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NEWS RELEASE

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**District Attorney Lynne M. Abraham Sells Forfeited Drug Property for \$1.00 to
Bibleway Missionary Baptist Church**

***Rev. Alfonso Ballard Will Convert Former Drug House Into a Community Center For
Counseling, After-School Activities and a Food Bank***

WHAT: News Conference
WHEN Wednesday April 14, 2004
11AM
WHERE: 2227 Moore St. (Map Book p. 37, C3.)

District Attorney Lynne M. Abraham today sold for \$1.00 a former South Philadelphia drug house to The Bibleway Missionary Baptist Church, 1705 Point Breeze Ave. The Reverend Alfonso Ballard has agreed to renovate the property at 2227 Moore St., and he will convert the property into a community center that will provide a myriad of services to the neighborhood.

“As district attorney, my mission is to prevent crime whenever I can,” said District Attorney Lynne Abraham. “I take great pleasure in turning this property over to Rev. Alfonso Ballard and the Bibleway Missionary Baptist Church because it will help to accomplish several crime prevention strategies.”

D.A. Abraham has been deeding properties for \$1.00 to non-profit organizations since 1992 as a way to turn houses that were plagues on the neighborhood-- and might otherwise become boarded-up houses -- into community assets. This practice is one of the many components in the district attorney's proactive package of programs to combat crime and improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents.

Reverend Ballard, who is also a member of the police clergy, envisions the former drug house as a property that in the future will enhance the neighborhood. He plans to offer drug-abuse counseling, after school programs and services, family counseling and a food program. Bibleway is currently involved in a food program in conjunction with the city

organization SHARE, which offers food twice a month to those in need. Rev. Ballard plans to increase this effort with the acquisition of the property.

This former drug house is just around the corner from McDaniel Elementary School at 22nd and Moore. After an investigation revealed that the property was being used to sell and store narcotics, the District Attorney's Public Nuisance Task Force filed a petition seeking forfeiture. When the Court forfeited the drug house, D.A. Abraham was able to offer it to Rev. Ballard and Bibleway Missionary Baptist Church for use as a community center.

Following an anonymous tip to the Narcotics Hotline of the Philadelphia Police Department, a confidential informant in December 2002 made controlled 'buys' of heroin from 2227 Moore St. These 'buys' plus other observed narcotics activity at 2227 Moore St. led Philadelphia Police Narcotics officers to execute a search warrant. Recovered from the property were six bundles of heroin, quantities of crack and marijuana, a loaded .380 caliber handgun and ammunition from under a pillow on the living room couch.

Under the agreement to take ownership of the property, the property may not be sold or transferred within three years. Unlike the provisions for public auctions, the Drug Act mandates that when properties are donated, as is the case with this property, the property must be deeded to a non-profit entity, not to an individual. The law also mandates that the properties be used to combat the war on drugs and that the recipients have the financial means to renovate the properties.

District Attorney Lynne Abraham also wishes to thank Philadelphia City Council President Anna Verna, Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson, Chief Inspector Keith Sadler, Narcotics Bureau; Inspector Joe Sullivan, Narcotics Division; Captain Greg Malkowski, Narcotics Field Unit South; Inspector Thomas Lippo, South Division; Captain Jerrold Bates and Captain Deborah Kelly, both of the 17th Police District.