjunct Assistant Professor Nancy Cooper, UM Department of Music, 406-243-2080.

**‘MESSIAH’ CONCERT SET TO BENEFIT HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

**MISSOULA –**

Community voices can join with professional musicians to perform Handel’s “Messiah” on Sunday, Nov. 29, at The University of Montana.

The 14th annual event to raise funds for Habitat for Humanity of Missoula begins at 7:30 p.m. in the University Theatre. There is no charge for admission, but freewill donations will be accepted at the door.

The fundraiser brings together professional soloists, a 30-piece orchestra and a community choir of about 100 members for the hour-long performance each year.

This year’s “Messiah” concert will be conducted by UM music Associate Professor Luis Millán.

Singers who would like to join the performance as community choir members can collect pledges to participate. A minimum pledge total of \$75 for adults and \$40 for students is needed to perform in the concert. Those who collect the most pledges will receive prize packages. For pledge sheets and more information, go to <http://www.habitatmsla.org> or call Habitat for Humanity of Missoula at 406-549-8210.

Two voluntary rehearsals will be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Nov. 15 and Nov. 22 at the Holy Spirit Episcopal Church Parish Hall, located at 130 S. Sixth St. E. in Missoula. A full dress

rehearsal will take place at the University Theatre from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. the day of the performance.

Featured soloists this year are UM music Professor Anne Basinski, soprano; music Assistant Professor Kimberly Gratland James, mezzo-soprano, alumnus Steven Aadland, tenor; and College of Visual and Performing Arts Dean Stephen Kalm, baritone.

The "Messiah" orchestra will include members of the Missoula Symphony Orchestra, the String Orchestra of the Rockies, the UM Symphony Orchestra and area high school orchestras.

Since its founding in 1991, Habitat for Humanity of Missoula has completed 39 homes for area families. Last year the "Messiah" fundraiser brought in \$20,000, and in the 14 years of the event, \$130,000 has been raised to help with the organization's hand-up to home ownership program.

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