



Habitat Impacts Housing Worldwide: A Local Volunteer's Story

When Joyce Benedict felt the call to serve with Habitat for Humanity International's blitz build effort in Nepal last year, the desire had a familiar ring to it. The opportunity tapped into her desire to learn about new cultures and make a tangible difference in the lives of others.

"I really like the physical aspect of working with Habitat," she said. "I enjoy physical construction and strongly support the mission of building homes. It was a coming together of my personal philosophy and things I enjoy doing."

Benedict was among more than 460 volunteers from around the world who arrived in Lekhnath municipality in Pokhara, Nepal to build 40 bamboo homes with Habitat home partners in a week. The work also included doing home improvements and expanding current structures to accommodate larger families. The unique nature of building with bamboo and other unfamiliar materials enhanced her understanding of the housing challenges in Nepal. "Understanding what's needed when you work with totally different materials requires a new approach and technique," she said.

The Nepal blitz build was not Benedict's first international experience. She has also participated with Habitat builds in New Zealand and Mexico, and has volunteered with other international organizations. She had also been to Nepal previously, and found a deep connection with the mountains and the people there.

"There are so many different places in the world where Habitat is building. Pick a place that appeals to you and find a build nearby," she said.

Benedict, who works in the income tax department at CenturyLink, is keeping her future volunteer and travel plans open. She'd like to do another international project, perhaps in tandem with her grandchildren, as well as increase her involvement locally with Heartland Habitat.

For those who think an international build might be for them, Benedict has some advice. "Do it! You'll never have any regrets. Even if the conditions are less than your liking, you'll find your inner strength. Don't have any hesitation," she said.

For more information about Habitat for Humanity's International Volunteer Program, visit <http://www.habitat.org/ivp>.

Habitat VBS Helps Children Understand Poverty and Affordable Housing Issues



Is your church looking for a meaningful theme for its 2011 Vacation Bible School? Look no further than Habitat for Humanity's program, "Under Construction." This VBS program uses construction metaphors and biblical scriptures to teach children about community and the need for decent shelter for all people. Most importantly, families in the community immediately benefit from the teachings of "Under Construction." Some VBS children have made and presented crafts to homeowners, while others have raised hundreds of dollars to help Heartland Habitat for Humanity.



For more information, visit <http://www.habitat.org/cr/resources.aspx>.

Opportunities for Apostles Build 2011 are Still Available!

Heartland Habitat's coalition builds are the perfect opportunity for several church or synagogue congregations to unite and collaborate on building a home for a local family in need. By sharing in the funding and labor resources required for a build, coalitions are able to serve alongside members of other churches, and together, strengthen the neighborhoods in our local community.

Heartland Habitat's plans for an Apostles Build in 2011 are underway. There are still opportunities for a couple more congregations to join in this collaborative effort. For more information on how your faith community can get involved, contact Marty Thoennes at marty@heartlandhabitat.org or call (913) 342-3047.

Special Events Committee to Meet

A great group of volunteers has gathered to help with upcoming Heartland Habitat special events! It's not too late to get involved. If you have a knack for event planning and want to use your skills and interests for the benefit of Heartland Habitat and the families it serves, the special events committee will meet again on June 8. Contact Kate Fields at kate@heartlandhabitat.org or call (913) 342-3047 for more information.

Upcoming Heartland Habitat ReStore Volunteer Orientations

Interested in volunteering at Heartland Habitat ReStore? Plan to attend one of our upcoming volunteer orientations:

- **June 15, 5:00-6:00 p.m.** at Johnson County ReStore, 9850 W. 87th Street in Overland Park, Kansas
- **June 18, 11:00 a.m.-noon** at Johnson County ReStore

For more information, contact Vanessa Little at vanessa@heartlandhabitat.org

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Olathe Build Update

Progress has begun on a new Heartland Habitat home in Olathe. Mina Foster and her children will be the proud owners of this new home. Recently, Mina joined her friends and family for a work day on-site. The Olathe build is sponsored by Farmers Insurance and the Olathe School District.

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