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Garrison Keillor will be the featured speaker at Paterson Habitat's 20th Anniversary Gala dinner on Sept. 18 at the Skylands Manor.

Keillor to speak at Habitat gala

Garrison Keillor, the host and creator of National Public Radio's popular "Prairie Home Companion," is coming to New Jersey to help Paterson Habitat for Humanity create decent housing for low-income families.

Described by one critic as the "Mark Twain of modern American humorists" and the author of nine books, Keillor will provide his unique thought-provoking enter-

tainment as the featured speaker at Paterson Habitat's 20th Anniversary Gala dinner Saturday evening Sept. 18 at the Skylands Manor, situated in the heart of the New Jersey Botanical Garden in Ringwood.

"Garrison still produces 35 live broadcasts a year of Prairie Home Companion and we're incredibly fortunate that he's volunteered to help Paterson Habitat," said James

Rice, Chief Executive Officer of Unilever Bestfoods in Englewood Cliffs and honorary chairman of the Gala. "Anyone who comes to the Gala can help the work of Paterson Habitat and have a memorable evening with Garrison in the process."

The Sept. 18 Gala is both a fundraiser and a celebration of

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Paterson Habitat's 20 years of operation, made possible by financial support and volunteer labor from individuals, churches, companies and organizations across Bergen and Passaic Counties. Last year Paterson Habitat met its long-standing goal of completing its 150th house in the Northside neighborhood of Paterson and the organization has a new goal of 200 houses by 2006 and eventually eliminating poverty housing from Paterson completely.

Keillor began his famous Prairie Home Companion show on public radio in Minneapolis in 1973 and it went national seven years later. He is probably best known for his

homespun but philosophically penetrating tales of life in the mythical Minnesota town of Lake Wobegon, monologues which always end with his signature closing line describing it as the town "where the women are strong, the men are good looking and all the children are above average." During the Habitat gala, Keillor will auction off the right to name two characters in his next Lake Wobegon monologue, with the proceeds going toward the building of another Habitat house in Paterson.

Tickets for the Gala are \$175 per person and can be ordered on the Internet at www.patersonhabitat.org or by calling (973) 278-4280 x107. Skylands Manor in Ringwood is in Northern Passaic County, minutes from the Bergen and Rockland County borders.