

ESSENCE®

ESSENCE MAGAZINE ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST SHOWHOUSE IN HARLEM

SHOWHOUSE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ABYSSINIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

New York, NY, September 30, 2005—ESSENCE magazine, the preeminent lifestyle magazine for African-American women, and Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC), one of the leading Community Development organizations in the country, have partnered to create ESSENCE's first designer Showhouse in a Harlem brownstone, known as **HOMEcomings**. Homecoming epitomizes ESSENCE's unique approach to its editorial content—a focus on its readers' mind, body, and spirit as well as homeownership and financial well being. The Showhouse will open to the public in September and is one of the key highlights of a year-long celebration of ESSENCE magazine's 35th birthday. Showhouse tour details will be announced in upcoming weeks on essence.com.

Homecoming will encompass a magnificently restored brownstone carved into three gracious residences—two single-floor apartments and one duplex. The three residences will highlight how savvy African-American women are living today: the duplex will showcase a family environment and one of the two single-floor apartments will be designed for a newlywed couple and the other for a single entrepreneur. Making this Showhouse so remarkable is that once it is over, the building will be sold to an individual through ADC's home-ownership program. The homeowner has the option to live in the duplex, and rent out the two single units.

“All of us at ESSENCE are extremely proud of the accomplishments made by our faithful readers over the past 35 years, and we are very grateful for the opportunity to play a role in their lives” says Essence Communications Inc., President Michelle Ebanks. “We hope that each one of them, in person or online, will enjoy the Showhouse and the useful renovation information we will include in ESSENCE's September issue.” Sheena Wright, President & CEO of ADC expressed, “ADC's historic partnership with Essence on this 35th Anniversary is a very exciting opportunity to share our work, and to encourage members of our community to pursue the dream of homeownership through financial education.”

Courtney Sloane, founder and President of Alternative Design, was selected by ESSENCE to design the interior spaces and finishes. Ms. Sloane is a renowned interior designer with a multi-disciplinary practice, which handles interior design, product branding and marketing among other endeavors. ADC's architect for the Showhouse is **Zevilla Jackson Preston, R.A.** Preston is the founder and principal of full-service architectural firm J-P Design Group, which specializes in not-for-profit, urban projects. Recognizing the inter-connection between the social, physical and cultural aspects of a community, she has designed distinctive spaces for ADC, South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corp., Harlem Commonwealth Council and the Harlem Y.M.C.A.

The Homecoming Showhouse's major sponsors are **Colgate-Palmolive, Hunter Douglas, Martex, Verizon** and **Wal-Mart**. **General Mills, HGTV** and **McDonald** are supporting sponsors. In addition, **Cadbury Schweppes, Mary Kay, Mizani** and **Motrin** are participating sponsors. The names of the other Homecoming sponsors will be announced at a later date.

Harlem, the heart of African-American culture, is the perfect location for the Showhouse. Home to generations of Black families, leaders, politicians, educators and celebrities, it is a neighborhood that resounds with history and that is today, reveling in an exciting economic renaissance.

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An inspiration for anyone interested in the world of design, the entire renovation process of the Showhouse will be available for viewing online. Visitors to www.essence.com will be able to review the work in progress, and obtain specific, personalized tips for their own remodeling and decorating ventures from ESSENCE lifestyle director **Vanessa Bush**. They will also receive special offers from Showhouse sponsors. In addition, the September issue of ESSENCE will offer the magazine's biggest guide ever on home decorating. The 25-page home special will help readers create relaxed living spaces that reflect their style, taste and life.

ESSENCE

Essence Communications, Inc. publishes ESSENCE, the preeminent lifestyle magazine that reaches more than seven million African-Americans each month. For 35 years, the company has provided cutting-edge reporting on and service for every aspect of the lives of African-Americans. Essence Communications, Inc. also produces the Essence Music Festival, The Essence Awards, Essence Books, [essence.com](http://www.essence.com), and has brand-licensing agreements for Essence Eyewear and Hosiery. www.essence.com

About the Abyssinian Development Corporation

The Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC) is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit comprehensive community development corporation dedicated to improving the quality of life in Harlem. For almost sixteen years, ADC has helped to strengthen and rebuild the socioeconomic fabric of the Harlem community by developing housing, spearheading commercial development, stimulating the local economy, fostering education, strengthening families and building community capacity through civic engagement. By providing quality affordable housing, social services, educational opportunities and economic development programs, ADC has played a key leadership role in the current "Harlem Renaissance." www.adcorp.org

About the Brownstone

The Brownstone for the Showhouse is part of the Neighborhood Homes Project established by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. ADC is the brownstone owner/developer and HPD <http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/hpd/home.html> and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) www.lisc.org supported this project with construction funding.

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