

HABITAT FOR  
HUMANITY CANADA,  
GLOBAL VILLAGE

# Global Village Voice

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## 100,000 Families Served in Latin America & the Caribbean

Habitat for Humanity first opened its doors in Latin America and the Caribbean in 1979, with a single house for a low-income family in a Huehuetenango, Guatemala. This March, Habitat will celebrate having served 100,000 families by providing adequate housing solutions across the region - nearly a third of the 350,000 families served by the organization worldwide.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, roughly 50 million families - one-third of the population - face severe housing issues. Between 1990 and 2000, the housing deficit in Latin America rose from 38 to 52 million. As opposed to overt homelessness, the inadequate quality of housing is the issue at hand in the region. While most families have a roof over their head, they lack the basic elements of safe and secure housing such as water, sanitation, structural integrity and access to the city, which permit them to live in peace and security.

Latin America and the Caribbean have one of the highest urban growth rates in the world. Between 2000 and 2030, the urban population in the region grew from 394 million to 609 million people. Additionally, the United Nations predicts that in 2020 the percentage of the population residing in urban zones will outnumber that of developed nations, becoming the most urbanized region in the world with 80 percent of its more than 600 million inhabitants living in cities.

Join a Habitat for Humanity Global Village trip to Latin American and the Caribbean and experience another culture while making a difference in the lives of others. As a Global Village volunteer, you will work alongside members of the host community in building decent, affordable housing. Your active partnership will help raise awareness of the burden of poverty housing and create a true global village of love, community, homes and hope. To view our trip schedule, please visit <http://habitat.ca/tripschedulec235.php>.

*Information courtesy Habitat for Humanity International*



*Photo courtesy Ian & Paula Duff*



*Photo courtesy Greig McPhee*

# Rebuilding Haiti

The January 12 magnitude-7.0 earthquake forever altered the landscape of Haiti. Habitat for Humanity is working in all three stages of disaster recovery - relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction - with families, communities and partners to rebuild and repair homes and reclaim hope. Habitat has set the bold goal of serving 50,000 earthquake-affected families over the next five years. Long after the world's attention has moved on, Habitat will remain in Haiti.

The earthquake struck hard in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and in Léogâne, Jacmel and Petit Goave, leaving behind damage and losses estimated at US\$8 billion. About 40 percent of that loss was housing - 105,000 homes were destroyed, and more than 208,000 were damaged. The cost of rebuilding homes, jobs and lives is estimated at US\$11.5 billion.

The needs are huge: 1.5 million people are homeless and displaced. Many families are temporarily separated, and many children are now orphans. About 1.3 million people live in temporary shelters in and around Port-au-Prince, and more than 600,000 have sought shelter in the countryside and in other towns. Tent cities offer little safety, privacy or protection from the rain.

Habitat for Humanity works to provide the widest range of resources available to help families obtain safe, secure, permanent shelter and rebuild their lives. From experience, Habitat has learned that giving families the tools to rebuild, and working alongside them, is the best way to improve housing conditions after a disaster.

Habitat works in Haiti through **Habitat Resource Centres**, which offer a focus for community building and construction services. Habitat Resource Centres (HRCs) have operated in Cap-Haitien, Flamands, Pandiassou and Gonaives for several years. In response to the earthquake, new HRCs are being established in Cabaret, Léogâne, Carrefour and Jacmel. Habitat for Humanity Canada is assuming responsibility for the Jacmel HRC. These centres will fill gaps in the response and reconstruction effort and develop programs to address them, including construction, technical assistance, structural assessments, training and management, financial literacy education, production of construction material and employment opportunities in construction trades. The centres will help many Haitian workers develop new livelihoods.

**Emergency shelter kits** offer families a self-help tool toward initial housing solutions. The kits include heavy-duty tarps and a variety of tools to help with minor repairs and cleanup. More than 21,000 kits are being distributed.

**Transitional shelter** is a much-needed bridge to permanent housing. Habitat is helping families to remove or recycle debris, and to construct transitional shelters with wood or steel frames set in concrete footings. Both designs have a corrugated galvanized iron roof, and include earthquake and hurricane-resistant features. The wood is recyclable, and the steel can be reused in permanent shelter. With the rainy season in May, and hurricanes possible in summer and fall, families urgently need a decent shelter. The cost ranges from US\$1,000 to US\$2,500 for each shelter.

**Housing reconstruction** is a challenge that includes establishing security of land tenure, and finding land, skilled labour, material and the infrastructure necessary for a vibrant community. Habitat's reconstruction solutions include repairing houses, building multifamily housing, and designing and planning whole communities. Habitat will also build "**core houses**" - single-room houses that will become the core of a larger house when more rooms are added later. The core house is a well-constructed, permanent structure of concrete block with a floor, a roof, a door and a window. The design reflects Haitian culture and includes a porch. A toilet and shower are located in a separate structure. Core houses have earthquake-resistant structural features, will offer living space for a family of five, and will cost between US\$4,000 and US\$6,000.

There is much to be done, but Habitat for Humanity is well placed to have an enormous impact. We need your help now, and will for years to come! [Donations can be made by clicking here.](#)

## HFH Chile Helps Children Return Home

In Santiago this year, GV volunteers will work on HFH Chile's special project, "Our Children Return Home." Children with catastrophic illnesses may live in medical centers or often visit hospitals as their house condition does not allow medical treatment at home. Alongside families, volunteers construct home modifications or a room addition to allow the children to have treatment at home with their families. For example, after a GV team visited in January, Isaac, 5, with bacterial meningitis, can now live at home in his new room. From May 2009 to May 2011, 200 housing solutions will be built.

Global Village trips to Chile for fall 2010 will be posted on our website soon. Fall trip dates will be approximately September 24 to October 8 and November 7 to 20. To view the trip schedule, please visit our website at <http://habitat.ca/tripschedulec235.php>.

## Chile Earthquake Update

Habitat for Humanity Canada is mobilizing resources to address shelter solutions for families affected by the 8.8-magnitude earthquake which struck Chile on February 27, 2010. The earthquake left more than 1,000 people dead and missing in the central regions of Biobío, Maule, Metropolitan Santiago and Valparaíso where Habitat for Humanity Chile has regional offices and currently builds homes. More than 1.5 million homes suffered some damage, and over 500,000 homes suffered serious structural damage. Our ability to respond effectively to this disaster will require support from donors, volunteers, churches, corporate partners and other community organizations. Please make a tax-deductible donation today to help families rebuild and repair their homes!

Donations can be made at <https://secure.e2rm.com/registant/donate.aspx?eventid=45171>



Article courtesy Habitat for Humanity Canada

# Become a Friend of Global Village

In 2009, Habitat Canada's Global Village program sent almost 1,400 participants to build over 100 houses and donated \$625,000 to Habitat's international mission. The **Friends of Global Village** is a special group of donors who invest in the Global Village program to ensure that we can provide even more volunteer teams and financial support to our host country partners on an ongoing basis.

Here is how you can become a Friend of Global Village:

1. **Champion the Cause and Help Raise Funds for Global Village:**  
As a GV participant, you may have conducted your own fundraising campaign to raise donations for your trip. To become a **Friend of Global Village**, as an individual or in conjunction with other members of your GV team, organize a fundraising campaign or hold an event within your network of friends, family and co-workers. <http://habitat.ca/friendsaskingfriendsp2967.php>
  
2. **Give What You Can to Help:**  
Any donation is helpful. If all of us give, even a small amount, it will add up quickly. **Friends of Global Village** can make individual donations to help support the program by **clicking on the following link**. <http://www.canadahelps.org/GivingPages/GivingPage.aspx?gpID=4653>
  
3. **Become a monthly supporter of the Global Village Program:**  
Even a small monthly donation will provide Global Village with the resources it needs to reach event more families around the world. Click on the following link and select the monthly giving option.  
  
Click the following link <http://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=s19963> and select the "Donate Monthly" option. Your donation will automatically be charged to your credit card each month and you can cancel your donation at any time by calling our office at 1-800-267-5137 ext 257.
  
4. **Ask Your Company or Organization to Help:**  
You may work for a company or organization that makes donations to organizations who encourage volunteerism, or names a charity of choice for their annual fundraising events. Please approach your company to become a **Friend of Global Village**. Contact Lisa Lalande, National Director, Corporate Partnerships, at [llalande@habitat.ca](mailto:llalande@habitat.ca) for more information.

As a **Friend of Global Village**, if you donate or raise more than \$1,000, you will be recognized on our website, in our newsletter and, if you like, receive a mounted GV photograph for your home or office.

Since the Canadian Global Village program started in the spring of 2005, over 4,000 volunteers have answered the call to action in more than 30 countries around the world and supported these countries with over 2 million dollars in donations. This incredible response has meant more hands, more resources and more families placed in safe, decent, affordable homes around the world. You, our volunteers, have been a critical part of making this happen and you should be very proud of what you have accomplished. Thank you!

In Partnership,  
The Global Village Team

## Friends of Global Village

Habitat for Humanity Canada's Global Village would like to thank the following sponsors for their support of our program. Because of you, Canadians are able to make simple, decent affordable housing available around the world.



## Mysterious Macedonia

Simultaneously ancient and new, Macedonia is struggling to find its place in the post-communist world. Since peacefully gaining independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonia has experienced many problems economically and politically. The number of people living below the national poverty level has exceeded 25%. Roma families very often live in poorly built substandard homes, in which they do not have appropriate water supply or sewage connection. The houses of the Roma are small and planned for providing only the basic living needs. For more than 50 percent of this population group, there is less than 5 square meters of living space per family member.

The Republic of Macedonia is situated in the picturesque mountains of the southeastern Balkans. Macedonia has a long and varied history and numbers Alexander the Great and Mother Theresa as two of its citizens who have made an impact on the world. Macedonia also lays claim to the early development of the Slavonic alphabet. Churches and mosques attest to the fact that Macedonia has long been a crossroads of cultures and religions in the region.

Located in the center of Macedonia, Veles is at the crossroads of three rivers: the Topolka, Babuna and the Vardar. Veles remains an enchanting place for lovers of history with its many artifacts from numerous archeological sites dating as far back as 70,000 years. Nowadays, Veles is a leader in the implementation of informational technology in the local administration in Macedonia. It is also a city of poetry, culture, history and tradition, as well as an industrial place with factories for porcelain, silk and lead. The Veles old town, with its steep and winding lanes flanked by traditional wooden houses, makes for an enjoyable afternoon jaunt.



For more information about trips to Macedonia, or to apply, please visit our website at <http://habitat.ca/tripschedulec235.php>.

## Featured Trips

There are still opportunities available to get involved in trips departing in the summer & fall of 2010.

**Ethiopia**

Jul. 02 – Jul. 17, 2010

**Macedonia**

Jul. 04 – Jul. 18, 2010

**Mongolia**

Jul. 12– Jul. 26, 2010

**Tajikistan**

Aug. 1– Aug. 16, 2010

**Honduras**

Aug. 06– Aug. 15, 2010

**Vermont**

Aug. 07– Aug. 15, 2010

**Portugal**

Aug. 07 22–Aug. 18, 2010

**Kenya**

Aug. 14– Aug. 29, 2010

**Bolivia**

Aug. 15 – Aug. 24, 2010

**Northern Ireland**

Aug. 22–Aug. 30, 2010

**Vietnam**

Sep. 4–Sep. 18, 2010

**Poland**

Sep. 5–Sep. 18, 2010

**Chile**

Sep. 26–Oct . 9, 2010

**Macedonia**

Oct. 03–Oct. 17, 2010

**New Mexico**

Oct. 10–Oct. 20, 2010

**New Zealand**

Oct. 17–Oct. 31, 2010

For more information, please visit [http://  
habitat.ca/tripschedulec235.php](http://habitat.ca/tripschedulec235.php)

## Think Global, Act Local

You've travelled the world and volunteered to provide a simple, decent home to families in need, but did you know that there is a huge need for adequate affordable housing right here at home?

In your own community, there are families who are living in unacceptable conditions. Within the areas that you travel every day, there are parents who are

having to make choices between food and rent as they work to support their children in unhealthy, over priced and unsafe environments.

Habitat for Humanity Canada is answering this need in 73 communities across Canada, from coast to coast to coast. Your generosity helped to put our global neighbors into a

new home, now we are asking for your help to do the same for a family in your own community.

To find out how you can volunteer in your own backyard go to [http://  
habitat.ca/participatec658.php](http://habitat.ca/participatec658.php)

# Canadian's Helping Chilean Families

A team of 13 Canadian volunteers travelled to Chile in January to work on four Habitat for Humanity houses in the greater Santiago area for a two week period. Through Habitat for Humanity's Global Village program, the teams modified four homes in metro Santiago as part of a heart-warming project aimed at helping families with critically ill children.

Co-ordinated by "Habitat Para la Humanidad Chile", the teams renovated the houses so that institutionalized and hospitalized children could return home and be safely and comfortably cared for by their families.

From 2008-2010, a total of 188 Canadian volunteers will have participated in the construction of housing solutions for Chilean families, and Canadian Global Village teams will have donated over \$65,000 USD to cover the construction costs of over twenty housing solutions.

On January 26, Ambassador Fountain Smith visited one of the projects and met both the partner family and a number of dedicated Canadian volunteers. The family lives in a modest home in the San Ramon district of Santiago. One of their three children suffers from a neurological disorder characterized by convulsions and compromised motor skills. A bout with bacterial meningitis has also left him almost completely blind and partially deaf.

"It is inspiring to see that this group of Canadian volunteers is so committed to improving the lives of Chilean families they have never even met. What is even more amazing is that although they generally don't speak the same language, the families, organizers and volunteers are able to find common ground and to work toward the shared goal of ensuring that families in need have access to safe and adequate housing." - Ambassador Fountain Smith  
This five year old boy has been sharing a bedroom with his parents since his birth. The room has ventilation problems and water leaks, further complicating his fragile health condition.

During their stay, the Canadian Habitat for Humanity team constructed an addition to the house measuring 3 meters by 2.5 meters so that this young boy could grow up in a safe, clean room of his own. The partner family was extremely grateful for the contributions of this team and told Embassy officials that this is a life altering renovation that will dramatically improve the quality of life of the entire family.

This project is yet another example of the important contributions Canadians are making in Chile and the region.

[Visit Habitat for Humanity Canada's website for more information](#) on the work being done on behalf of their Global Village Program.

Article courtesy of Canadian embassy in Chile and originally printed on [chile.gc.ca](http://chile.gc.ca)  
Photos courtesy John Ayearst



John Ayearst with Ambassador Amy Colleen



Canadian team in Chile

## Lessons We Learn

Dear Global Village Department,

My name is Roderick Ingersoll and have just returned from a Global Village build in Usulután, El Salvador. I have all my life wanted to do something for someone, somewhere else in the world that would make a difference in their life. I have donated both my time and money in the past for such things as the Terry Fox Run, The Northern Alberta Make a Wish Foundation, The Canadian Heart and Stoke, The Canadian Cancer Society, The United way and have a sponsored child in Africa through World Vision and may other charities and causes, but was never there yet. I knew that there was something else out there that was for me, I found it, Habitat for Humanity. My trip to El Salvador was by far the best trip I have ever been on in my life. I met 15 new friends from across Canada, experienced a new culture like never before and came away with a whole new outlook on life. I couldn't believe until I saw it with my own eyes that the people that we worked and lived with on our trip had so little, but were so happy for it. A simple smile and "hola" was always returned with a huge smile from the heart. The feeling of working with other Canadians who really care about other peoples' lives in the world besides their own was a pleasure to have. The trip was well coordinated and was a great success; everyone came away with the same feeling.



Upon returning home I experienced the biggest culture shock right here at home, we take 90% of life's pleasures for granted, I think that we have forgotten the values of life, love, family and a safe place to live. After seeing what I experienced in Central America, it has opened my eyes to the world, including right here in Canada and have since returning became a Volunteer member of HFH Northumberland and hope to do my first Canadian build in Port Hope in April 2010. I am also becoming a Volunteer member in my home town of Fredericton New Brunswick with HFH Fredericton with my second Canadian build in Fredericton ( for Teymouth ) being in July 2010. I will also be presenting a slid show and talk of my Global Village experience in El Salvador at the Rotary Club in Fredericton at the same time. I plan to do at least one Global Village Trip per year for as many years as I can, next I am thinking Costa Rica or Bolivia.

Thank you for the experience,  
Roderick Ingersoll  
Participant on El Salvador, 2010 GV trip

# Moving Forward in Honduras

For 7 months, Honduras lived through one of the most severe political crisis' in all its history. On June 28, 2009, the elected president was ousted by a military coup d'état and sent to temporary exile. This had a profound effect on the Honduran population, separating families, causing people to take political stances, protesting on the streets, which resulted in the creation of a martial law. The news from Honduras portrayed curfews, human right issues, tear gas, etc. The worldwide economic downturn exacerbated this time of crisis for the Honduran people.

June 28, 2009, brought significant changes to Honduras, but did not break the peoples' spirit. They chose to look forward to a better future, face the struggles, recover and get stronger.

The Honduran people have been involved in natural disasters, war and poverty throughout history. Some may think that this may cause Hondurans to be less open or hospitable to visitors, however, the opposite is true. Hondurans are very generous. Last month I was walking with a Global Village team through the village of Copan and from a small mud house a lady approached us and invited us to come inside. She was preparing lunch by grinding corn to prepare bean empanadas on the grill. She offered us the only thing she had in her humble kitchen with a smile. Once you meet Hondurans you realize you do not need much in order to share what you have and be happy. A cup of freshly brewed coffee, handmade tortillas... one learns to appreciate the simple things.

Habitat Honduras was affected by this latest political and financial crisis but we did not stop our work. We kept building and supporting families, as well as trying to include the communities to participate in local builds. We even celebrated the construction of our 9,000th Habitat house!

We are now planning to start a special project: building 40 houses at Puerto Cortes near San Pedro Sula. We will also continue our support of the Maya Chor'ti' people of Copan with home renovations and a pilot health program to prevent illness caused by the lack of hygiene and Chagas disease (a parasitic disease transmitted by insects or contaminated drink or blood. A low risk to travelers, but higher risk for those in poor-quality housing. Without treatment, long-term effects are heart problems or death.\*)

Habitat Honduras will build our 10,000th home in July 2010, while continuing with our annual goal of 1,300 housing solutions. Furthermore, we may start a new small project on the Mosquito Coast.

We want you be part of the efforts of the Habitat volunteers that support Honduras as the country starts to recover from this crisis. Your help would be much appreciated.

Article courtesy Luis D. Madrid, National Work-Teams Coordinator at HFH Honduras



## Global Village El Salvador—It's Time!

In February, it was just over a year since I had joined the Habitat for Humanity team in Northumberland. Even now I am still learning and working on new skills every day. This, combined with being an only parent of two very involved boys, makes time my most valuable commodity. As a result, when I reflect on my first Global Village experience, I do so with this in mind.



### Time for new friends!

I like to brag that Habitat Northumberland has the best volunteers! (And we do!) Our team leaders Lynda and Don, from Northumberland, ensured that we had what we needed every step of the way. Whether that was a t-shirt because your luggage was lost (mine was), care when the heat was too much or just a smile of encouragement as you learned to mix “mescala” (mortar). I met new friends. People from diverse backgrounds and experiences that taught me so many things, made me laugh. I have travelled a few places over the years and always found that if you really want to go to another country you can't do that unless you become part of that community in some way. This Global Village build is the best way that I have ever seen. The mason and workers all made us feel like we were valuable members of the team. It is amazing how much can be conveyed through gestures, nods and smiles. The partner family and their friends brought wonderful snacks every day. There is nothing like fresh fruit when it is 32C! We became friends, playing frisbee with the kids in the street, sitting laughing and telling stories. Even strangers who walked past our site carrying laundry up the hill to wash or the cashier serving us when we were filthy and dirty at the end of the day had a smile, a knowing nod and an Ola to share.

### Time for perspective!

Sheepishly, I remember before leaving for El Salvador that I was rushing around trying to get ready, and silently cursing the washing machine because it was too slow. The day I got back I went and gave that same old washing machine a pat and no matter what it does in the future I won't have a thing to say, because I certainly don't have the fortitude to carry a huge load of laundry up the side of a mountain to get to a stream to wash it.

I consider myself fairly well educated and aware of global issues and world poverty, and donate and advocate, but it is completely different when you are in the middle of it. One of the first things I was told when I arrived was - Do Not Drink The Water. Clean water is incredibly unavailable to most people. I went through a number of toothbrushes, as you can't even rinse them with the tap water! As I think about how many times I have flown across Canada and seen all the blue I know that I am truly blessed and my environmental responsibility has been forever cemented into daily action.

# Global Village El Salvador—It's time (cont'd)

## Time for work!

Each day we would get up, have a great breakfast, and sit outside in the sun among the most vibrant colours I have seen, and wait for our ride to the job site. It was a time of relaxation camaraderie and anticipation of what we would accomplish that day.

One of the first things I noticed on the job site were the noises, or lack of them. There were the voices of people laughing and singing as they worked against the backdrop of the community going past the home. We were building walls from cinder block that was reinforced with rebar and “chispa” and everything is done by hand, there were no drills, generators or saws. And definitely no tampers - until you have taken a pole in a can of cement and used it to compress a hundred wheel barrels of sand in 35c you truly can't appreciate a power tamper. I used muscles I never knew I had and learned skills I never thought I could. Our greatest honour was being trusted enough by the local workers to be allowed to mix the “chispa and mescal”. (Not as glamorous as it sounds.) I enjoyed every minute.

## Time for fun!

The end of each day brought great local food, time spent with friends going over the day's events and challenging ourselves to accomplish more the next day. There were beautiful sun sets, cards, quiet walks and laughter.

Not having been on vacation in the last few years, I was kidded a lot before leaving for El Salvador that hard manual labour was NOT a vacation. I beg to differ. I was in a warm beautiful place, I was stress free, didn't have to make any major decisions or be responsible for anything major, was getting lots of exercise and fresh air, hanging out with great people, laughing eating great food and I haven't been that relaxed in years.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone involved with this trip, especially Habitat for Humanity Northumberland for all their support!

## Time to get ready for next year! Hope to meet you there!

If you are interested in volunteering with or donating to Habitat for Humanity Northumberland, please contact the affiliate at [info@habitatnorthumberland.ca](mailto:info@habitatnorthumberland.ca) or visit their website at [www.habitatnorthumberland.ca](http://www.habitatnorthumberland.ca).



Article and pictures courtesy Kim Lauder,  
Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity Northumberland

Department of Sociology  
McMaster University

## PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON VOLUNTEERISM

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study of volunteerism and working with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*. I am trying to understand the motivations for volunteering and whether volunteering raises awareness and grows social networks.

I am looking for volunteers who participated in the Global Village program.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to: participate in a one-on-one interview lasting approximately one hour to talk about your participation with *Habitat for Humanity Canada*.

You would be answering question like:

What attracted you to volunteering?  
Has being involved with volunteering changed you?  
What kinds of things did you learn while volunteering?

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Leslie Cove  
Phone: (289) 396-0185  
Email: [covelj@mcmaster.ca](mailto:covelj@mcmaster.ca)

Rick Tait  
Phone: (613) 264-9672  
Email: [rtait@habitat.ca](mailto:rtait@habitat.ca)  
Global Village Program Director

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, McMaster University, Phone: (905) 525 9140 Ext. 23142, email: [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)



Has seeing the world changed your life?

Verge Magazine is currently accepting entries for our new Two-Minute Travel Tales multimedia contest. Using video, photography or writing, tell us how meaningful travel has changed your life.

Inspire us. Surprise us. Make us laugh or cry.

Entries must be SHORT! Stories up to 500 words; photos accompanied by up to 200 words; videos less than two minutes long.

The grand prize for the best overall entry is \$1000 and the winner of each category will receive \$200. The top submissions will also be displayed on Verge's website and included in a travelling exhibition.

The deadline for entries is June 1, 2010, 6pm EST. For full contest rules and to enter, visit: [www.vergemagazine.com/2-minute-tales](http://www.vergemagazine.com/2-minute-tales).

# Finding Passion in Guatemala



After years of taking care of family, it was time for me to find both my passion and myself. My oldest son had participated in two Habitat builds, one in Honduras and the other in El Salvador. Each time he came home, I could see the positive effect the experience had on him. If I was going to step out of my comfort zone, why not with a Habitat build?

I was part of a motley crew ... sixteen teenagers from 2 different high schools and six adults. Some had already had some experience with a Global Village trip, but for the majority of us this was going to be an adventure of a lifetime! So many questions: What was it going to be like in Guatemala? What were the people like? Were we going to be safe? What will we find when we get there? Because of our schedule, our first few days were actually our R & R days. We went to Volcan Pacaya, visited some Mayan ruins and

then travelled to Panajachel on Lake Atitlan. We took a boat ride on the lake to the small community of Santiago Atitlan. This was our first experience with a local market. The colors were amazing! Everywhere there were bright, beautiful colors.

The R & R was fabulous and we really needed it after fundraising all of the money needed for every member of our team. But we were itching to get to our builds, so on the fourth day we were going to finally head to Totonicapan, where our builds and families were! On the way there, however, we stopped at the market in Chichicastenago. It was sensory overload - so many people, colors, sounds and smells. It was wonderful! There was even a ceremony taking place at the church while we were there! After Chichi we settled in for the drive to Totonicapan. We arrived at our hotel, just in time to check-in and then we headed over to the community hall where the opening ceremonies were taking place.

We were a first for Habitat Totonicapan ... everyone cried during the opening ceremonies. Angelica (from the Habitat office) said that most people cry during the closing ceremonies, but crying during opening ceremonies was a first! There were three families that our team would help and they all welcomed us with their whole hearts and gave us all many blessings.

The next day was our first build day and everyone was pumped! Because there were three builds and we were a large group with two Spanish speakers, we split up into two groups to work on the builds in the most effective way possible. At the end of the first day, each group had fallen in love with their families despite the language barrier. It was amazing to see how hard everyone, especially the teens, worked on the builds and how excited they were at the end of the day to share their feelings about the whole experience.

After four days of hard work ... the end had come and we were taking part in closing ceremonies. This is where everyone cries and we were no exception. It was threatening rain during the closing ceremonies and Angelica told us that the "heavens wanted to cry because we were leaving".

Lila Watson said, "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us walk together." I went to Guatemala to find my passion. In working with Habitat and the families of Totonicapan, and experiencing the kindness of all Guatemalans we came into contact with, I came back to Canada with so much more. I have found my passion. And not so surprising, I also fell in love with the beauty and the people of Guatemala. Would I do it all over again? In a heartbeat!

Our motley crew has already made plans for next March break ... I plan on going with them! I may even join an open team and again this year!

Adios, Guatemala!

Article courtesy Sue Faulkoner



Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national non-profit, faith-based organization made up of 70 affiliates and over 30,000 volunteers who are mobilizing communities, to build safe, decent and affordable housing in partnership with those in need.

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The organization was founded in 1985 and is a member of Habitat for Humanity International, which spans 100 countries, has built over 200,000 homes, and is now building a new home every 24 minutes.

We are on the web:  
[www.habitatglobalvillage.ca](http://www.habitatglobalvillage.ca)

## GV Ventures to Vermont

An estimated 5.4 million American households face worst-case housing needs, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. About 95 million people—nearly one-third of the U.S. population—have housing problems of some sort.

Are you looking for a way to make a difference while exploring the world around you? Join us for a working vacation to help build a safe, decent, affordable home for a family in Bennington, Vermont. Learn new skills and make new friends! No previous construction experience is necessary - just willing hands and a willing heart



### About Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity:

Established in 1997, the Bennington Area Habitat for Humanity affiliate is an all-volunteer organization that invites people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build homes together in partnership with families in need. We have completed nine homes, including one completely renovated home and eight new homes.

### About Vermont:

Where your days feel slower, your nights more relaxed. It's as if time slows down for those of us in Vermont. Spend a few days in our country, in our company, and it will happen for you too - like a buoy out on a clear Vermont lake, your life's priorities will naturally right themselves in Vermont.

Nestled in the northeast corner of New England, Vermont is the region's only state without an Atlantic coastline, but the Green Mountains that give the state its name (from the French *verts monts*) more than make up for this lack of ocean playground. Each year, crowds flock to the celebrated slopes of Killington, Mt Snow and Stowe for the finest skiing and snowboarding on the East Coast. These same mountains help form the Long Trail, a hiking path that courses the length of the state and lures countless repeat visitors - especially during the autumn months, when the state erupts in a blaze of spectacular foliage.

For more details about joining this GV trip to Bennington, Vermont, please visit <http://habitat.ca/tripschedulec235.php?PJID=194> or contact Tanya McMurdo at [tmcmurdo@habitat.ca](mailto:tmcmurdo@habitat.ca).