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The Welcome to America Project

Press Release

CNN Names Scottsdale Woman a 2009 CNN Hero for her Work with Phoenix area Refugees.

Carolyn Manning, Founder and Executive Director of The Welcome to America Project, receives international honor from CNN.

Phoenix, AZ, February 26, 2009: Carolyn Manning started The Welcome to America Project in late 2001 after losing her brother-in-law in Tower One of the World Trade Center on 9/11. In an effort to find a positive outlet for their grief and to help other victims of terror, she and her husband Phil began collecting furniture donations to help furnish the bare apartment of a local refugee family they had read about in a local paper. From this humble beginning helping just one family, Carolyn's non-profit, The Welcome to America Project, was born.

Since then, Carolyn and her ever-growing team of hundreds of volunteers and donors have furnished the homes of over 550 refugee families in Phoenix – all free of charge to the refugee families and resettlement agencies that rehome them safely in the US.

Now, in recognition of her extraordinary generosity and dedication to refugees, CNN has awarded its prestigious international honor on Mrs. Manning: **she is the newest CNN Hero of 2009.**

To view her story and see the impact her work is having on refugees and the local community of volunteers here in Arizona, go to www.cnn.com/heroes.

Carolyn will appear on Larry King Live on Friday, February 27th (check local listings for times) and be featured on **CNN, Headline News, CNN International and CNN Espanol** throughout the days on Friday, Feb 27th and Saturday, Feb 28th.

Carolyn is available for interviews, comments, photo, audio and video requests, and speaking engagements. Press are welcome to join WTAP volunteers on deliveries. See website for schedule.

About The Welcome to America Project

The Welcome to America Project, a 501c3 non-profit organization established in 2001, helps newly resettled refugees transform their bare apartments in Phoenix into comfortable, warm homes. This volunteer group collects high quality furniture and household items from donors throughout the Phoenix area, and delivers them free of charge, every Saturday to refugee families arriving from Africa, the Middle East, and other war-torn regions. Since November of 2001, WTAP has delivered home furnishings and necessities to over 550 refugee families, raised over \$650,000 in in-kind donations, and logged thousands of volunteer hours. The organization has won numerous awards and accolades for its grassroots, volunteer work.

For more information, please contact: Sue Michalowski, sue.michalowski@wtap.org. To volunteer or to make a donation, please visit www.wtap.org or call (602) 820-3224.

