

This program allows students in grades 9–12 to uncover information about the social, economic, geographic, and political causes surrounding poverty housing and homelessness. As part of the focus of these materials, students must take this information and apply it to real-life, higher-order problem solving scenarios, in which they make recommendations for change, advocate for the rights and needs of others, make informed decisions as members of a global community, and analyze the special geographic and cultural needs of people around the world.

### **About Habitat for Humanity's Mission**

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races, and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need.

Habitat for Humanity welcomes and encourages the participation of all people — regardless of their belief systems — who identify with the mission and want to partner with the organization. Habitat does not discriminate on the basis of faith, or on any other basis, in the selection of partner families to live in Habitat homes. Habitat's aim is to build simple, decent, affordable homes in partnership with people who need them.

Habitat for Humanity encourages its partners not to conceal the organization's Christian identity to gain supporters. By doing this, we run the risk of offending people later when they learn the truth on their own and feel deceived.

### **About Habitat's Partner Families**

It is important for students to understand that Habitat partner families are key players in the home-building process, and are chosen based on these three criteria: 1) their level of need; 2) their willingness to become partners in the program; and 3) their ability to repay the no-profit, no-interest loan. Habitat families are typical families: they work hard to invest hundreds of hours of their own labor — called "sweat equity" — into building their Habitat house and the houses of others, they pay back a mortgage, and they create a loving and nurturing environment for their children.

### Sensitivity

Teachers using these lessons should keep in mind that they may have students who are homeless, living in poverty housing, or who may be members of Habitat families. Being sensitive to these issues when conducting these activities is crucial. Teachers may want to consider discussing with the students that fellow classmates may be experiencing housing conditions similar to what they're reading and learning about, and how we all need to be respectful and sensitive to those situations.

### Teaching Units

Included in this curriculum package are three standalone teaching units for grades 9–12. Each unit focuses on a different area of social studies and contains the following important information: unit overview, standards addressed, learning objectives, teacher preparation time, class time, materials needed, activity sheet(s), lesson steps, assessment, extension activities, an abridged unit activity, a modified unit for classes with limited Internet access, and resources.

Descriptions of each unit follow:

### Unit 1: Economics, Government, and Housing

#### *Description*

Designed to align with the curriculum in a high school government or economics class, Unit 1 helps students make deeper connections between how economic and government decisions and policies affect individuals. Students must act as civic-minded problem solvers by analyzing a problem and making thoughtful and realistic recommendations for change.

#### *Learning Objectives*

By completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Recognize some general statistics surrounding the main factors of poverty and homelessness.
- Analyze and evaluate causes and possible solutions to issues surrounding poverty housing and homelessness, with particular emphasis on economics.
- Create and justify proposed policy regarding poverty housing and/or homelessness.

### Unit 2: Current Issues Around Poverty Housing and Homelessness

#### *Description*

In this unit, students analyze specific initiatives that different communities have taken to address the issues surrounding poverty housing and homelessness. After an analysis modeled with the help of a

handout, students must analyze a new initiative from the perspectives of various stakeholders concerned with alleviating the current crisis around these issues.

### ***Learning Objectives***

By completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Investigate and form opinions about current initiatives to address poverty housing and/or homelessness.
- Compare and contrast the benefits and drawbacks of different policies created to address poverty housing and/or homelessness.
- Analyze and ask questions about policy from different perspectives.

### **Unit 3: Geographic Influences on Homebuilding**

#### ***Description***

In order to better understand the challenges of building in various locations around the world, students gather information about the geography and local building materials used in a particular country (or countries). After studying Habitat houses outside the United States, students must use this information to design a Habitat house appropriate to a local setting in another country.

#### ***Learning Objectives***

By completing this unit, students should be able to:

- Gather relevant geographic information about the country (or countries) under study.
- Analyze geographic information in relation to human needs and economic limitations.
- Synthesize geographic information to create a visual and written product.

### **What Now?**

#### **Getting Involved in Habitat for Humanity**

To extend these lessons into community action — and to address the passion and energy that these lessons may spark in your students — the following strategies can be used:

#### **Volunteer locally**

- To volunteer with HFH, contact your local Habitat for Humanity affiliate at [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org). Once there, click on “find your local affiliate.” You can also ask them if they participate in the Youth United program.

#### **Start a campus chapter**

- Campus chapters are student-run, student-led organizations that perform four main functions: build-

ing houses in partnership with HFH affiliates and homeowners, fund raising for the work of Habitat, educating the school and community about Habitat, and advocating to raise awareness about the poverty housing crisis. If your school would like to start a HFH campus chapter, please e-mail the Campus Chapters office at [campuschapters@hfhi.org](mailto:campuschapters@hfhi.org), or call 1-800-HABITAT, Ext. 2220.

### **Build for a week with Habitat for Humanity**

- Participate in a week-long Habitat build during a school break through the Collegiate Challenge program. For more information, visit the Collegiate Challenge Web site at <http://www.habitat.org/ccyp/cc.html>

### **Sponsor a house**

- Sponsor a Habitat for Humanity house with your high school. For more information, visit <http://partnernet.habitat.org/intradoc/groups/ccyp/documents/webpagesupportfiles/pnetdoc005149.html>

### **Visit the Global Village & Discovery Center**

- Bring learning to life with a field trip to Habitat for Humanity's Global Village & Discovery Center. Students can explore Habitat's international work at this 6-acre village in Americus, Georgia. After a walk through an urban poverty neighborhood, students can imagine living in 15 Habitat homes from different countries around the world. Tours, activities, and crafts can be tailored to students' studies. For more information, go to the GV&DC Web site at [www.habitat.org/gvdc](http://www.habitat.org/gvdc) or schedule a visit with the group tour coordinator by calling 866-924-5823, Ext. 5815.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Web Sites**

Habitat for Humanity's Web site provides extensive information about the organization's mission, its success stories, and opportunities for involvement — both as a volunteer and as a potential partner family. Visit the site at <http://www.habitat.org>

For a description of a HFH affiliate program, go to <http://www.volunteersolutions.org/volunteerway/org/216639.html>

For a description of a ReStore program, which touches on issues of affordable housing as well as pragmatic use of construction materials, go to <http://www.shfh.org/restore/>

The National Low Income Housing Coalition works to help solve the United States' affordable housing crisis. Visit its Web site for key legislative updates and resources at <http://www.nlihc.org/>

Visit the National Coalition for the Homeless Web site for background information and statistics on homelessness, as well as opportunities for advocacy at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Web site provides information on public housing and equips potential homeowners with the knowledge they need to purchase and maintain a home. Visit their Web site at <http://www.hud.gov/>

### **Videos**

*Building Hope, Lives, and Dreams* shows how Habitat helps families worldwide step out of poverty and into decent, affordable homes. To order, go to the HFH Gift Shop at [http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product\\_list.asp?SKW=VIDEO&](http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product_list.asp?SKW=VIDEO&) or call 1-800-422-5914. (item number 1069, 1069DVD)

*Two Families* tells the stories of two Habitat for Humanity families — one from Costa Rica and one from Boston, Massachusetts — who, with the help of Habitat and its corps of volunteers, overcame their housing problems to join the ranks of proud homeowners. To order, go to the HFH Gift Shop at [http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product\\_list.asp?SKW=VIDEO&](http://www.habitatgiftshop.com/product_list.asp?SKW=VIDEO&) or call 1-800-422-5914. (item number 35-1068.)

### **Questions? Comments?**

Direct any questions or comments about the curriculum to Habitat for Humanity International's Youth Programs Coordinator, via e-mail at [yp@hfhi.org](mailto:yp@hfhi.org) or by phone at 1-800-HABITAT, Ext. 2422.