



Legacies

A newsletter by the Planned Giving department
of Habitat for Humanity® International

A message from Habitat's CEO



*"Go, sell everything
you have and give to
the poor, and you will
have treasure in heaven.
Then come, follow me."
—Mark 10:21 NIV*

So said Christ to the rich young ruler. That particular young man did not understand how he could heed the call, but two thousand years later, another young man was eager to upend his entire life to respond. Millard Fuller, a self-made millionaire at 29, gave away all his wealth to follow Christ. He then went on to found Habitat for Humanity International in 1976, creating an organization that has built more than 300,000 houses worldwide, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1.5 million people.

Some might argue that when Christ told the rich young ruler to sell all and give to the poor that he was setting up a universal standard – that he expected everyone to do what only a few souls like Millard have proved capable of doing. I do not think we are all expected to give everything that we have, but all of us can give something—and we should give wisely, as good stewards of all that God has given us.

One of the aspects of Habitat that appeals most to potential donors, especially in these difficult times, is that giving to Habitat accomplishes so much. A gift to Habitat not only puts our partner families in decent, affordable homes, it raises their health and educational standards as well. As the house payments are made and loans on Habitat homes are paid off, the proceeds fund new homes so that the process begins anew with more families experiencing new opportunities.

Thomas Rosenmeyer provides security and dignity with a gift to Habitat for Humanity

By Nakia Fowler

When Thomas Rosenmeyer, professor emeritus of Greek and comparative literature at the University of California at Berkeley, passed away in 2007, his family was not aware that he had left Habitat for Humanity a gift.

Patricia Rosenmeyer, executor of her father's estate, said he had never mentioned including Habitat in his will, "but I'm certainly glad that he did." She recently sent Habitat for Humanity International a \$95,000 check from her father's estate.

Rosenmeyer, who was 86 when he died at his home in Oakland, Calif., had a longstanding interest in issues that dealt with people and their impact on the world, his daughter says. "He was careful about his money and understood that there were not many people as fortunate as he was, and he felt a great social obligation to help," says Patricia.

Patricia goes on to say that her father may have left a gift to Habitat because he knew what it was like not to have a home. Rosenmeyer, a German citizen, was one of thousands of Jewish refugees during World War II. So for him, Patricia says, "the idea of having a home was very special. Even his dissertation was on the lost city of Atlantis. Having a city, a home, was very important to him."



Thomas Rosenmeyer

GENEVIEVE SHIFFRIN

An adventure in self-sufficiency

Thomas Rosenmeyer was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1920. As the son of a banker, he grew up in a relatively affluent home, but life changed for him at the age of 19, when he fled to England to escape Nazi persecution. He was later sent to an internment camp in Canada.

"In Canada, my father and others had to build their own latrines, shelters and bunks. They performed a lot of manual labor," says Patricia. "He used to tell me that he viewed the experience as a new adventure in self-sufficiency."

Those who volunteer with Habitat all over the world tell us that their experiences help them build understanding and friendships, thereby creating bridges of understanding and reconciliation. Whether it is young working with old, Hindu working with Muslim, hearing working with deaf or executives working with laborers, they all tell us the same thing: Working together on a build site allows them to put aside their differences, each one feeling the value of contributing. Many times our donors find their lives changed as well; they find their faith deepened as they become more involved in building and helping others.

Not many charitable organizations can claim to do so much with a single gift, which helps account for the generosity, loyalty and enthusiasm of Habitat's donors and volunteers.

In this issue, you will read more about two people who have given very different kinds of gifts to Habitat. One is Millard Fuller, who passed away in February at the age of 74. By founding Habitat and creating a model of partnership housing, Millard has given a perpetual gift that provides families a "hand up" in securing homeownership. The other is Habitat friend Thomas G. Rosenmeyer.

Just recently, Rosenmeyer left Habitat a percentage of his trust, a gift of \$95,000 in his will. Through his thoughtful planning, Rosenmeyer was able to help low-income families have access to simple, decent and affordable housing.

I hope that the memory of Millard Fuller and the generosity of Thomas Rosenmeyer will inspire other friends of Habitat to do their part in building homes, lives and communities.



Jonathan Reckford
Chief Executive Officer
Habitat for Humanity International

“He was careful about his money and understood that there were not many people as fortunate as he was, and he felt a great social obligation to help,” says Patricia about her father, Thomas Rosenmeyer. “My dad was a Jewish refugee during World War II and the idea of having a home was very special. Even his dissertation was on the lost city of Atlantis. Having a city, a home, was very important to him.”

He was eventually sponsored by a Canadian family who helped him attend college to continue studying classics, which he had begun in England. To help support himself, he dug ditches, worked on roads and even labored in mines before graduating with bachelor's and master's degrees from universities in Canada. He later received a doctorate from Harvard University.

Professor Rosenmeyer taught at the State University of Iowa, Smith College and the University of Washington before joining the University of California at Berkeley in 1966. Having written four books and more than 50 published articles, Rosenmeyer was an expert on classical Greek literature and ancient philosophy. He retired from teaching in 1990.

“My father loved teaching and research,” Patricia recalls. “He had devoted students, and they wrote so many letters about how my father touched their lives. And while he was a very learned man, he also was very humble and desired for people to call him by his first name.”

Rosenmeyer's wife of 56 years, Lilo, was also from Hamburg, Germany, though they met through mutual friends in Montreal. In addition to Patricia (of Madison, Wis.), he is survived by daughter Katherine, who lives in Tacoma, Wash., and three

grandchildren. Patricia recalls that her father loved hiking, bird-watching and traveling and was a longtime supporter of several charities.

A testament of generosity

Her father's gift to Habitat has inspired Patricia to give as well. “I plan to get involved in a Habitat build,” she says. “I also plan to get my son, who was very close to his grandfather, involved in the spring break trips when he is of age.”

“Overall, security and dignity were very important to my father,” she adds. “As he had health challenges, he insisted on living in his home independently.”

And security and dignity are what Professor Thomas Rosenmeyer's gift will provide as Habitat for Humanity continues to build safe, decent and affordable homes in partnership with low-income families.

“Professor Rosenmeyer's life story is an inspiring testament to what one can accomplish with perseverance when faced with adversity,” says Robert Schmidt, Habitat for Humanity International's director of planned giving. “We are truly grateful for the gift he has bestowed to Habitat.”

Nakia Fowler is a public relations specialist with Habitat for Humanity International.



KIM MACDONALD

Millard Fuller
— pictured at a house dedication in Paterson, N.J.
— recognized the change that a simple, decent house could mean to families around the world.

MILLARD FULLER

{1935-2009}

In the early morning hours of a February Tuesday, Habitat for Humanity International founder Millard Fuller passed away.

The many members of Habitat’s extended family mourn his loss — and celebrate his longstanding commitment to the cause of affordable housing. His death on Feb. 3, at the age of 74 after a brief illness, ended a life dedicated to what Fuller often referred to as the “God-ordained, Christ-centered work” of building simple, decent, affordable housing with families in need of shelter.

The first seeds of Habitat were sown at Koinonia Farm, a Christian farming community founded in southwest Georgia in the 1940s. In 1965, financially successful but personally spent, Fuller and his wife Linda decided to begin anew at Koinonia. The former entrepreneur/attorney and his wife gave away the fruits of their lives’ labors and moved to Koinonia, where they encountered farmer, theologian and community founder Clarence Jordan.

In time, Jordan and Fuller launched a program of “partnership housing” — building simple houses in partnership with rural neighbors too poor to qualify for conventional home loans. The first house was dedicated in 1969. In 1973, the Fullers took the concept to Africa. Within a few years, simple concrete-block homes were replacing unhealthy mud-and-thatch homes. And Millard Fuller had a bold idea: If partnership housing could improve lives in Georgia and Zaire, why not the rest of the world?

After three years, the Fullers returned to the United States and launched Habitat for Humanity International. Fuller led Habitat from its 1976 founding until his separation from the organization and his founding of the Fuller Center for Housing in 2005.

By Habitat’s 25th anniversary in 2001, tens of thousands of people were volunteering with Habitat and more than 500,000 people were living in Habitat homes. In the years since, Habitat’s numbers — and its impact — have only grown. Habitat has built more than 300,000 houses around the world, providing more than 1.5 million people with safe, decent, affordable shelter.

The idea of change that first sprouted in the fields of Koinonia continues. The very same housing need that Fuller saw in the lives of his Georgia neighbors exists everywhere. Because of the vision and tireless effort that he brought to the founding of Habitat, because he was able to inspire so many to join him in the task, God’s work continues around the world.

“We are frustrated that we can’t just wave a magic wand and have houses appear for everyone who needs them,” Fuller once wrote in the pages of *Habitat World*. “But we do know that by doing what we can, we make a difference. We know from experience that when we move on faith, God moves with us.”

This story originally appeared in the March 2009 issue of Habitat World.

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MILLARD FULLER

Other ways to give besides your will

By Richard Algra

Habitat for Humanity Legacy Society

The Habitat for Humanity Legacy Society recognizes the importance of legacy gifts in eradicating poverty housing.

To become a member of the Habitat for Humanity Legacy Society, you must plan to benefit Habitat for Humanity after your lifetime—whether in the form of a bequest, annuity or other planned giving arrangement—and notify Habitat of your plans.

Join the Legacy Society today! Just contact the Planned Giving department at (800) 422-4828, ext. 7692, or at plannedgiving@habitat.org.

Contact us

There are several ways you can find out more information about planned giving:

Write: Planned Giving department
Habitat for Humanity International
121 Habitat Street

Americus, GA 31709-3498

Call: (800) 422-4828, ext. 7692

E-mail: plannedgiving@habitat.org

Web: www.habitat.org/giving/planned

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian organization dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness worldwide and to making adequate, affordable shelter a matter of conscience and action.

Did you know there are several ways to leave a gift to Habitat for Humanity besides through a will? While leaving Habitat a gift through a will is a simple process that only requires bequest language, there are other easy options called “will substitutes.” Life insurance policies and retirement plans are two examples.

There are several ways to use life insurance for charitable giving. The easiest way is to simply name Habitat as the beneficiary of a policy. Other options include:

- Naming Habitat as the sole beneficiary or as a partial primary beneficiary of a policy, while you keep the right to change the beneficiary clause as owner of the policy.
- Naming Habitat as the contingent successor beneficiary, to receive the death benefits only if a named individual beneficiary precedes you in death.
- Creating a separate trust named to receive death benefits, with trust terms providing first for the financial support of one or more named individuals for a set number of years – or for life – after which the trust terminates and its assets pass to Habitat.
- Naming Habitat as the residual beneficiary of an annuity settlement option, available under some policies.

Leaving the balance of a retirement account is another “will substitute” option for providing a gift to Habitat. In this case, Habitat is simply listed as the primary beneficiary. If a portion of funds should be left to Habitat, with the rest going to family, Habitat can be listed as a secondary beneficiary. Or you might designate a specific amount to be paid to Habitat prior to division to family members.

These are just a few options besides your will that you can use to benefit Habitat for Humanity after your lifetime. Please feel free to contact us at plannedgiving@habitat.org or 800-422-4828, ext. 6750 if you are interested in using your life insurance or retirement plan as a way to help us build more houses in partnership with families in need.

Richard Algra is a development officer with Habitat for Humanity International.

SNAPSHOTS



STEFFAN HACKER

Two hundred students on spring break recently gathered in Miami to celebrate 20 years of Habitat for Humanity’s Collegiate Challenge program. Habitat for Humanity annually sends more than 12,000 students to volunteer in more than 200 locations through its alternative break program for 16 to 25 year olds.