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## **PLATINUM ROCKERS TO RESTORE HOME OF KATRINA HERO**

***Rock Band Better Than Ezra Selects Injured Firefighter's Historic Home as First "House That Ezra Built"***

NEW ORLEANS (Sept. 12, 2006) The Crescent City's most famous rockers, Better Than Ezra, has selected a home to rebuild for their "House That Ezra Built" Katrina-recovery project. The Treme homeowner is a true hero – and he has endured a painful journey since Katrina.

In late August, 2005, 44-year-old New Orleans firefighter Terry James was off-duty, taking advantage of some much-deserved vacation days. Hurricane Katrina drew him back to the firehouse, where he knew he would be able to provide vital services during and after the storm. He and his colleagues worked day and night while the storm and the subsequent floods overtook the city. Even while water rushed into his own home and destroyed his belongings, he continued to work, he said, "because that is the duty of a first responder."

In the months after the disaster, James continued to work with the rest of the New Orleans Fire Department, sleeping at the Holy Cross school. Just before Christmas, James responded to a fire in East New Orleans, and a motorist sped in front of the fire truck, causing it to roll. James broke his neck, and his friend and fellow firefighter was killed.

Now on worker's compensation and living in a FEMA trailer, James has done as much work to repair his home as his injuries allow. His insurance settlement already has been put back into the house, but much work remains to be done before he can return home. He did not have flood coverage, and was taken advantage of by an unscrupulous contractor.

Upon hearing his story, Better Than Ezra members immediately decided to select James' home as their first project with Rebuilding Together of New Orleans. "Many first responders suffered some of the heaviest losses," said Tom Drummond, Better Than Ezra bassist. "Terry James not only needs his home back, but also his health. We hope that getting Terry back to familiar and comfortable surroundings will speed his recovery."

James has endured two neck surgeries so far, and faces months more of physical therapy. "Terry is a living example of heroism and determination," said Travis McNabb, the band's drummer. "It is a privilege to help this hero."

Funds for the renovation will be raised at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual charity golf classic and concert, The Ezra Open. The Ezra Open kicks off Sunday, Sept. 24, with a patron and celebrity VIP concert hosted at Tipitina's in the French Quarter. Ed Roland of *Collective Soul*, Josh Kelly, Howie Day and other special guests will perform with Better Than Ezra. Celebrity guests include Ricardo

Chavira of *Desperate Housewives*, Candace Ramos of *Extreme Home Makeover*, *Days of our Lives* alum Nadia Bjorlin and others. The concert will feature an open bar and gourmet cuisine. Actor Patrick Muldoon and former Saints player-turned-actor Paul Green also will play at the golf classic, to be held at the Tournament Players Club (TPC) Louisiana on Monday, Sept. 25, 2006.

Corporate sponsorship are available, and the public may buy tickets to the Patron Party concert for \$250 per person through the Ezra Open hotline at 504-636-3060.

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### **About Rebuilding Together**

Rebuilding Together, a program of the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans and a affiliate of Rebuilding Together in Washington, D.C., already has enabled 35 families to come home. The program brings together volunteers and skilled tradespeople to renovate and repair the homes of low-income elderly and/or disabled homeowners in neighborhoods throughout the city.