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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What Obama's Inauguration Means to the Homeless Interviews with Residents at Project PLASE

Baltimore, MD (Jan. 15, 2009): As the nation gears up for the inauguration of our next president, Baltimore is flooded with those who weren't quick enough to get rooms in Washington, public schools are giving students a holiday on Inauguration Day, and the formerly homeless residents of Project PLASE, a homeless advocacy agency in Baltimore, are no less excited than anyone else.

Many of our residents, in fact, turned out to vote in the November election. One resident, Gregory Southers, who has not previously been a regular voter, said that he wanted to vote this year since, "this election is more important [than previous elections] - instead of choosing the better person, we chose a good one."

Steven Sydnor believes that the upcoming inauguration is significant in many ways. "One," he says, "this is history changing. Two, it shows progress in race relations - not just for African Americans, but for others who have been left out. And three, we need a young man [as president], not someone who is old with the same old ways."

Homeless residents at PLASE hope that housing, jobs, ending poverty are tops in the new president's agenda. Their excitement does not keep residents from being practical, however. Perhaps more than any other group of people, those who come to Project PLASE are aware that a change of leadership will not necessarily solve all their problems.

Mr. Sydnor says, "Change takes time to come. [Obama will be] managing the system until maybe his second term, but he has such a mess, he might not have time to get his programs started." Mr. Southers agrees, saying that "Previous administrations were geared for wealthy people. [Obama will have to] deal with specific issues in a way that will help a wide range of people... [He needs to] help change administration to help lower class people. [There is] a hard job ahead and things will get worse before they get better."

In addition, our residents know that everyone has to work to make changes happen. As Mr. Southers says, "Don't just clap your hands, do some work."

So on Inauguration Day, whether you're gathering around the television, or fighting crowds on the Mall remember that your hopes for change with the incoming president are just as poignant as those of Baltimore's homeless population.

About Project PLASE

Project PLASE, Inc. addresses homelessness by providing transitional housing, permanent housing and supportive services to homeless adults. We serve the most vulnerable and underserved, including persons with mental illness, HIV/AIDS, addiction, developmental disabilities, and ex-offenders. We treat, restore and rehabilitate the whole person. We empower each individual to function at the highest level possible. Project PLASE is located at 1814 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, Md 21201 - minutes from I- 83 at North Avenue. For more information, please call 410.837.1400 x15 or you can donate directly at www.projectplase.org