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BELLSOUTH RESTORES AND BEAUTIFIES CASA VALENTINA'S NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING SITE FOR YOUNG WOMEN WHO AGE OUT OF FOSTER CARE

MIAMI (September 13, 2006) – An “Extreme Makeover” took place at Casa Valentina’s newly purchased apartment building in Coconut Grove’s West Village on September 13, 2006 when nearly 100 BellSouth employee volunteers tackled several restoration projects to kick off their 2006 United Way/Hands on Miami campaign to help others. The two-story, old-Spanish apartment building in Coconut Grove is one of Casa Valentina’s two affordable housing sites for young women in our community who age out of foster care when they turn 18.

“We are so incredibly grateful to BellSouth for choosing Casa Valentina as their community partner,” said Sharon Langer, Chair of Casa Valentina. “All of the volunteers rolled up their sleeves – literally – and worked tirelessly in the hot sun all day to make our property beautiful. It was an amazing sight to see.”

From sunrise to sunset, droves of BellSouth employees and several Hands on Miami and United Way volunteers undertook countless tasks, including painting the building, staining the back yard deck, landscaping the front and back yards, installing a fountain and wiring the building for phone and Internet services. The focal point of the back yard makeover was the creation of a reading garden with a circle of benches and colorful plantings. A large, three-tiered fountain surrounded by benches was also installed in a corner of the yard creating a tranquility garden.

“To see a corporate/non-profit partnership like this in action is inspiring, and we are thankful to Hands on Miami and United Way for bringing Casa Valentina and BellSouth together,” Langer said. “Even more exciting is that these groups want to continue the relationship, and we are thrilled about the opportunity to work with all of them to develop innovative projects and services that will benefit us all.”

Casa Valentina is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide young women in Miami-Dade County who age out of foster care with safe, affordable housing and the support services they need to become successful, independent adults. Beginning this fall, Casa Valentina will offer affordable housing to up to 14 former foster women at two residential sites in Miami located in Coconut Grove and The Roads. Casa Valentina will also provide the women with a comprehensive case management and support services program. Visit Casa Valentina online at www.casavalentina.org.

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