

**PRESS RELEASE**

October 22, 2010

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**State Honors Cathie Griffith of ARC of Spokane with *Friend of Housing* Award**

Tacoma, Wash. — On Oct. 20, Cathie Griffith, homeownership opportunities specialist for ARC of Spokane, was honored for her outstanding service in expanding affordable housing resources for Washington’s low-income residents. Before an audience of 350 colleagues, Griffith accepted a *Friend of Housing* Award from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. The ceremony took place at the Hotel Murano in Tacoma as part of the *Housing Washington 2010* conference on affordable housing.

“Cathie’s commitment to ARC’s mission is exceptional,” said Kim Herman, executive director of the Commission. “She puts the “Mission Impossible” team to shame, and we are delighted to honor her with the statewide recognition she deserves.”

Stories of her outstanding service abound. Here is one example. She assisted an 18-year-old woman on nine life-support systems to become a homebuyer. This not only involved financing and the purchasing process, but modifications in design to her house to accommodate the oxygen machines and extensive backup systems she needed to be able to live in a home of her own.

Griffith embodies ARC’s mission to promote independence and choice, and enhance the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities as well as their families.

Since 2004, Griffith has assisted 67 households of people with developmental disabilities to become homeowners. She works with these individuals and families on credit problems and good credit development, introduces them to agents, helps them locate property, assists in purchasing a home, and works with the households in all before and after home-buying assistance. When necessary, she also helps with the

applications to Department of Social and Health Service's Division of Developmental Disabilities for any additional services they might need.

Griffith continually strives to do more. Recognized statewide, ARC's Homeownership Opportunities Program, which she has developed over the years, allows her to be a better advocate and to assist more households.

For instance, she applied for and received a grant from the State of Washington's Housing Trust Fund to provide up-to-\$20,000 in down-payment assistance. While applying for this grant Griffith's recognized that adding a safety net could really help the disabled from undue risk, so she wrote into the application a clause to include a foreclosure/emergency reserve account. This was granted.

Griffith provides real personal service. She was recently working with a wheelchair bound woman to redesign an existing condo to make it ADA accessible. Then she got a better idea. She redirected the client to purchase a new home instead. Her client moved into her custom-built, barrier-free home in September.

Griffith has spent hundreds of hours developing a pre-purchase education program for all of her homebuyers as well as for others who are considering purchasing their own home. Griffith has personally built a team of professionals in insurance, banking, and real estate to teach her clients their responsibilities as a home purchaser.

Griffith defines dedication and community commitment. Here are a few of the organizations she participates in:

- Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium;
- Northeast Washington Fair Housing Alliance;
- The Regional Homeownership Advisory Council;
- Spokane Community Land Trust Formation Committee;
- The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment;
- Spokane's Washington Families Fund Committee; and,
- Spokane Community Warehouse Steering Committee.

"Cathie is recognized as one of the top homeownership advocates in the state and deserves to be recognized," said her colleague at ARC, Michael Chappell, who nominated her for this award.

**Washington State Housing Finance Commission**

Washington State Housing Finance Commission is a publicly accountable, self-supporting agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for Washington state residents.

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