

# HabitatWorld

The Publication of Habitat for Humanity International | March 2006

## Reconcilable Differences

One Catholic, one Protestant, these Habitat homeowners in Northern Ireland have defied the odds—and centuries of sectarian violence—to cultivate true friendship in a divided land.

MARCH 2006

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Zambia, Africa



ON THE LEVEL REFLECTING ON HABITAT’S MISSION

Much to Celebrate, Much Yet to Do

I am immensely proud of what this organization has accomplished in the past several months. Despite well-founded insistencies that this is not a first-responder agency, Habitat nevertheless found a way to harness the energy and enthusiasm of thousands of volunteers, donors and sponsors so that some level of Gulf Coast reconstruction could begin long before the region was ready for boots on the ground. The wall frames that were built, then packed in trucks and shipped to the Gulf, have given potential homeowners a head start on renewed hope.

While the lights shone brightly on many of those efforts—in Rockefeller Plaza, on the National Mall, outside Minute Maid Park during the World Series—Habitat leaders were accomplishing another miracle, a much quieter, much more behind-the-scenes miracle—and, it seems to me, one that has much more long-term impact than the containerized wall panels.

The work you have done all these years has been wonderful, these leaders told affiliates

around the country, but the times, they are a-changin’. Now you have to do more. Much more.

Part of that urgency to build more homes stems, no doubt, from our success. While it took 25 years for Habitat to build its first 100,000 safe, decent, affordable homes, it took but five years to build the next 100,000. Acceleration of that magnitude is an inspiration to go faster, farther, higher.

Part of the urgency to increase building exponentially comes from the fact that the challenge is increasing in leaps and bounds, as well.

Only 25 percent of Americans now work in jobs that provide middle-class wages, according to a study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research. Couple that with the fact that another 25 percent of jobs don’t pay even a poverty-level income. Those are truly astounding and truly discouraging statistics. The minimum wage has not been raised since 1997, a stat that goes beyond astounding and discouraging on its way to mind boggling. If it had risen as fast as CEO pay since 1990, the lowest paid

On the cover: Jennifer Crockard, left, and Michelle Hamilton found common ground on a Habitat build site in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Photo by Stephen Wilson.

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KIM MacDONALD

**INSIDE**  
**Habitat makes a point of involving men and women in transforming communities. Page 14.**

workers in the United States would be earning \$23.03 an hour today, according to a report in *USA Today*.

The Census Bureau says 1.1 million more people fell into poverty in the United States in 2004. Many academics, using what they say are more realistic measures, insist that more than 50 million Americans now live in poverty or teeter unsteadily along its edge.

It has become fashionable to talk about poverty as lack of access—to jobs, to educational opportunities, to housing. Somehow it has gotten unfashionable to talk about poverty on a more basic level: Poor people don't have enough money. Perhaps we don't want to talk about it in such concrete terms because a few years back, when we overhauled the welfare system, we told everyone who needed a bit of help that they had to go get a job as a prerequisite.

And they did. That may have assuaged the Puritan work ethic that is part of our collective social fabric, but it has been about as effective as a New Orleans levee in a category 5 blow.

**Given the disturbing news** that Katrina exposed—that a huge portion of the population of a major American city did not even have the wherewithal to comply with an official order to evacuate—one would have thought we, collectively, as a nation, that our leaders in state capitals and in Washington, would be burning the midnight oil to find ways to overcome this national disgrace. In fact, we, collectively, turned away from Katrina issues with a speed that was as startling as it was disturbing

“A profound transformation is occurring in America,” broadcast journalist Bill Moyers said in an October speech to a wealth and giving forum. “Inequality is greater than it’s been since 1929.... Working people have to run harder and harder just to stay even, and our social stratification has become alarming. Our political class,” Moyers said, “seems indifferent....”

You are reading this magazine. You are not indifferent. It is apparent that you believe that intervention works. It is also apparent that your belief has a strong foundation in fact: Habitat for Humanity has helped one million people out of substandard housing. Those folks, by and large, have seen their wages rise, their lives stabilize, their children thrive.

We must do more, and we will do more. We will build more, we will lift more people out of poverty housing. Perhaps more to the point, we will put more pressure on our elected leaders to work out their seemingly irreconcilable differences over how to overcome poverty at its roots.

Reconciliation is the underlying theme of this issue of *Habitat World*. Certainly, it is front and center in Shawn Reeves’ account of his visit to Northern Ireland. It underpins Rebekah Daniel’s report on gender and development.

With sufficient good will, the political reconciliation required for a renewed war on poverty is possible. Surely, Bill Moyers is wrong? Surely the men and women we elect to public office are not so indifferent as not to be up to the task? Surely we will vote them out if they are? 🏠

—Bill Walsh



GREGG PACHKOWSKI

**Habitat World editor Bill Walsh** tackles another issue—the ONE Campaign—that demonstrates Habitat’s increasing interest in advocacy and outreach. See page 12.

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*Habitat World* is also published online at [www.habitat.org/hw](http://www.habitat.org/hw) with additional coverage of housing issues. Go to the Web site and click on **MORE STORIES** for the supplementary content. Also check out the new Editors’ Blog.

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## Notes from the Field

KIMI MACDONALD



**Building Beyond the Tsunami.** One year after the 2004 tsunami devastated coastal areas of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, Habitat for Humanity had provided more than 6,000 families direct housing assistance. Approximately 133 teams from eight countries helped by building new houses and repairing existing homes—in addition to 43 domestic teams from Thailand and Indonesia.

Covering three years from 2005 to the end of 2007, Habitat's recovery strategy will be to lend direct housing assistance to 20,000 families and, through a network of Habitat resource centers, assist another 10,000 to 15,000 in disaster mitigation services and training in construction and materials fabrication.

**The Sound of Music.** Since hurricanes Katrina and Rita forced many musicians to flee New Orleans, the jazz, blues and Dixieland that were the city's musical score have been harder to find, as have the musicians who seek to return, but, like so many, have no place to go.

Habitat for Humanity International and New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity, working with Harry Connick Jr. and Branford Marsalis, honorary chairs of the organization's hurricane rebuilding program Operation Home Delivery, seek to change that with a "Musicians' Village" in the Crescent City.

The village will consist of Habitat-constructed homes built with qualifying

displaced New Orleans musicians. Its centerpiece will be the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, named for the patriarch of the Marsalis clan, a modern jazz pioneer and native New Orleanian, and dedicated to the education and development of homeowners and others who will live nearby. The center will celebrate the music and musicians of New Orleans and will include performance rooms and classrooms.

"Music is as much a part of the fabric of life in New Orleans as the cuisine, the culture," said Branford Marsalis, the award-winning saxophonist. "Hurricanes Katrina and Rita scattered musicians across the country and shuttered many clubs and con-

## Join the Jimmy Carter Work Project in India.

By entering *Habitat World's* JCWP essay contest, you become eligible to participate in a trip to Mumbai (Bombay), India, to join hundreds of volunteers during this year's Jimmy Carter Work Project in October.

As of 2005, there were some 1.4 million nonprofit organizations operating in the United States—with thousands more registering each year. This is to say nothing about the countless other nonprofit organizations registered in other countries.

In 500 words or less, describe why, when so many groups are competing for your dollars and your time, you choose to volunteer for and/or donate to Habitat for Humanity.

If you are selected, *Habitat World* will pay your air transportation, as well as modest daily accommodations and meals.

Before putting your thoughts to paper, remember that to the victor come the spoils—and the sweat and the blisters. If selected, you will be expected to work a full day at the build site during each of the five work days.

Please visit [www.habitat.org/hw/essay](http://www.habitat.org/hw/essay) to download additional necessary forms and information and to find out more about this opportunity to make a difference. You may also call (800) HABITAT, ext. 2165 to request the appropriate materials, send an e-mail to [habitatworld@habitat.org](mailto:habitatworld@habitat.org) or write *Habitat World*, Essay Contest, 121 Habitat St., Americus, GA 31709.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If selected, you will be responsible for obtaining the requisite immunizations and travel documents, including visa and passport.



GREGG PACHKOWSKI

cert venues across the city. This plan, this village, will help restore New Orleans' musical heritage and protect it for the next generation that will follow."

"This is very exciting because it uses the Habitat model—building homes and communities—and takes it a step farther, to building hope for the future," said Connick. "Children will grow up in the neighborhoods, in a safe and secure environment, and at the same time have the opportunity to become a part of the musical and cultural scene in New Orleans."

**Home Builders Plan Blitz.** In an effort to galvanize professional builders throughout the United States, Habitat for Humanity will conduct a Home Builders Blitz June 5–9, in which professional house builders will construct 700 Habitat homes in 175 communities across the country. Following the blitz, participants will build 300 houses along the hurri-

cane-ravaged Gulf Coast. The project was initiated by builders in Raleigh, N.C., who proposed making it a national event.

The event also will help spotlight standard and affordable housing issues and the resolve with which Habitat affiliates across the country are responding.

"We've found from previous local Home Builders Blitz projects that builders have continued to stay involved with Habitat after the event itself. It's a chance for them to demonstrate their community outreach, and the media attention that will accompany the build will go a long way toward raising awareness of important housing issues," says Abby Goward, Habitat's project associate for the blitz build.

To learn more about the Home Builders Blitz and to find out whether your local affiliate is hosting such an event, contact Goward at (919) 303-7807, Ext. 4333 or via e-mail at [homebuildersblitz@habitat.org](mailto:homebuildersblitz@habitat.org). 🏠

**WHO WE ARE** | Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit, Christian housing ministry that works both to eliminate poverty housing around the world and to make adequate housing a matter of conscience and action. Habitat welcomes to the table partners from any faith—or from no faith—who are willing to pick up a hammer to help improve the lives of families needing decent shelter.

**WHAT WE DO** | Local Habitat for Humanity affiliates build and renovate houses in partnership with people in need, and then sell the houses to the homeowner partners. Homeowners are selected by local affiliates based on their need for housing, ability to repay a no-profit mortgage and willingness to partner with Habitat. Mortgage payments contribute to a Fund for Humanity, which in turn provides the money to build more houses. Because of Habitat's no-profit loans and because the houses are principally built with volunteer labor, mortgage payments are affordable for low-income partners.

**WHERE WE WORK** | The organization started in the United States in 1976, but today its work reaches around the world. Currently, more than 2,300 affiliates are at work in all 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, and other countries around the globe, including: Afghanistan | Angola | Argentina | Armenia | Australia | Bangladesh | Belize | Barbuda | Bermuda | Bolivia | Botswana | Brazil | Bulgaria | Burundi | Cambodia | Cameroon | Canada | Cayman Islands | Chile | China | Colombia | Costa Rica | Democratic Republic of Congo | Dominican Republic | East Timor | Ecuador | Egypt | El Salvador | Ethiopia | Fiji | Germany | Ghana | Great Britain | Guatemala | Guyana | Haiti | Honduras | Hungary | India | Indonesia | Ivory Coast | Jamaica | Japan | Jordan | Kenya | Kyrgyzstan | Laos | Lebanon | Lesotho | Macedonia | Madagascar | Malawi | Malaysia | Mexico | Micronesia | Mongolia | Mozambique | Myanmar | Nepal | Netherlands | New Zealand | Nicaragua | Nigeria | Northern Ireland | Pakistan | Panama | Papua New Guinea | Paraguay | Philippines | Poland | Portugal | Republic of Ireland | Republic of Korea | Romania | Russia | Rwanda | Samoa | Senegal | Sierra Leone | Singapore | Solomon Islands | South Africa | Sri Lanka | Suriname | Tajikistan | Tanzania | Thailand | Trinidad and Tobago | Turkey | Uganda | Vanuatu | Vietnam | Zambia



# The Twain *Shall* Meet

If there's anything more striking than images of bombed buildings, burned-out, smoldering cars, and angry children hurling stones at each other in the streets of Belfast, it's the reality of people there—Catholics and Protestants in equal measure—coming together in peace, building a future characterized by tolerance, reconciliation and compassion, not Molotov cocktails and riots.

For 30 years, Northern Ireland was at war with itself, its people blowing one another up in an explo-

sive declaration of identity.

The army barricades in the city center are gone now, as is much of the fear that so long loitered on downtown street corners. Following a 1994 cease fire among warring Catholic and Protestant factions, that fear has been replaced by shoppers, pub patrons and tourists. When visiting Belfast, it's difficult to reconcile the violent persona so customarily attributed to the people with the sense of hope that seems destined to overcome decades of deep-rooted malevolence.



Children play in the shadow of a "peace wall" in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Aimed at curbing decades of violence between Catholics and Protestants, the walls also reinforce the sectarian divide that has caused so much suffering. Following a 1994 cease-fire, however, hope and peace are taking root.

*In the killing field that was Northern Ireland, Habitat binds wounds, builds peace.*

*By Shawn Reeves*

CEDRIC ARNOLD/CORBIS SYGMA

Since 1994, Habitat for Humanity has established itself in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland not only as a house builder, but even more importantly as a peace-builder, interpreting a decent, affordable house not so much as an end in itself but as the means to a much larger end of unity and accord.

"In Northern Ireland we are more and more concerned with measuring the outcomes of our work rather than the outputs," says Peter Farquharson, executive director for Habitat for Humanity-Northern

Ireland. "It's not about the numbers of houses or even the number of volunteers or the number of Protestants and Catholics that have been involved, although that's a good indicator. We're entering a new area of exploring what reconciliation looks like. What are the indicators of reconciliation? If you're talking about a sustainable peace, what does that look like? We are at the front line of working with organizations to define more clearly what effective peace-building means."

Make no mistake: There is a real need for decent

Habitat homeowner Lynn Paul works on her house in Protestant Ballysillan. Her home, which she will share with her husband Leonard and their sons Robert, Neil and Jonathon, is the last of a collection of eight houses Habitat for Humanity has built there, bringing Catholics and Protestants together in the process.



STEPHEN WILSON

housing, as some low-income families struggle in overcrowded conditions, enduring “fuel poverty” and facing “heat-or-eat” situations. But perhaps the more fundamental need in this battle-weary country is reconciliation.

The centuries of conflict, punctuated by three decades of intense violence commonly known as “the Troubles” are what make Habitat’s work in Northern Ireland so compelling. During those 30 years, more than 3,600 people—Catholics, Protestants, young, old, often innocent—died violently, and one in every 50 people was injured. If the same ratio were applied to the United States, the number of injured would exceed the population of Minnesota.

**‘We are at the front line of working with organizations to define more clearly what effective peace-building means.’**

—Peter Farquharson, executive director for HFH-NI

Pubs and banks were bombed; residents were abducted from neighborhood sidewalks, then killed or beaten and left for dead; masked gunmen, fueled by hatred and loyalist or republican fury, raided homes or businesses, stealing fathers from daughters, sons from mothers, neighbors from neighbors.

It’s a part of the world that’s given us C.S. Lewis and Van Morrison, the heart defibrillator and the modern tractor, five Nobel Prize winners and the Titanic. At the same time, it’s a part of the world where events as seemingly harmless as parades can stir a pot of resentment that too frequently has boiled over into violent protests, shootings, bombings, torture.

**The beauty** of Northern Ireland and the warmth of its people belie a violent history that has plagued and destroyed so much and so many. Even in the wake of an 11-year cease-fire, it is still divided in many ways, where, in so many neighborhoods, Catholics feverishly embrace nationalism, seeking a united Ireland, and Protestants grip unionism, seeking instead—and with equal vehemence—to preserve a union with Great Britain.

Paramilitaries on both sides still cast a coercive net across Northern Ireland neighborhoods, controlling life there through extortion, fear and intimidation. And conflict still surfaces from time to time in “interfaces,” those areas that physically link one community to another and that, consequently, have served as hot spots for sectarian violence. As part of the 1998 Belfast Agreement, which helped pave the way for more peaceful days, some 20,000 prisoners from both sides were released. Many have turned their backs on

violence; some have reclaimed it.

Unlike race relations in the United States, where differences are and have been declared by the color of one's skin, sectarianism in Northern Ireland is in one sense more subtle, surmised by such otherwise innocuous questions as, "Where do you live? What school did you attend?" and even "What's your name?"

In a country where some 70 percent of working-class neighborhoods are segregated, single-identity communities, clearly marked by emblems, flags, murals and graffiti, answers to such questions can and do indicate "which foot you kick with," as construction supervisor Danny Burns phrases it.

In one story, a grade-schooler encountered a classmate who informed him of his Muslim faith, to which the first child responded, "So does that make you Catholic or Protestant?" This, it seems, reflects the bedrock from which many people in Northern Ireland proclaim their identity: "Are you Catholic or Protestant?"

Intermixed at one point, demographics in these communities have shifted over the years as each "side" gravitated toward its "own" under threats, both perceived and real, from the other. Northern Ireland today is approximately 55 percent Protestant and 45 percent Catholic. For years, nightly riots were the

norm, cross-community interaction the exception and an increasingly distant possibility. Families crouched in darkness, sleeping in shifts, keeping buckets of water on hand in order to more quickly douse flaming gasoline bombs. It was and is always worse in the lower-income neighborhoods.

In an attempt to stop, or at least minimize, the violence, authorities erected dozens of so-called "peace walls," which snake through neighborhoods and reach as high as 50 feet. And their effect goes beyond physically dividing people. They impinge on the availability of housing, as well.

Because of the peace walls, "communities cannot simply expand their neighborhoods to meet the housing need," says David Blake, program manager for HFH-NI. And while the walls may help curb the conflict, they also impose a psychological barrier, says Claire Moss, Habitat's communications manager and a native of Belfast. They reinforce the idea that "you're not supposed to go there," that one shouldn't get to know the people who live, work and play on the other side. The result: utter suspicion and mistrust.

In his book, *Interface: Flashpoints in Northern Ireland*, Colm Heatley writes that "Nationalists say the peace lines act to hem in their expanding community in North Belfast, while unionists, whose numbers are



Habitat homeowners Martin and Ellen Taggart, with sons Martin, Lewis and Samuel, will move into one of the last Habitat houses built in the Protestant neighborhood of Ballysillan.

STEPHEN WILSON

# Reconciliation

Bridging the divide between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland is what drives Habitat for Humanity construction supervisors Danny Burns (above) and Rab Branney.

STEPHEN WILSON



STEPHEN WILSON



declining in North Belfast, prefer to see them as a necessary fact of life, providing some element of security.”

They have produced wastelands, he writes, “which would otherwise be used to build public-sector housing. This has created a housing crisis, particularly in working-class nationalist areas, which are characterized by overcrowding; ...in short, they are bursting at the seams, while houses in nearby Protestant areas lie empty.”

Entire generations have grown up not knowing their peers from the other side, remaining unfamiliar with their culture. “What is fairly clear is that there isn’t even a realization among each community of the other’s needs,” Heatley points out in his book.

The conflict is really about identity, Blake says, and it’s not only about being Catholic or Protestant; it’s also about being Irish or British; it’s about being nationalist or unionist. In other words, it’s at once an issue of national, religious and political identity. And the division has exacted an immeasurable economic and human toll. Healing is taking place, however, forged in part by residents’ refusal to return to “hell on earth”—and in part by groups like Habitat for Humanity.

**Bridging people** across such profound chasms is exactly what Habitat is doing in Northern Ireland.

The organization has built 47 houses since its 1994 inception, but numbers are not what drives Habitat’s efforts there—or Habitat staff and volunteers themselves for that matter.

“Habitat’s work is so wonderfully about bringing people together,” Farquharson says, “and I think as a movement that’s probably our greatest achievement. I think the numbers of houses are insubstantial, and I think the work in terms of building community and getting the community together on a global level is just phenomenal.”

Farquharson quickly concedes, however, that such work would not be possible without support from so many individuals, churches, businesses and other organizations.

One of those organizations is the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, a government-funded housing agency

whose purpose is to ensure that housing is provided on the basis of need. NIHE works indiscriminately with families from both communities to help resolve standard housing issues and build cross-community relations. Not too surprisingly, then, Habitat partners with NIHE to foster both decent housing and community cohesion. Elma Newberry, who heads NIHE’s Community Cohesion Unit, says HFH-NI is helping research, develop and promote mixed-community housing.

“Housing in itself is a social good and central to the development of stable, cohesive neighborhoods,” she says. “The NIHE recognizes that Habitat is a politically neutral organization with experience and expertise in developing relationships in diverse communities.”

While the scars presently run too deep for an integrated Habitat community in Northern Ireland, the organization is successfully building houses with both Catholics and Protestants in single-identity neighborhoods. Volunteers and prospective homeowners from each side travel to and work on site in the other’s community—a practice virtually unheard of only a short time ago. In November, HFH-NI dedicated the last of eight houses in the Protestant Ballysillan neighborhood of North Belfast. In the coming months, volunteers will build and dedicate the last two of eight houses in the nearby Catholic neighborhood of Ligoniel. All of the houses will have been built with cross-community volunteers.

Some Habitat staff and volunteers in Belfast, who grew up amid the Troubles and for whom sectarian conflict is a life context, tell of their initial uneasiness about entering, let alone working in, a community on the other side. Large murals depicting militants with black guns and black masks can be intimidating, not to mention the history of random abductions, mutilations and killings that remains entirely vivid. Yet they continue their work because they believe in the outcome—which they see, experience and foster every day.

As a measure, perhaps, of Habitat’s credibility in Northern Ireland, apart from some relatively minor vandalism from “bored kids,” Habitat actually has experienced very little resistance in the neighborhoods where it works, says Rab Branney, a construction supervisor. “They know we’re coming in to do a positive thing in their community, and people recognize the importance of decent housing,” he says, reiterating at the same time that Habitat doesn’t work for one side or the other, but rather for everyone.

In talking about his work with Habitat, Angus Beck, who serves on the board of HFH-NI, references scripture in the Book of Matthew imploring one to



Jennifer Crockard (left), Protestant, and Michelle Hamilton, Catholic, first met on a Habitat build site and since have cultivated a true friendship, defying an identity barrier that otherwise might have separated them.

“love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you.”

“I thought, ‘Well, that’s great, but how do you practically show that?’” he says. “Here’s an organization that gives people an opportunity, if they want it, to step out to the other side of a community, to practically do something for people who, historically, have been seen as your enemy or you’ve been seen as theirs just because of where you come from. This gives them an opportunity to step outside their comfort zone, to cross that divide . . . and that’s what’s so exciting.”

Never has that been better exemplified than in the experience of Michelle Hamilton and Jennifer Crockard, Catholic and Protestant respectively.

The two women, both Habitat homeowners, grew up amid the Troubles and have seen firsthand the hostility and violence that can so thoroughly infect a community.

“I decided I wasn’t going to get caught up in all of that,” Crockard says, sitting on the sofa in Hamilton’s home in the staunchly Catholic neighborhood of Ligoniel.

Hamilton and Crockard met on a Habitat build site in the Protestant neighborhood of Ballysillan, a mere stone’s throw from Ligoniel. They worked hand in hand then, and they walk, figuratively, hand in hand still. Each watches the other’s children; they take vacations together—to Scotland last year—watch movies together. Even more revealing, perhaps, is that their young children look at one another not as Catholic or Protestant first, but as friend and neighbor.

“It’s so important to take people as they come,” says Hamilton.

“It doesn’t matter to me who or what people are,”

Crockard echoes. “A person can embrace an identity, but still think beyond the walls of a particular community.”

In Northern Ireland, Catholics and Protestants live in close proximity—in Crockard and Hamilton’s case only a half-mile at the furthest point—but entire worlds divide them in terms of personal interaction. So each time Hamilton and Crockard visit in their respective neighborhoods, they bridge a divide that decades of hostility have carved in the hearts of people throughout the region and particularly in a city where some of the more intense conflict surfaced during the Troubles.

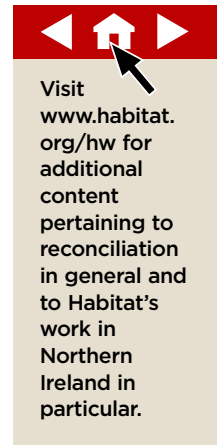
By coming together in true friendship, Hamilton and Crockard personify the very purpose for Habitat’s work in Northern Ireland.

“With Catholics and Protestants building in each other’s communities . . . to engage everyone like that is very significant,” says Blake, especially in light of decades where many people were concerned more with burning the other’s house than with building it.

“Habitat talks shop and then does shop,” Crockard says. “It doesn’t pick sides, and it regenerates communities by giving people hope.”

Hope is what has come to Northern Ireland in the form of peace-building organizations, in the work of individuals and churches, in the outreach of official agencies and cross-community groups, in the same conciliatory spirit shared between Crockard and Hamilton.

And it’s come to neighborhoods throughout Belfast—where people are building houses and peace, no matter which “foot they kick with.” 🏠



# ... And All for One

*Habitat joins global effort to end poverty.*

*By Bill Walsh*

**T**his is not the best of all possible worlds. If it were, poverty and preventable disease would not run roughshod over so many around the globe. If it were, governments in developed countries would not be so eager to offer aid packages that come with so many strings attached—the better with which to strangle, according to critics. If it were, developed countries would be embarrassed to extend a largesse so small to those in such desperate need.

Hence the ONE Campaign.

Many of the more than 50 humanitarian organizations and two million individuals who have signaled their support for the ONE Campaign are veteran activists, certainly much more grizzled in these endeavors than Habitat, whose role in government affairs has been relatively low-profile. While the campaign's more politicized efforts aimed at relieving debt, confronting AIDS and reforming trade are on the front burner for many who support the movement, Habitat will concentrate, at least initially, on efforts to prompt the federal government to significantly bolster the size of its international aid package, according to Habitat CEO Jonathan Reckford.

"This is a key part of our new thrust into advocacy," Reckford says of Habitat's enrollment in the cam-

paign. "What we want to do is promote the idea that we are joining in a coalition to advocate to end poverty. Decent housing is a big part of this, but only a part. The other piece of it for us is...to try to identify where 'ONE-like' campaigns are at work in other countries where we are building. We can help support those efforts through our area offices." Reckford sits on the campaign's nine-member governing board.

"What the ONE Campaign is doing is attempting to influence the United States to increase its humani-

tarian aid by about \$25 billion per year, or about one percent of the budget," he explains.

That's a statement that leaves many scratching their heads. A majority of Americans, according to campaign research, believe that fully a quarter of the federal budget is spent on foreign aid, not the 0.7 percent that is reality. More than 85 percent of U.S. citizens, according to that same study, support spending at least one percent on foreign aid. Given the high profile of the ONE Campaign—it is closely associated with rock star Bono, with Bill and Melinda Gates and with a bevy of Hollywood celebrities—both percentages figure to rise.

"Moral authority has never been a problem for (charitable) groups on Capitol Hill," political columnist Ronald Brownstein wrote in late October. "What they have lacked is political clout. Other than venerable but limited church networks, development advocates have never built a mass community of voters for their cause. ONE wants to change that."

**The \$25 billion** figure has others scratching their heads in wonder over its affordability. But "to put this in focus," according to campaign literature, "Americans spend \$42 billion on diet and health books each year, almost three times what America gave in official development assistance to the world's poorest people in 2003."

As this is being written in December, the U.S. has heretofore spent nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars fighting the war in Iraq, and ONE Campaign literature is quick to point out that "poverty in the developing world is a serious global security threat, a fact acknowledged by the U.S. when President Bush included development as a priority area of his National Security Strategy."

Diet books and terror threats aside, "Habitat is committed to the major biblical injunctions to work to end poverty in the world," Reckford says. "After an extensive, comprehensive process involving our leadership worldwide, Habitat for Humanity identified advocacy as one of its major mission goals in its 2006–2011 strategic plan. In its advocacy commit-






MIKEL FLAMM

ment, Habitat implicitly and explicitly states the goal of eliminating poverty worldwide in terms of the Millennium Development Goals.”

Prominent among those eight goals is the call for halving the number of people in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. “We will have time to reach the Millennium Development Goals—worldwide and in most cases, or even all, individual countries—but

only if we break with business as usual,” says United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. “We...must start now. And we must more than double global development assistance over the next few years. Nothing less will help to achieve the goals.”

Individuals can indicate their support by signing on to the ONE Campaign on our Web site, [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org). 

**Habitat for Humanity joins World Vision, Save the Children and others in a global effort to end poverty such as that surrounding this child in his home fishing village of Isla Verde in the city of Davao on the island of Mindanao. In January, Habitat for Humanity began building and transforming lives in partnership with the *Badjao*, or sea gypsies there.**

## One vision, one voice

The ONE Campaign is a new movement to build a constituency of Americans who believe—and are prepared to act on the belief—that it is vital that the United States should do more to fight global disease and poverty. The campaign’s calls to action include support for organizations working with the poor, educating others and influencing the government to increase foreign humanitarian assistance by one percent of the federal budget.

The ONE Campaign was begun several years ago by several non-governmental agencies as an organization known as “A Better, Safer World.” In 2004, it was constituted as the ONE Campaign and now has more than 50 national organizations in its membership.

It is best known by its association with Bono and Bill and Melinda Gates, but its two million supporters include diverse political figures and celebrities.

Habitat’s international board of directors approved Habitat’s joining the ONE Campaign at its June 2005 meeting. In December, Habitat for Humanity was named as one of nine non-governmental agencies on the ONE Campaign’s first governing board. In addition to Habitat CEO Jonathan Reckford, the ONE Board includes the CEOs of CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Oxfam America, Mercy Corps, DATA, Bread for the World and Heifer International.

—Tom Jones, Ambassador-at-Large for Habitat for Humanity



# Equal Opportunity

KIM MACDONALD

*Men, women carry different loads in terms of community development.*

*By Rebekah Daniel*

**For these women in India, household supplies donated after the 2004 tsunami helped rebuild the most central of all community building blocks: the home.**

**‘G**ive a man a fish; he’ll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish; he’ll eat for a lifetime.” In a September interview with *The New York Times*, Bono, internationally known rock star and advocate for the poor, added a twist to the oft-cited proverb: “Maybe the mantra should be, ‘Give a man a fish, he’ll eat for a day. Give a woman microcredit, she, her husband, her children and her extended family will eat for a lifetime.’”

When it comes to community projects in developing countries, women are the demographic of choice. A seemingly infinite number of programs seek to do everything from improve women’s access to health

care to facilitate the gathering of clean water, coach women on starting and maintaining small businesses, teach them to fertilize their crops efficiently and keep girls in school longer—or at least get them there to start with. Two-thirds of the 3.7 million micro-entrepreneurs reached by USAID’s microenterprise program in 2002 were women.

But it is not just as program beneficiaries that women pop up on the radar screen of nongovernmental aid organizations; they are tapped as leaders, too. The United Nations Population Fund asserts in its “State of the World’s Population 2005” report that, “Women are the backbones of their families, pillars of

## Programs that address only women's needs fail to acknowledge the necessary cultural role men play ...

community life, caregivers for the sick and elderly and primary caretakers of the next generation.” Women’s concerns center on food security, health care, education and safety—topics strongly geared toward improving the quality of life for a broad spectrum of the population.

Yet if the goal of women-focused community development programs is to develop healthy communities—defined in Habitat’s mission statement as “communities in which every person can experience God’s love and can live and grow into all that God intends”—half the community’s population is currently being left to fend for themselves.

### Gender warfare

Some men are part of the problem. Stories of fathers who have sold their daughters into prostitution and philandering husbands who have knowingly infected their wives with HIV are too common, and too true. Last year, a World Health Organization study in Vietnam showed that HIV infection rates among women in Asia jumped 10 percent in two years. “The biggest HIV risk for many women is marriage,” said Shigeru Omi, WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, warning that the bulk of new HIV infections will indeed “occur through marital sex, usually from husband to wife.... Women who are married and monogamous now account for the majority of new HIV infections in some countries, such as Cambodia and Thailand.”

But for many men, the problem is not callous disregard for women; it is simply a mark of how times have changed. Farming and animal husbandry, traditional male occupations in the developing world, have been turned upside down by environmental mismanagement, expanding urban development and, according to many, flawed aid and trade policies imposed by the developed world. The loss of occupation can be devastating to both individuals and their communities; men are able to work but unable to find a job, and the lack of a dignified way to provide for their families encourages too many to while away the time with others in the same boat, susceptible to the temporary relief of alcohol or gambling. Others flee to urban areas, seeking employment and cash to send back home. It is a lifestyle often fraught with loneliness and danger as men, cut off

from their support networks at home, face fierce competition for scarce jobs. Many turn to prostitutes—then carry disease back to their rural villages.

Despite their good intentions, many of the current aid and self-help programs exacerbate the divide between men and women. Programs that address only women’s needs fail to acknowledge the necessary cultural role men play in leadership and can upset traditional divisions of labor. Bulelwa Ngcetani, credit controller for a Habitat affiliate in Cape Town, South Africa, has seen men become displaced and lose self-dignity as their wives get involved in successful community development programs. “[Females] can work to earn a living—they no longer need men to be self sufficient.”

Yet programs that address only men’s needs fail to acknowledge the very real disadvantages women face in achieving even rudimentary quality-of-life standards in education and health care.

**Many community development programs aim to increase food security and improve nutrition. In Kasulu, Tanzania, women harvest cassava, a plant with edible roots that yield a nutritious starch.**



KIM MACDONALD

## Division of labor

With thorny disadvantages to choosing sides in the “who needs more help” debate, Habitat has come to a thoughtful verdict: Neither. And both. Men need productive employment toward a worthwhile goal; women need to contribute meaningfully to the welfare and security of their families. Building a simple, decent house satisfies both.

It is not only the finished product—an improved, affordable place to live—that develops the community, however. The process itself becomes an experience in which all who participate bring a uniquely flavored dish to the table to share.

“When Habitat Kyrgyzstan started to build its first 10 houses five years ago, we had our first Global Village team that consisted of both men and women,” Habitat Kyrgyzstan public relations manager Nadya Plahutina says. “Women from the team did absolutely the same jobs as men without any discrimination, and for them, it was strange, maybe, to hear from local men words like, ‘Don’t lift this, it is too heavy’ or ‘You are a woman—you shouldn’t do this, let men do this.’”

“But as the construction lasted, women from part-

ner families became more skilled and confident, and they were working harder and harder. Men also started to get used to working together with women and sharing the work with them more equally.”

In Cluj, Romania, the Habitat for Humanity affiliate has recognized that men and women can be equally involved in community transformation without necessarily doing the same jobs. Men may be more likely to invest their time on the work site, but promoting the affiliate in the community, participating on radio and TV shows, preparing for special events and making church presentations are highly valued contributions that allow women to participate meaningfully. Because the tasks are divided, men and women both have opportunities to excel in ways their culture appreciates.

“[The men] are proud that their wives have become involved with Habitat, and they encourage them to keep going,” says communications manager Maria Cinar.

Ultimately, the Habitat message is one of family partnership. If communities are to successfully address the daunting poverty issues facing them, it will take everyone’s unique contribution. 🏠

Close ties to one another, through family and friendship, help women step out on new ventures to improve their environments.



KIM MACDONALD



JOE MATTHEWS

# Going 'Green'

A blower test helps measure air infiltration in newly constructed houses.

*Energy costs prompt better buildings.*

*By Rebekah Daniel*

It seems Sir Isaac Newton may have omitted a natural law of the universe that is becoming increasingly apparent to anyone who enjoys electricity and heat: Energy costs increase over time. Given various weather disruptions and ongoing situations in the world's oil fields, energy prices may go up 100 percent from last winter's record levels.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the cost to heat a Midwestern home with natural gas for the 2003–2004 heating season was \$864, up 43 percent from 2001–2002. Natural gas is the third-largest source of electricity generation in the United States; when natural gas prices go up, so does your electric utility bill.

Short of sitting in the dark, shivering (or sweating) and eating cold, raw food, what alternatives are left to

families without the financial wherewithal to absorb such increases? A lot, it turns out. Increasing the energy efficiency of both new and existing homes—and the enabling options are growing—is a topic very much on

**‘That’s what it’s all about: recognizing that by spending very little money, you save a lot of money on energy over the life of the house.’**

**—Earl Mason, volunteer**

the minds of builders, homeowners and renters.

“There’s a growing recognition that to build a truly affordable house...Habitat needs to provide a house that’s affordable on a daily, weekly and monthly basis,” says Jennifer Langton, HFHI’s environmental

resources specialist. Green construction, she says, is softer not only on the environment but also on budgets. “We look at all bills, not just the mortgage,” in determining partner families, she says, “and sometimes the utility bills can be quite high. Lowering the utility bills can compensate for a slightly higher mortgage.” That “slightly higher mortgage” can put decent housing within reach of more people.

## What is Green?

“Green building” is a phrase that has described anything from homes made from renewable mud and straw, to those using off-the-grid wells and septic systems, sustainably harvested hardwoods and appliances rated for energy efficiency. Or, as the official definition of green design from the U.S. Green Building Council puts it: “Design and construction practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants in five broad areas, including sustainable site planning, safeguarding water and water efficiency, energy efficiency and renewable energy, conservation of materials and resources and indoor environmental quality.”

Theoretically, any structure—be it commercial or residential, new or existing—can be green. When applied to housing, the lofty philosophical concepts of conservation and sustainability translate into mundane, practical truths: If you build a house to be energy efficient, it costs less to heat and cool. If you build it with

locally available materials, it costs less to build. And when a house is well-built, especially with precautions taken against water infiltration, it lasts much longer.

The challenge is not in deciding whether to build energy-efficient houses, but in how to take advantage of existing green-building knowledge to stretch precious construction dollars as far as possible.

## Options Abound

Some techniques are proven. In hot climates, light-colored roofing materials with generous eaves mitigate the sun’s heat and keep living spaces cooler. In cold climates, large, south-facing windows catch the winter sun for passive (and free) heating. And though fresh air is important for good indoor air quality, energy experts have found it is much more efficient for a house to “breathe” through properly sized ventilation units than through uncaulked, drafty joints.

In any climate, adequate insulation is key. The winters in northern Illinois are long and cold enough to be a significant influence on the construction practices of Ed Leach, construction supervisor at Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity. The affiliate was initially introduced to the advantages of green building by a \$250 rebate offered by its electrical supplier for homes built according to Energy Star® specs. Leach upped the amount of insulation in each house, upgraded the furnace and hot water heater, and got the electrical supplier to conduct a blower test on each

## Homeowners and renters can adopt many energy conservation practices for their existing homes.

- Lower the thermostat to around 65 degrees F—or even lower (to around 60 degrees F) when no one is home, or buy a programmable thermostat, especially if your home is vacant most of the day. Set it to turn the heat up half an hour before anyone arrives home.
- Have the furnace (particularly oil furnaces) professionally cleaned, i.e. clearing it of carbon and other residue, to help it burn fuel more efficiently.
- Take inventory of all windows, doors and outside vents, and check to see what areas might be letting cold air come in or allowing heat to escape. Apply weather-stripping around these windows and doorways to cut down on fuel consumption. Install storm windows or windows specifically made to keep heat from escaping and cold air from coming in.
- During the summer, raise the temperature of an air conditioner to around 76 degrees F. Each degree increase will save approximately five percent in energy costs.
- Keep the air conditioning filter clean to help the unit run more efficiently.
- Install the air conditioning unit on the shady side of the house rather than in direct sun.
- Ensure that refrigerator door seals are tight by placing a piece of paper between the door and refrigerator. After closing the door, if the paper pulls out easily, replace the seal. Also, cleaning the coils in the back once a year will help the unit run more efficiently.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs, which last 10,000 hours, as compared to only about 750 hours for incandescent bulbs.
- Reduce the temperature on the hot water heater to around 120 degrees F, and insulate the unit.
- Plant trees or install awnings on outside windows and doors on the sunny side of the house.

finished house to test for air leakage. The total cost of the upgrades was only about \$800, an amount the family ends up saving in utility bills within five years.

“We caulk every penetration for wiring or plumbing through the attic space to reduce air flow,” Leach says. “You don’t have to be terribly skilled to take a caulk gun and stuff it full. It’s a matter of conscience to me, as a pretty environmentally sensitive person, to minimize the consumption of our natural resources. And we’re trying to help the family get a start in the home they otherwise wouldn’t be able to get.”

Other techniques are newer but proving themselves. In 2003, East Bay Habitat for Humanity in Oakland, Cal., built four houses with a variety of green components: a 2.25-kW photovoltaic system (solar panels) on each home, cellulose insulation in the walls and ceilings of two homes, raised heel roof trusses, vinyl windows with low-e2 coating, an Energy Star® refrigerator, and fluorescent fixtures/lightbulbs.

“We oriented the houses to the south to maximize passive solar gain,” says director of construction Dave Sylvester. “Cost was a big consideration at first, and we hired architects for the first build.” Over time, however, they’ve found that some of the most effective green techniques—careful orientation on site, recycling construction waste—have no negative financial impact.

SIPs, or structural insulated panels, are gaining in popularity among efficiency advocates because they can provide an interior space that is very well-insulated and nearly draft-free. The panels consist of rigid foam

insulation sandwiched between two layers of oriented strand board sheathing. Unlike typical wood frame construction, heat cannot be conducted along the studs because there aren’t any, and the foam insulation is more resistant to air flow than fiberglass.

“It is always cheaper to buy insulation and caulk than it is to buy furnaces and fuel,” says Habitat construction volunteer Earl Mason, an efficiency advocate known in Habitat circles for challenging the inertia of “the way we’ve always done it.”

“That’s what it’s all about: recognizing that by spending very little money on installation you save a lot of money on energy over the life of the house. Is saving the \$500 to \$1,000 on insulation so we can build 51 not-so-efficient houses more important than building 50 really efficient houses?”

Ironically, one of the most important factors in achieving energy efficiency has nothing to do with construction. Regardless of how well insulated a house is, a family that insists on maintaining an indoor temperature of 75 degrees in January will have higher heating bills than necessary. Homeowner education plays a role in East Bay’s building. Overall, Sylvester says, the families have been willing to make changes.

“The homeowners really love not having an electric bill,” he says. 🏠

*Habitat houses are becoming more aesthetically diverse as well as energy efficient. See page 20 and visit the Web site, [www.habitat.org/hw](http://www.habitat.org/hw), click on “More Stories,” then on “Drawn by Opportunity.”*

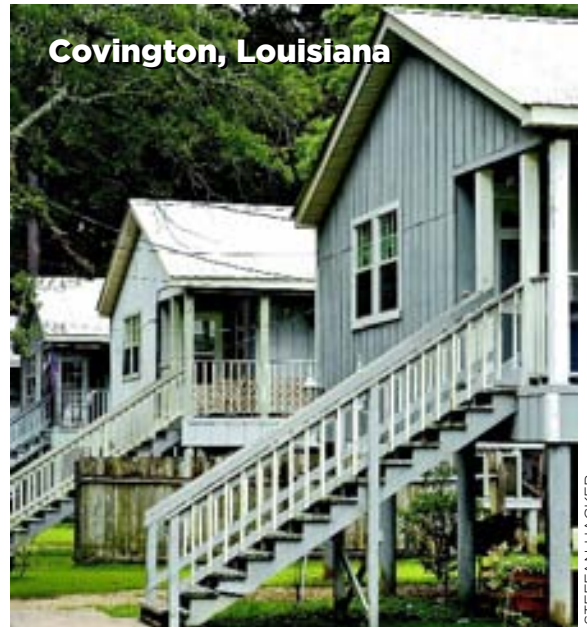
- Install an attic fan to eliminate hot air that can put a strain on an air conditioning system.
- Check with your utility company for rebates for installing energy-saving equipment.
- Fix leaky faucets—one drip a second is 20 kilowatts a month.
- Turn off your computer when not in use, or use the energy-saving “sleep” mode.
- Seal energy leaks. Caulk over cracks and small holes around windows and exterior walls. Look carefully around plumbing pipes, telephone wires, dryer vents, sink and bathtub drains and under countertops.
- Participate in your power company’s special energy-saving programs. Some programs shut down electric appliances for short periods of time during peak hours. You hardly notice the difference—except in your bill.
- Consider a front-loading washing machine, which uses 50 percent less energy and one-third less water. They also remove more water in the rinse cycle, and that translates into big savings in dryer time.
- Let the sunshine in. Open drapes and let the sun heat your home for free (close them at sundown so they help insulate).
- Shorten showers. Simply reducing that lingering time by a few minutes can save hundreds of gallons of hot water per month for a family of four. Showers account for two-thirds of your water-heating costs. Cutting your showers in half will reduce your water-heating costs by 33 percent.
- Use appliances efficiently. Do only full loads when using your dishwasher and clothes washer. Use the cold water setting on your clothes washer when you can. Using cold water reduces your washer’s energy use by 75 percent. Be sure to clean your clothes dryer’s lint trap after each use.
- Plug “leaking energy” in electronics. Many new TVs, VCRs, chargers, computer peripherals and other electronics use electricity even when they are switched “off.” Although these “standby losses” are only a few watts each, they add up to more than 50 watts in a typical home.

**Grand Rapids, Michigan**



STEFFAN HACKER

**Covington, Louisiana**



STEFFAN HACKER

# Shelter From the Norm

**L**ike Habitat for Humanity affiliates themselves, Habitat houses are diverse in their design. When developing house plans, U.S. affiliates try to take the architectural characteristics customary to a particular location into account,

as they seek to blend Habitat houses with existing homes. These houses adhere to the “simple, decent” principles of Habitat’s housing model. (Go to [www.habitat.org/hw](http://www.habitat.org/hw) and click on “More Stories” to read Rebekah Daniel’s interview with an architect who

does a lot of work with Habitat.)

The Habitat homes on these pages illustrate the diverse architecture in various regions across the United States. In the next issue, we’ll have a sampling of the diversity of Habitat homes in other countries.

**Redwood City, California**



STEFFAN HACKER

Phoenix, Arizona



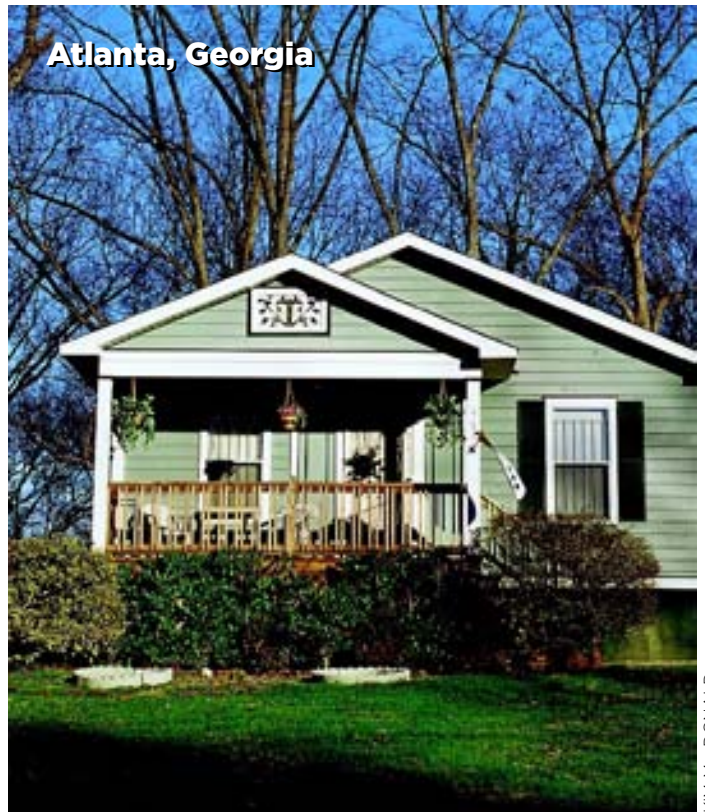
STEFFAN HACKER

San Diego area, California



KIM MACDONALD

Atlanta, Georgia



KIM MACDONALD

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



STEFFAN HACKER

## Rebirth starts along the Gulf Coast

In the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the housing need along the Gulf Coast is staggering, but the recovery must start somewhere. What better place than flood-ravaged Slidell, La.?

Right before Christmas, mother of two Paulette Lindsey became the first Habitat homeowner to move into a house built as part of Operation Home Delivery, Habitat's long-term recovery effort. Begun as a containerized house in New York's Rockefeller Plaza during "Make a Difference TODAY" last September, the framework for Lindsey's house was shipped to Slidell, where volunteers reassembled it into a permanent dwelling.

"I've seen where a lot of people, even some celebrities, have signed their names to the 2" x 4"s, and it's just nice to know that so many people I don't even know cared enough to help like that," Lindsey says.

"It's not just people I know who helped, but a lot of people I don't know helped, too, and that means this house has come along with a lot of support and love."

Lindsey's house provides stability for her family, including 12-year-old son, Tiron, and daughter, Tonisha, who is 9, but it also symbolizes the hope that decent housing can provide families throughout the Gulf region. And hope is exactly what Habitat seeks to foster as its building efforts intensify in partnership with families whose lives were turned upside down by Katrina and Rita.

As Operation Home Delivery transitions from its first phase of containerized houses to actual homes on ground, progress is being made:

- 221 Habitat OHD houses have been framed and containerized.
- 60-plus containerized houses were under construction on the Gulf Coast as this report was being written in December.
- 20-plus Global Village groups have worked in the affected area.

While the numbers thus far may pale beside the enormous housing need, Habitat's is a long-term commitment in the region. The massive disaster has demanded a massive planning effort.

To that end, Habitat has staffed an office whose charge it is to prepare and execute a lasting building plan that ultimately will result in thousands of houses along the storm-ravaged coast.

"Operation Home Delivery is working on programs and structure, and is making some progress in the hurricane-affected areas," says Ken Meinert, senior vice president for Habitat's OHD program. "We have supported affiliates who are recovering and have new homes under construction in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas. Longer-term planning efforts for an aggressive building plan for 2006 will be implemented soon."

*Habitat World* will keep readers apprised of those plans as they take shape. 🏠

—Shawn Reeves

Paulette Lindsey (center) and her two children, Tiron, 12, and Tonisha, 9, were the first Habitat family to move into a house built as part of Habitat's Katrina recovery effort, Operation Home Delivery. She stands in front of her house in Slidell, La., with her children, her sister Marion Boston and former NFL New Orleans Saints player Maurice Spencer.



KIM MACDONALD

## Light at the end of the tunnel

Last fall, I visited a community of Morgan sea gypsies in the village of Tachatchai in Phuket, Thailand, an area heavily damaged by the deadly tsunami of Dec. 26, 2004. Although saddened by the villagers' stories of loss from the terrible waves that destroyed lives and livelihoods, my visit was nevertheless marked by hopefulness.

Thanks to the work of Habitat for Humanity, our corporate partners, countless volunteers and especially the community itself, I was privileged and honored to dedicate five new Habitat houses during my visit. This group of families came together after the tsunami to rebuild what was lost.

I was especially touched by the story of Somwang Chiochan, a slight, 40-year-old who is developmentally challenged. He owns a tiny, two-square-meter plot of land near the edge of the water. Before the tsunami, he lived on that plot of land in a building not much bigger than a dog house. Although he was lucky enough to survive the waves, his small home was washed away. The community wanted his new home to be bigger, despite the size of his lot, so they built up. He now owns the only three-story, two-square-meter house in Tachatchai. They call it the watchtower, and his job, he said, is to watch the sea for another tsunami.

As I was welcomed into the village and greeted with a beautiful Thai flower necklace, the community liaison officer told me that Habitat for Humanity not only helped provide the physical housing, but it also provided a communal strength through the building process. Strong houses, to be sure—and a far more robust sense of what it is to be a community.

"We are all so thankful," he said, "not necessarily to have new houses, but more so that we can come together with love as a community to rebuild our lives together."

This is the same spirit that infuses the work taking place in Northern Ireland, as Shawn Reeves reports elsewhere in this issue, and underscores the importance of our dedication not just to building houses but also to building the hope that the houses exemplify.

**As we begin** our 30th year, Habitat for Humanity, in cooperation with others of a like mind, has a heretofore unprecedented opportunity to expand that hope, to put shelter on the hearts and




LEX DAVILA

minds of people in such a powerful way that poverty housing and homelessness become socially, politically and religiously unacceptable, and, in so doing, to send our message to the farthest corners of the globe.

Much has been made in the press and on television about "disaster fatigue" in the wake of the tsunami, the multiple hurricanes, flooding and mudslides in Central America and the massive earthquake in Pakistan. If there is some of that, there certainly is another side to the story.

There is no question that we can, at times, feel overwhelmed by the task before us. But the destructive events of the past 15 months have so underscored the vulnerability of those living in poverty that there is a demand like never before to do what is necessary to end it.

A variety of non-governmental organizations and charities have seemingly come to the same conclusion at once: that we—as did the villagers in Tachatchai—can come together as one community to rebuild the lives that poverty has so stricken, so compromised. The board of directors of Habitat for Humanity International voted to enlist this organization in the ONE Campaign in June 2005. A variety of individuals across this country and around the world also came to the same conclusion, and the campaign now numbers two million members.

We are not fatigued. We are more driven and energized, for God has lighted our path and extended our mission faster and further than we ever dreamed possible. We have neither time nor patience for fatigue. 

**CEO Jonathan Reckford discusses housing issues with Jose "Lito" Atienza, mayor of Manila, during a trip to survey tsunami damage last fall. So far, Habitat has provided assistance to 6,000 families in the tsunami-affected area.**

# Never before has Habitat for Humanity been so prominently in the spotlight—and never before has the need for its work been greater.

**Y**ou may have seen images on TV or in the newspaper depicting Habitat's long-term hurricane recovery plan called **Operation Home Delivery**. From Rockefeller Plaza to Major League Baseball's World Series to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., volunteers have come out enthusiastically to help build "containerized" houses that are being shipped to the Gulf Coast for reassembly in partnership with displaced families.

The word is getting out, and progress is undoubtedly being made. Yet while Habitat has used the opportunity to spread the important message of substandard and affordable housing, the need for decent shelter still far outpaces its provision.

That's why we need your help TODAY. We need your gift NOW in order to deliver simple, decent, affordable homes not only to those devastated by recent events, but to those millions of families in all parts of the world living in poverty that constitutes a daily disaster unto itself.



Philippines

MIKEL FLAMM

Media cameras do not illuminate their hardships, and their hope for a better home never makes the front page. But with your support, they will not go overlooked. Housing *does* make a difference. You *can* change a life today. Please send us your donation so that we may strengthen our drive, with you, to improve lives along the Gulf Coast and throughout the world.

**Call (800) HABITAT to give or visit us online at [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org), where you can donate securely.**  
**Thank you for caring.**



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