



Student guide to **Collegiate Challenge**



one week can
change a life
forever

*“Do your little bit of good where you are;
it’s those little bits of good put together
that overwhelm the world.”*

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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Dear Collegiate Challenge participant,

Congratulations! You have accepted the Collegiate Challenge! We are thrilled to have you aboard one of the country's largest alternative break programs. As a student, you're privileged with time, energy and resources that others may not have available. Thank you for deciding to spend a week serving others!

This experience will enable you to put your faith into action, to build partnerships with people sharing a common goal, to gain greater awareness of the need for decent and affordable housing and to deepen your commitment to social action.

This student guide has been designed as a tool for you to use before, during and after your Collegiate Challenge break trip. There are a lot of helpful hints regarding fundraising, site logistics and reflections. We hope it will be a valuable tool that you will continue to use, even after you have returned from your experience.

Sincerely,

The Collegiate Challenge team

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Habitat for Humanity

Myths and facts

Myth**Habitat gives houses to poor people.****Fact**

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates decent, affordable houses with the help of homeowner families. Habitat houses are sold to families at no profit and financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.

Myth**Habitat builds houses for minorities.****Fact**

Habitat doesn't build houses **for** anyone. It builds houses **with** people in need of a decent place to live without regard to race, creed or ethnic background.

"I can see the full picture now. I always knew Habitat was a great charitable organization. But, now that I've experienced it for myself I feel that I truly understand how much heart, soul and mind goes into the project. I got to meet the homeowners and what an experience that was!!! I could tell by the glow on their faces that this new house meant everything to them and was going to impact them for the years to come. The joy of getting their sweat-equity papers signed off each day showed their enthusiasm for not only their house, but their life as a whole. I was so proud to say that I helped to make that possible, however small my contribution was. I brought a good thing to someone in need. I truly came home with an experience I will never forget."

—Christina Brantley, University of Science and Art of Oklahoma

Myth

You have to be a Christian to be a Habitat homeowner.

Fact

Habitat was founded as and remains a Christian ministry, but homeowners are chosen without regard to creed. Habitat also welcomes volunteers from all faiths — or no faith — who can actively embrace Habitat's goal of eliminating inadequate housing from the world.

Myth

Former President Jimmy Carter started Habitat for Humanity International.

Fact

Habitat for Humanity International was started in Americus, Georgia, in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller. Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, have been longtime Habitat supporters and volunteers who help bring national and international attention to the organization's house-building work.

Myth

Collegiate Challenge is only for students who have specific skills and a lot of construction experience.

Fact

Habitat's house-building ministry largely depends on the work of unskilled volunteers. Collegiate Challenge gives participants the opportunity to learn construction skills, even if they have never picked up a hammer. Experienced construction supervisors will be at every Collegiate Challenge site teaching the necessary skills to complete tasks.

Myth

Collegiate Challenge is only a spring break trip for college students.

Fact

Started in 1989, Collegiate Challenge is the country's largest alternative break programs offering opportunities for students ages 16 and older throughout the year.

Habitat's mission

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 as a grassroots effort on a community farm in southern Georgia. The Christian housing organization has since grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in more than 1,300 communities throughout the U.S. and in more than 70 countries. Families and individuals in need of a hand up partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves.

Preparing the way for a life-changing trip

Getting ready



Who's who

on your Collegiate Challenge trip

Host affiliate

Your host affiliate is a local grassroots Habitat for Humanity organization which is responsible for providing you with work, securing you a place to live and coordinating interaction between you, construction supervisors and members of the community. There are more than 200 host affiliates hosting Collegiate Challenge students this year!

Student groups

Your student group is responsible for providing the host affiliate with labor for the week, a donation to help procure building materials and volunteer housing, and shared experiences and excitement to bring back home with you.

Construction supervisor

Construction supervisors work with the host affiliate to provide a safe and productive work environment for you while on site.

Mission principle

Focus on shelter by building and renovating decent, affordable houses.

We have chosen...to carry out the belief that safe and affordable housing is a basic human right and a fundamental component of dignity and long-term well-being for every person on earth.



“One of the Collegiate Challenge participants had moved into a Habitat home when he was six. Hearing his family’s story and seeing him fly across the country to work on a Habitat home for another family was both inspiring and touching. To see firsthand what the effect of growing up in a Habitat home can do to a child, and now a young man, was an amazing experience.”

—Becky Terlep, Habitat for Humanity of Orange County



"I can't believe we actually provided a home for someone by just giving one week of our time and very little money."

—Katie Nesdahl,
University of
Minnesota

Paying for your trip

There are many expenses to consider when planning for and while on a Collegiate Challenge trip. Since you already know your destination, your team leader has already paid the \$30 per person program fee that confirms your participation in Collegiate Challenge. This fee covers administrative costs and supplemental accident medical insurance during your trip.

Please discuss your total trip cost with your team leader and the other members of your group. **Keep in mind that this total cost will include the financial contribution, transportation and food** throughout the week.

Financial contribution

The financial contribution that your host affiliate requires will be used to buy building materials and pay for your living accommodations. This is your monetary donation that supports the affiliate in addition to your great labor.

Transportation

Make sure to include transportation in your team's Collegiate Challenge budget. Your group is responsible for traveling to the affiliate and for traveling to the work site each day. This may mean that you will need to rent a van, pay for gas, buy plane tickets, etc.

Food

Each person should expect to provide funds for a week's worth of food. Unless the affiliate indicates otherwise, groups are responsible for food/meal planning, buying, preparation and cleanup. We estimate that \$5 to \$8 per day is sufficient for food costs. When planning a menu with your group, either before the trip or during, keep in mind the special dietary needs of your whole group.

Make sure that you ask your school and local community for donations of food and other things that you may need on the trip. Some businesses will be more apt to contribute items rather than money.



Fundraising

for your Collegiate Challenge trip

So, you have estimated the total cost of your trip and you think that there's no way you can pay for it? It's time to start fundraising. Your group leader will facilitate a meeting where you will be able to discuss fundraising ideas and a timeline so that you can ensure that your trip is paid for before you get there.

Some ideas that have worked in the past are:

Rent-a-Worker (*Penn State University, Pennsylvania*) – Students can hold a “rent-a-worker” day in the local community. For a donation, members of the trip can do household jobs.

Valet Parking (*Converse College, South Carolina*) – Students can provide valet parking at school events for donations to their Collegiate Challenge trip.

Nail Sale (*Floyd E. Kellum High School, Virginia*) – Students can sell nails for 25 to 50 cents apiece, then donate the nails to the host affiliate.

Lego® Houses (*Muhlenburg College, Pennsylvania*) – Legos® were given out to different campus groups and each built a house; the houses were displayed and students voted on the best ones by putting money in a jar in front of each house.

T-Shirt Design Contest (*Linfield College, Oregon*) – Students submitted T-shirt designs to the campus chapter. The winning shirt was printed and sold to raise money.

Brick-by-Brick (*Millsaps College, Mississippi*) – A fundraiser was held selling cardboard bricks at the first home football game. People purchased a cardboard brick, signed their names and contributed the brick to a cardboard replica of a house.

Art Auction (*Middlebury College, Vermont*) – The chapter asked students to donate their art projects at the end of the semester. They provided refreshments and held a silent auction of pottery, photographs and paintings.

Mission principle

Advocate on behalf of those in need of decent shelter.

We commit, as an integral part of our work, to communicating the needs of all people for safe and decent shelter, thereby engaging in deliberate efforts to leverage change within society to eliminate restraints that contribute to poverty and inadequate housing.



Education and advocacy

As you plan your trip, it's important to reflect on the deeper issues of inadequate housing. Work with your group and educate each other about the need for decent homes for all people. Fundraising is a great opportunity to raise awareness about Habitat for Humanity and its mission of eliminating substandard housing. It's great to get others excited about your trip so that they contribute to your fundraising mission monetarily, but it's also important to create fundraisers that incorporate education about substandard housing.

Some education and advocacy ideas include:

Evening for Humanity (University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia) – In the fall, the chapter hosted an “Evening for Humanity” dinner event. The campus chapter president spoke about the chapter’s plans for the year; the executive director for the local affiliate also spoke, as did a homeowner. The event was open to the entire campus and was well attended.

Hammer Day (Duke University, North Carolina) – Students were encouraged to carry their hammers to class in support of Habitat. Students who were taking a Collegiate Challenge trip posted and sold wooden signs to be delivered to the Habitat building site, distributed Habitat brochures and fact sheets containing substandard housing statistics, and used newspapers to educate the campus community about upcoming events and the work of Habitat.

Oxfam America Hunger Banquet (Drury College, Missouri) – The students sponsored “Hunger Day,” which was in conjunction with Hunger and Homelessness Week. Students gave up meals, and the food service group on campus donated the money from those meals to the students for their Collegiate Challenge trip. Students also sponsored a “Oxfam America Hunger Banquet,” through which students experienced the divisions of the world, based on hunger. This event also served as a fundraiser.

Act! Speak! Build! Week (nationwide) – A week of events dedicated to raising awareness about the problem of substandard housing.

For housing statistics that you can use to raise awareness, check out the following websites:

- Habitat for Humanity International: **habitat.org**
- Habitat's Government Relations and Advocacy Office: **habitat.org/gov**
- Center on Budget & Policy Priorities: **cbpp.org**
- Homes for the Homeless: **homesforthehomeless.com**
- National Housing Institute: **nhi.org**
- National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness: **nscanh.org**
- Bread for the World: **bread.org**
- Children's Defense Fund: **childrensdefense.org**
- National Coalition for the Homeless: **nationalhomeless.org**
- National Low Income Housing Coalition: **nlihc.org**
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: **hud.gov**
- Do Something: **dosomething.org**
- The World Bank Group: **worldbank.org**
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: **aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.shtml**
- U.S. Census Bureau: **census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html**
- National Alliance to End Homelessness: **endhomelessness.org**
- Southern Poverty Law Center: **splcenter.org**

Become a Habitat for Humanity advocate online! Visit **habitat.org/gov** to learn about Habitat's advocacy priorities and sign up for email updates.

Details to ensure your experience is awesome and safe

You're on your way

Planning for the trip can be both a busy and exciting time. Organization is key. Prepare a checklist of the essential items you do not want to forget.

What to bring

Below is a list of suggested items to bring. Once you find out more about your host affiliate, add to these lists based on their needs and recommendations.

Basic tools

- Hammer
- Utility knife and extra blades
- Combination or speed square
- 16" or 25" measuring tape
- Work boots/steel-toed shoes
- Nail apron/pouch
- Carpenter's pencil
- Work gloves

Optional tools

- Framing square
- Nail set
- Aviation snips (wire cutters)
- Pry bar and/or cat's paw
- Chalk line and chalk
- Construction stapler
- Staples
- Hand saw

Clothing, etc.

Hat or visor	Bottle for water
Bandanna	Reusable cup
Work pants and shirts	Jacket/rain poncho
Sleepwear	Soap and toiletries
Towels, washcloths	Comfortable shoes
First aid kit	Spending money
Pillow	Camera
Bedding/sleeping bag	Reflection materials
Sunglasses	Journal
Sunblock	Paper/pencils/pen
Prescription medicines	Cards/games/puzzles



Accommodations

Most participants live in housing that includes sleeping quarters, a kitchen area, showers and a community room. Students have stayed in volunteer centers, gymnasiums, churches and camp retreat housing. Living conditions will be simple and may not have all the comforts of home. Talk with your team leader about where you will be staying.

- In what kind of housing are you living?
- Where are the showers located? How many are there?
- Where is the nearest phone?
- What is the number of that phone?

Safety

during nonworking hours

During the nonworking hours, activities in and around your living space should take into consideration the safety of the area. With your group and with the affiliate, discuss the kinds of safety precautions that need to be followed. What is your group's safety policy?



Drug and alcohol policy

Alcohol and drugs are not allowed on the work site. A construction site is inherently dangerous even without the introduction of substances that can impair perceptions. This is a policy that must be upheld for legal reasons and to ensure the safety of all participants.

Please discuss with your group what your policy toward drugs and alcohol will be for the duration of your Collegiate Challenge trip. Consider the ages of students in your group and the possibility of exclusion from certain activities given their location.

Consider these statements during your discussion:

- Drinking is illegal for anyone under the age of 21.
- If your group intends to travel anywhere, only students over 21 can drive a rented vehicle.
- Alcohol is not allowed on the premises of Collegiate Challenge housing at any time.

What types of situations can arise as a result of alcohol on a Collegiate Challenge trip?

Write your group's policy on alcohol here:

Safety on the construction site

Whether you have never been on a construction site before or you were born with a hammer in your hands, construction safety is very important, and Habitat for Humanity International and all Habitat affiliates take it very seriously. There are work rules that must be followed. Students will participate in an orientation the first day of work where specific safety rules will be reviewed, but here are some safety guidelines that will apply to all sites.



Safety tips

- Ask a supervisor when uncertain about how to do a task or how to operate a power tool.
- Think before doing your work or task (this one seems so simple, and yet...).
- Concentrate on your task to eliminate distractions.
- Know where the first-aid kit is located and how to get emergency help.
- Inspect all power tools, hand tools, ladders and scaffolding daily.
- Advise your supervisor immediately of any unsafe condition or hazard.
- Return all tools, ladders, etc. to the proper place at the end of a workday.
- Use any safety equipment that the host affiliate suggests, such as hard hats, safety glasses, dust masks, ear plugs, etc.

Relating to people and opportunities

Community life

"I learned that no matter who you are and no matter who you are working with, if you are all working towards a common goal, magnificent things can happen."

— Carey O'Kelly,
University of
Wisconsin-Superior

Being a community member

While on your Collegiate Challenge trip, you are guests in the community of your host affiliate. You are representing your school and yourself, but you are also representing Habitat for Humanity International and advocating its mission. It is important to be respectful of the space and property of others. Work with your group to define a community living statement that reflects a consensus of how the group agrees to respect each other, your hosts, the site, the space you are living in and the community around you. Decide what rules you want to adhere to while you are living together. Discuss the consequences of breaking these rules as a group.





Shopping list

This image shows a vertical rectangular area filled with evenly spaced horizontal grey lines, resembling a page from a notebook or a document template. The lines are thin and extend across the entire width of the frame. There is no text or other graphical elements present.

Meals in a community

You are probably going to be preparing meals with your group in the place where you are living. Keep in mind, you may be sharing cooking space with others. Perhaps each person will be responsible for a meal, contribute ideas for a meal, or set up or clean up before and after a meal.

Here are some questions you may want to think about:

What are some possible simple meal ideas that you would like to prepare or have prepared? *(Make sure that these ideas take everyone's dietary needs into consideration.)*

Write down which day(s) you are responsible for some aspect of food preparation or cleanup and what your responsibilities include.

“The students were enthusiastic and eager learners, willing to take on any task they were asked to. I and the rest of the staff were impressed by their positive attitude and willing spirit.”

—Steve Greene,
*Habitat for Humanity
of Northern Virginia*

Devotions

It is a Habitat tradition to gather at the beginning of the construction day for devotions before reviewing work tasks. This provides a context for understanding that home building is not just about pounding nails, but also community and relationship building. This is often also a time to review work and crew assignments and talk about the work goals for the day. This time can also provide a look at the Christian principles of Habitat.

Reflections

Reflections are often held at the end of the day and offer a chance to reflect on the day’s events, on larger issues, and on your own life. Reflections can be led by one or many people. Reflections and devotions that are personal, open, honest and shared by the entire group make the activity more meaningful for everyone involved.

Write down some ideas for devotions or reflections here:

Write down the day that you are assigned a devotion or reflection to prepare:





The Habitat homeowner

During your Collegiate Challenge experience, you may have the opportunity to meet and work alongside the future Habitat homeowners of the house you are building. Take time to get to know the homeowners. As you build together, you will discover that you are constructing more than a house. You are helping to provide a strong foundation for this family to grow and realize their dream.

Mission principle

We pledge to promote dignity through full partnership with Habitat homeowners and future homeowners.

We put into practice the belief that healthy self-regard — and the benefits that derive from that sense of worth — is promoted not simply by living in an adequate house, but by fully contributing to the process of acquiring that house and by the opportunity to help others also acquire adequate shelter.

“You could be in 10,000 different places this week, but you chose to come to Rockbridge County. You will never know how much this means to me and my family.”

— Jane Wells, Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity homeowner

Building on the memories of your Habitat experience

After the trip

You don't have to wait until next year to lead your team on another adventure. Accept the challenge... again! Don't forget that Collegiate Challenge is a year-round program. Opportunities to be involved with Habitat are varied, from local to a host of worldwide locations.

Just because your Collegiate Challenge experience is over does not mean that your involvement with Habitat needs to end or that the energy and enthusiasm that you have felt during Collegiate Challenge has to fade. Here are some ideas to make your transition back home go more smoothly.

Keeping in touch

Before saying goodbye, write down the contact information of people whom you have gotten to know during your week in the new community. Friendships often develop during a house-building experience as people work together toward a shared vision and meaningful goal. After hanging up your carpenter's belt and returning home, you will have some time for post-trip reflection. Connecting with your new friends will help you keep your Collegiate Challenge experience close during post-trip reflection time and beyond.

Staying involved

Bring back that motivation and spirit to your local Habitat affiliate and keep your enthusiasm alive. Habitat affiliates always welcome volunteers to help with ongoing and upcoming projects in their communities. With your unique talents and enthusiasm, you may be just the volunteer they are looking for!





Also be sure to check out post-graduation and summer opportunities with Habitat for Humanity. Visit Habitat's website at habitat.org and click on the link "Volunteer" for a variety of available Habitat opportunities. In addition to long-term and temporary volunteer positions, there are staff openings both at Habitat's international headquarters in Americus, Georgia, and with its U.S. affiliates. Some Habitat affiliates also offer internship programs. Contact your local affiliate to find out more, or search for internship opportunities at **habitat.org**.

"I have realized that even if a neighborhood is poor, it doesn't mean that the people that live there are poor — well at least not poor in spirit, heart and love."

—Emily Hooks,
North Carolina State
University

Your participation in and support of Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge program is a vital contribution to the mission of eliminating inadequate housing from the face of the earth.

Thank you.

**Contact Collegiate
Challenge**

(800) HABITAT
Colchal@habitat.org
habitat.org

Important to remember

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

every one

can make a difference



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