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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Student Design Project for Green Affordable Housing Comes to Life

Students enrolled in the Ecosa Institute's Total Immersion Semester in Sustainable Design have worked together to create plans for an environmentally, socially and economically responsible 45-unit housing project for Desert Mission Neighborhood Renewal, a non-profit community development organization sponsored by John C. Lincoln hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. This project is currently moving into the construction document phase with a commitment to eco friendly design as a means of providing long-term affordability for home-owners.

(PRWEB) – While it is exceptionally rare for today's design students to see their plans translated into real-world construction projects, it is rarer still that they are given an opportunity to make a direct and positive impact in people's lives. By employing sustainable design methods learned throughout their semester at the Ecosa Institute, students have been able to address the social and economic components of a workforce housing complex on its way to construction in Phoenix, Arizona.

Searching for solutions to the lack of affordable workforce housing in their area, Desert Mission Neighborhood Renewal, a non-profit community development corporation sponsored by John C. Lincoln hospital, commissioned the Ecosa Institute and its students to design a 45-unit housing project in the Sunnyslope neighborhood of Phoenix. As the National Association of Home Builders has noted, "Workers who provide vital services to the community face an uphill battle to find affordable housing in the nation's top 25 metropolitan areas," of which Phoenix is one. The Ecosa students were required to engage the practicalities and constraints of site and budget— subjects not often taught in architecture school—in order to maintain a 'triple bottom line' of economic, ecological and social balance.

Though contrary to popular thought, green design can be affordable upfront while also mitigating utility costs down the line. The Mission Lane design utilizes solar orientation and shading strategies to achieve passive heating, lighting, ventilation and cooling so that the buildings will actually regulate their interior temperatures. Rainwater catchment and gray water reuse will allow the native landscape design to thrive in even the driest summer months. The site will be a pilot project for a new form of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ certification, LEED-H, that will be used to assess multi-family townhouse units.

Antony Brown, Director of the Ecosa Institute, highlights the broader implications of the successful student endeavor: "Because half of all carbon emissions come from the building sector, the American Institute of Architects has announced the 2010 Imperative to increase ecological literacy in all design classrooms by 2010 and the 2030 Challenge to reduce the

carbon output of all new construction 10% every five years, so that by 2030 all new buildings are completely carbon neutral. The Mission Lane project is an example of the work the Ecosa Institute is doing to address the oncoming crisis of climate change and can serve as a model for other designers attempting to meet the 2030 Challenge."

For more information on the progress of the innovative Mission Lane project or to learn more about the unique Sustainable Design programs offered through the Ecosa Institute, please visit their website at www.ecosainstitute.org.

About the Ecosa Institute:

Since offering its first semester in Sustainable Design in 2000 in Prescott, Arizona, the Ecosa Institute has evolved to provide revolutionary learning experiences to design students, professionals and others interested in ensuring a sustainable future. Their mission is to restore health to the natural environment, and thus the human environment, through education in design.

The Ecosa Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, condition of handicap, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin in admission to the program.