

The Forum

SERVING HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MEMBERS THROUGHOUT JAPAN

July 2006



WELCOME TO THE HABITAT JAPAN JULY NEWSLETTER

With the rainy season seemingly behind us, July heralds the beginning of summer, with higher temperatures and debilitating humidity. Fortunately, summertime also witnesses the arrival of a variety of beautiful flowers and delicious fruits, such as 'biwa' (びわ). This fruit has been cultivated in Japan for more than 1,000 years and takes its name from a resemblance to the shape of an ancient musical instrument, the biwa (枇杷) lute. Typically 3 or 4 cm long, this small, pale tangerine-colored, pear-shaped fruit offers a wonderfully delicate taste, yet with a distinctive, pleasant tartness. So, until next time, enjoy!

JIMMY CARTER WORK PROJECT COMES TO INDIA IN FALL 2006

Jimmy Carter's involvement with Habitat for Humanity began in 1984 when the former president led a work group to New York City to help renovate a six-story building with 19 families in need of decent, affordable shelter. That experience planted the seed, and the Jimmy Carter Work Project has been an internationally recognized event of HFHI ever since.

This fall, Jimmy Carter will lead homeowners and volunteers in the rural Lonavala area of western India. Building simple, decent, affordable houses that will bring an end to poverty for hard-working Indian families. **Habitat for Humanity Japan would like to invite you to be a part of this historical event!**



PROJECT DATE:	29th October - 3rd November (5 day build)*
BUILDING SITE:	A village 2.5 hrs outside Mumbai, near Lonavla
PARTICIPANTS:	2,001 volunteers (20 years old or older)
WORK PLAN:	To construct 101 houses
SCHEDULE:	29th October - JCWP 2006 Opening ceremony 30th October - 3rd November: Blitz build on-site 3rd November - House dedication & Closing ceremony
PARTICIPATION FEE:	¥220,000 - ¥235,000 [†]

* Date of departure/arrival in Japan is subject to flight schedule.
† Fees cover airfare, food, lodging & local ground transportation.

ASIA PACIFIC UPDATE: TOP STORIES FROM HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL

US\$2 MILLION CITIGROUP GRANT
Habitat for Humanity has received a US\$2 million grant from the Citigroup Foundation to support the 2006 Jimmy Carter Work Project in India and to help build homes across the US. Through an on-going partnership with Habitat, more than 5,000 Citigroup employees from around the world will volunteer to build a total of 36 homes in India & the US.

INDONESIAN EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE



Habitat and its partners have started a community learning program in Yogyakarta following the May earthquake. More than 25 homepartners attended a two-day workshop

on earthquake-resistant construction technology. Homepartners also shared their views on home designs. Habitat for Humanity Indonesia will be building core transitional houses with 1,000 families within a year. Read more on the Habitat Asia-Pacific website.

PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE



After completing its first 100-shelter project, Habitat in Pakistan has started distributing additional shelters to survivors of the October 2005 earthquake. Habitat aims to get 1,300-plus survivors to move to more adequate shelters before the monsoon season begins.

The Habitat Resource Center in Balakot is also providing sawmill services to help villagers cut new wooden beams or reshape damaged ones for use in building new homes.

DEDICATION OF 100 HOUSES IN TAMIL NADU



Habitat recently dedicated 100 houses in Tamil Nadu state, India. The project in Madurai district was a partnership with the Meenakshi Mission Hospital and Research Center. Tamil Nadu governor Surjit Singh Barnala presented keys to home partners in a symbolic ceremony. He also laid the foundation stone for a 1,000-house project by Habitat and microfinance institution Mahasemam.

BEYOND MY EXPECTATIONS

Bret Saalwaechter, Hokkaido

Most people know Habitat for Humanity as the organization that brings people together to build decent homes in the communities around the world that need them the most. In April and May of 2006, I was personally able to witness this 'hand up' in Kampung Jemukan Ulu, Malaysia. What I experienced had a special dimension for me as a teacher and indeed took me "beyond my expectations," as Along, our Malaysian guide would often say.

After countless hours of digging trenches, laying bricks, and nailing the house frame, we had an amazing opportunity to hold a foreign language play day with the neighborhood children who had watched us with curious eyes during the week. Though it began with about fifteen kids singing 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees, & Toes', soon nearly fifty swelled in the street and we began teaching numbers, colors, and animals. Most of us Habitat volunteers were also English teachers in Japan, and so thousands of miles from our homes and many thousand more from our native countries, we found ourselves in a classroom on the streets of a rural village with the most eager students in the world.



Throughout our week of construction, the kids always came to greet us, and each day spoke with steadily improving English that was learned only hours before. The kids taught us words in Bahasa Maylay and often music and laughter formed a common language, in which we could play and learn about each other. For me, the faces of those children are the face of Habitat for Humanity. Their smiles personify the massive effect that just eight volunteers can have. We didn't solve global hunger or eradicate poverty, but we were able to help give a family and a neighborhood full of kids the tools with which to make better lives for themselves. That is, after all, what the Habitat mission is all about.

A special thank you to Bret for allowing the use of his stunning photographs within these articles.

MALAYSIA GLOBAL VILLAGE: 'AN AMAZING 10 DAYS'

Katie Finnegan, Hokkaido



This year over Golden Week, I led a team of eight others to Malaysia to work in Kampung Jemukan Ulu, just outside of Kuching city on the island of Borneo. Our group members consisted of assistant language teachers from Hokkaido, Iwate, Kumamoto, Matsumoto & Osaka, and another member who worked for a clothing company in Tokyo. We all met for the first time at the airport after having spent the better part of three or four months communicating via email. One of the tasks I assigned to my team members before our departure was to fill out a short biography. One question asked about their motivations for going on the trip. What linked everyone's answers together was the desire to do something more than go on a recreational trip. Of course, like all travelers, they wanted to experience a different part of the world. But moreover, they wanted to dig deeper, not only in the sense of the housing construction, but in understanding the way of life and acting on and discovering more about issues they were concerned about.



Personally my experience in Japan has made me realize the value of getting to know a place through the people I meet. It is hard to imagine life in my town without associating it with the teachers I work with, the students I teach, and the adult English class I meet with each week. It's not only places or sites that form memories, but the people that are there around me.



One member of the group was particularly interested in the work Habitat for Humanity had done in Malaysia and the various issues facing poorer members of the community around Kuching. He often spoke with the site manager and other Habitat board members (themselves volunteers), learning of other policies to raise awareness, allowing other individuals to contribute in the future.

Another member was equally special, with her happy-go-lucky personality helping to keep up team spirits in the midst of humid weather and tiring work. On our last day, she was instrumental in organizing nearly three hours of games for the friendly village children.



Coming from a privileged society, the obvious reasons for participating in this project, at least for me, are to see and experience a different part of the world where the hierarchy of needs are much more basic and tenuous. To do something about this - even if it's making the smallest of small difference - and to learn and apply the lessons learned from this experience back home in my own community work. In short, I have worked on many volunteer projects, including a Habitat for Humanity project in the East Bay region of Northern California, and I would like to continue to use these wonderful experiences to shape my character and to kick into high-gear my resolve to "give back".

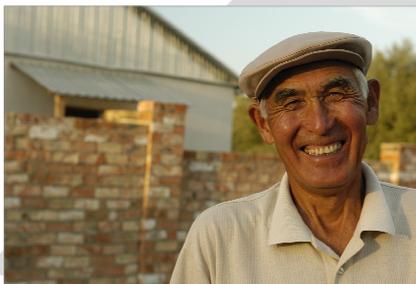


POST-SOVIET KYRGYZSTAN: A HOUSING DEFICIT



In Kyrgyzstan, the people live in harmony with the mountains and the plains of the central Asia. However in the urban areas, many Kyrgyz suffer from inadequate houses built in the 1950's & 1960's. During the communist era, the government promised all citizens a safe place to live, yet even today there are many who are still waiting. Some individuals stood up & many more followed, building their own homes in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Kyrgyzstan.

TEAM(S) NEEDED FOR SPRING/SUMMER 2007 BUILD IN BISHKEK, KYRGYSTAN
Habitat for Humanity are offering members a unique opportunity to visit this fascinating country and experience true *eco-tourism*.



ECO-TOURISM FOR CONSCIENCIOUS TRAVELLERS
Habitat houses are constructed using natural resources, just like those traditionally built by the Kyrgyz. In September 2004 we started an innovative construction project utilizing wild cane reed, providing a thermal insulation system that combines with floor heating techniques improving energy efficiency.

Furthermore, Habitat Kyrgyzstan has taken over an incomplete government apartment complex, allowing volunteers a variety of opportunities to finish construction, plaster walls and even decorate the interior.

REST & RECREATION ON KYRGYZSTAN GV
After participating in the reconstruction projects, Habitat volunteers are encouraged to enjoy a diverse range of recreational activities, including horse back riding, traditional camping in a movable 'yurt' house, swimming in the crystal clear waters of Ishk Kul Lake (the pearl of the Central Asia) and other unique experiences, before sightseeing and shopping in the bustling capital city Bishkek.



HABITAT'S PRESENCE IN KYRGYZSTAN
Habitat is the only organization in the country that provides no-interest, long-term mortgages for homes. Traditionally, a family must pay for their home up front in one lump sum, making it impossible for most people to own their home. So far 52 families have been housed in renovated apartments, while a further 21 families have moved into completed homes.

KYRGYZSTAN GV 2006: HOW TO APPLY
You can deposit and reserve the work site starting from September 1st. Start gathering a few friends, then contact Habitat for Humanity Japan at the address shown on the back page. There on, Habitat coordinators will guide you through the ride of your lifetime!

KYRGYZSTAN BACKGROUND INFORMATION



During Soviet times, Kyrgyzstan was one of the poorest Soviet republics. After independence and the economic upheavals that followed in the 1990s, the Kyrgyz people became even poorer. In Kyrgyzstan today, according to the National Statistics Committee, 71 percent of the population has an income below the poverty line. Poverty is more intense in rural areas where many people cannot manage to meet food needs, sanitation is worse and disease more common.

The housing deficit in Kyrgyzstan is enormous. In the post-Soviet period, Kyrgyzstan experienced a major population shift as the rural population moved into the cities looking for a better life. Overcrowding is a major problem in Bishkek and other cities with multiple families sharing one apartment or house. Many families must share living space of 12 sq.m. or less. Rural areas also suffer from deteriorated and severely inadequate housing conditions. It is not unusual for three generations of the same family to be crowded in a single room with no bathroom or running water.

KYRGYZSTAN DATA: FACTS & FIGURES

AREA:	198,999 sq km
POPULATION:	5,081,429
CAPITAL:	Bishkek (pop. 589,000)
PRESIDENT:	Kurmanbek Bakiev
RELIGION:	Muslim 75% Russian Orthodox 20% other 5%
LIFE EXP.:	67.84 years
GDP P/CAP.:	\$1,600

TOUCH UNIQUE CULTURES IN CENTRAL ASIA & HISTORY IN EUROPE WITH HABITAT.
See more of Habitat's innovative activities in Central Asia and Europe at:

<http://www.habitat.org/eca>

Following the Kyrgyzstan teams, GV trips to Rumania and Hungary will be available from Habitat for Humanity Japan in the near future!

INVITATION TO 'YOUTH PROGRAM' WITH THE JAPANESE YOUTH



The Youth Program for educating and empowering young people under the age of 25 is now supported by official, student-run Habitat organizations called *Campus Chapters* which operate with three primary roles; building houses, raising awareness, and fund raising. Activities to support the establishment of the *Campus Chapters*, the holding of 'productive meetings' and similar events are currently being conducted throughout Japan. The purpose of the Youth Program is to channel the positive creativity, energy and aspirations of such young supporters into Habitat's various activities.

For this purpose, we are seeking individuals who are interested in launching unique collaborations, such as fundraising/charity events etc. with the Japanese youth, and general participation within Habitat activities. If you are interested in pursuing such collaborations, contact us today for further information on getting involved.

LET'S ENJOY NGO DISCUSSIONS: 'LUNCH WITH HABITAT'

Are you curious about the day-to-day running of NGOs here in Japan? Perhaps you would like to learn more about Habitat's activities throughout the world? The Habitat Japan team are always delighted to welcome interested visitors to our friendly office in Higashi Nakano, offering everyone the opportunity to volunteer with an NGO in a casual, relaxed environment.



At 'Lunch with Habitat', we welcome guests for a few hours during lunchtime to watch activity videos, browse photos reports of previous Habitat participants, and listen to tales and experiences from our diverse Habitat for Humanity Japan staff members.

Contact us today at info@HabitatJP.org and drop by!

PAKISTAN TRACTOR APPEAL: REQUEST FOR DONATIONS

In the Balakot area of Manshera province, one of the most quake-affected areas of Pakistan, Habitat for Humanity Japan salvages wood from collapsed buildings to produce timber using sawmill machines. Our aim is to help the region's reconstruction efforts, supporting the future lives of local people. Tractors allow sawmill equipment to reach individuals living in inaccessible mountainous areas, and are therefore vital to the rebuilding process of the community. We kindly encourage HFHJ members to support this appeal through cash donations, as we attempt to raise the ¥900,000 required for each tractor.



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Thank you for your continued generosity.

PHILIPPINES POWER TOOLS: REQUEST FOR DONATIONS

Reliable power tools are essential to ensuring successful GV build projects, with expensive Japanese branded tools being the most durable. In order to maximize funds for housing construction, HFH Philippines have requested assistance. Please donate to support their efforts.

DONATION SUPPORT: HFHJ BANK TRANSFER

POSTAL SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Account No.:	00100-2-278431
Name:	(特活) HFH ジャパン

BANK ACCOUNT

Transfer To:	三井住友銀行 中野坂上支店 Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Nakanosakaue
Account No.:	普通 4180738
Name:	トクヒ ハビタット フォー ヒューマニティ ジャパン



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY JAPAN seeks to eliminate poverty housing worldwide through participatory, community led programs. In 2006 we mobilized nearly 1,000,000 volunteers in over 100 countries. For further information on our exciting destinations and life changing opportunities, contact us today!

Habitat for Humanity Japan

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