Affiliate Guide to Church Relations
Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International, based in Americus, Ga., is an ecumenical Christian ministry that welcomes to its work all people dedicated to the cause of eliminating poverty housing. Since 1976, Habitat has built more than 200,000 houses in nearly 100 countries, providing simple, decent and affordable shelter for more than 1 million people.
# Table of Contents

**Habitat for Humanity and the Church**  
- Why Building Partnerships with Churches Is Essential  
- The Faith Community Is a Changing Landscape  
- Church Relations or Faith Relations  
- Think Partnership  
- How Churches Can Benefit Habitat for Humanity  
- How Habitat for Humanity Can Benefit Churches  
- Translate Smart Business/Relationship Practices  

**Structuring for Success**  
- Putting the Right People in the Right Places  
- The Staff Church Relations Manager  
- The Church Relations Team Where Everyone Has the Same Function  
- Creating a Church Relations Team by Matching Gifts with Needs  
- The Church Relations Team Organized for a Specific Project  
- The Focus of the Church Relations Team  
- Job Description for a Church Relations Team Leader  
- Job Description for a Church Relations Team Member  
- Establishing an Efficient Database  
- Assessing Your Messaging  
- What Do You Want to Say?  
- What Messaging Tools Should You Develop?  

**Becoming Familiar with Church Relations on PartnerNet**  

**Assessing Where You Are**  
- Affiliate Assessment Tool  
- Taking Action on Improvements  

**Looking at Where You Want to Be**  
- Reaching Out to More Churches  
- Small Churches  
- Evangelicals  
- Nondenominational Churches  
- Mega Churches
# Table of Contents

Interfaith Partnerships .......................................................... 19

Getting From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be ................. 23
  Deepening Relationships with Existing Churches .......................... 23
  Seeking New Church Partnerships ........................................... 23
  Learning About an Unfamiliar Church ....................................... 24
  Putting Together a Profile for Each Church ................................ 24
  Developing a Specific Church Relations Plan ............................... 24

Making Contact with Churches .................................................. 27
  Special Concerns in Large Communities .................................... 28
  Reaching Many Churches at One Event ..................................... 28
  Making the First Visit to a Church .......................................... 29

Partnership Proposals .............................................................. 31
  How Can You Be in Ministry Together? ...................................... 31
  Local Building Opportunities ................................................ 31
  Global House-building Opportunities ...................................... 33
  Building on the Excitement of a Global Trip ............................... 34
  Community Development Opportunities ................................... 34

Special Events and Campaigns for Church Partners ......................... 35
  Building on Faith .............................................................. 35
  The International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat ...... 36
  Apostles Build Projects ...................................................... 37
  Building on the Dream ....................................................... 37

Making Presentations ............................................................... 39
  How to Respond to a No ...................................................... 40
  After a Church Says Yes ...................................................... 40
  Letter of Intent ................................................................. 41
  Thanking and Encouraging Church Partners ............................... 41
  After Construction Is Complete ............................................. 42

Housing Advocacy Opportunities ............................................... 43

Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Focus ........................................ 45

Appendix ..................................................................................... 47
  Appendix A: Affiliate Assessment Tool .................................... 47
  Appendix B: Affiliate Assessment Tool—Sample .......................... 51
  Appendix C: Locating Churches in Associations/Networks ............ 55
  Appendix D: Church Profile Tool ............................................ 58

Church Relations Materials ......................................................... 66
Habitat for Humanity and the Church

Why Building Partnerships with Churches Is Essential

Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry answering the call of the gospel to respond to our neighbors in need. What better partners could we have than local churches? Actively pursuing and nurturing partnerships with churches helps us fulfill our mission of demonstrating the love and teachings of Jesus Christ. Approaching churches to be in ministry together is a powerful way to build partnerships.

Many churches have birthed Habitat affiliates in their communities, and countless churches house Habitat offices. The challenge of the present is to build on the legacy of Habitat’s work over the past generation. Find where the spirit of Christ is alive in churches and you will find partners in your work.

The Faith Community Is a Changing Landscape

Take a look around. How many new churches are in your community that didn’t exist 15 years ago? Look inside. Who attends the more traditional church services in your area? How do the congregations compare to those of 15 years ago?

If you are to develop and nurture partnerships with churches in your community, you have to stay informed. Churches of all sizes and descriptions can be powerful Habitat for Humanity partners. Like people, churches have different personalities. The key is to get to know key leaders in as many congregations as possible. Find out about the passions of each church and how you might match the ministry goals of various congregations. Determine how together you can serve Christ by serving others.

Church Relations or Faith Relations

Many Habitat for Humanity groups that seek the support of churches and other faith groups have spent prayerful hours determining what they will call their teams. Should they be Church Relations or Faith Relations?

The use of the name Church Relations is not meant to be exclusive. In fact, the HFHI board of directors is looking for ways that Habitat for Humanity can be a Christian ministry that is lovingly inclusive as we work among Christians and persons of other faiths around the world.

Our very identity as a Christian ministry calls us to model the life of Jesus Christ who welcomed all people. Habitat for Humanity invites people of all faiths and no faith to help us with the enormous task of ending poverty housing.
When asking the question about using Church Relations or Faith Relations on a local level, the context is very important. Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry—not an interfaith organization. If a Habitat group is seeking to use the name Faith Relations to move away from its Christian foundation and to become interfaith, there is a problem. However, if a Habitat group seeks to be more welcoming of other faiths while maintaining its Christian identity, leaders have a strong case for using the name Faith Relations. Some affiliate leaders say they prefer the term Faith Relations because it helps them be more inclusive of Jewish and Muslim supporters and all people of faith.

Each Habitat group has the authority to choose its name. The important issue is that we remain faithful and obedient to the mandates of Jesus to love our neighbor and to care for the least of these.

**Think Partnership**

Nurturing relationships is essential in developing church partnerships and, as in any successful partnership, both parties must realize benefits.

**How Churches Can Benefit Habitat for Humanity**

Establishing strong relationships with churches can strengthen your affiliate and ultimately help you serve more families in your community who need a simple, decent home in which to live. In addition to supporting Habitat with funds and labor, churches can help your affiliate:

- build a prayer network.
- establish a vision for transforming lives.
- maintain your focus in living out the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- select building sites, target communities for construction and build relationships within those communities.
- strengthen your family selection and partnering efforts.
- supply your board and committees with “fired up” members.
- educate the community about the need for simple, decent, healthy housing.
- sanction your work and establish credibility in the community.

Every affiliate is empowered when the community of faith prays for Habitat and when churches join Habitat as partners in discipleship and service.

**How Habitat for Humanity Can Benefit Churches**

Our ministry offers a unique opportunity for people to experience their faith in new and exciting ways. Participating in a Habitat project can:

- help people see the spirit of God at work outside the four walls of the church.
- help build the church. Habitat for Humanity is a widely recognized and respected Christian organization. A Habitat project can be just the spark that gets people excited about working in Christian community.
- help a church fulfill its mission to minister to persons who are in need.
- attract new members and bring energy into a congregation.
- enable individuals to experience spiritual growth.
- be a means for identifying and developing leaders within the church.

A Houston church promoted a Habitat project “because it fulfills our mission to worship and serve Jesus Christ through our time and talents.” Working with Habitat for Humanity helped that church achieve its ministry goals. That is partnership! The key is to match goals with each church and to help churches see how,
working together, you can be powerful servants of Jesus Christ in your community and in the world.

Pray about your work. As you begin each meeting, each presentation, each moment of pondering what God can unleash in your community, seek God’s guidance.

Translate Smart Business/Relationship Practices
Thinking about smart business models and personal relationships can help guide you as you think about specific steps in approaching churches. The very practices that make many people successful in business can translate to successful church partnerships. Entering into the mindset of church partnerships as relationships also can inform you about how to proceed.

- Introduce yourself and invite pastors, church leaders to coffee/breakfast/dinner.
- Attend events at churches and make yourself known.
- Send thank-you notes for church support—particularly if you are new to the affiliate.
- Plan regular thank-you/recognition events for church supporters.
- Send newsletters to churches. Include information about homeowners from previous builds, new projects, celebrations, etc.
- Attend worship services and learn about the personalities of local churches.
- Visit Web sites and pick up brochures.
- Determine how Habitat for Humanity might be an asset to local church ministries—think partnership!
Habitat for Humanity is a servant of the church that provides a concrete opportunity for people to put faith into action.
Structuring for Success

Putting the Right People in the Right Places

One of the first tasks in establishing a Church Relations program is to determine who is going to be in charge and who is going to help. Someone needs to be accountable for recruiting and nurturing church support. All those responsible for Church Relations should be in prayer for the work of Habitat worldwide and should be familiar with Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles (see page 66).

Some larger affiliates hire staff members whose specific job is to manage Church Relations. They may be supported by a few hand-picked volunteers or a formal Church Relations team.

Some affiliates set up a Church Relations team that is organized around the idea that every group member has roughly the same function, and similar assignments are divided among group members.

Other groups prefer to establish teams that match specific functions to the gifts of individuals (technical types maintain the databases, nurturers come up with ways to thank churches and keep in touch with church liaisons, etc.).

Some affiliates toss out the whole idea of long-term Church Relations teams and prefer to operate with project groups, such as an Apostles Build team.

Let’s take a look at each of these possibilities, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is finding a system that helps your group build relationships with churches. If you do well the work of building relationships and nurturing partnerships, churches will be excited about joining you in ministry.

The Staff Church Relations Manager

Affiliates that hire a staff person to be in charge of Church Relations must realize that while a staff member can put systems into place and do a lot of day-to-day work to develop partnerships with churches, the support of many other people is necessary to open doors and create opportunities at numerous churches in the community.

Typical duties for a staff Church Relations manager might include:

- Speaking at churches and special events.
- Building awareness of Habitat for Humanity as a Christian ministry and how Habitat can help individual churches achieve their mission goals.
- Maintaining or being familiar with and helping to keep updated an efficient database of volunteers, donors, church liaisons and the current status of projects/conversations with each church or potential church partner.
- Responding to requests for information from partners and the public.
- Preparing and distributing a newsletter/other communications to churches.
- Conducting research on churches and developing a profile on each one.
- Representing Habitat at special events and meetings.
- Planning and conducting recognition events and sending regular thank-yous to churches.
- Coordinating special projects and organizing local events such as the International Day of Prayer and Action, Building on Faith, etc.

Often affiliates that have a staff person responsible for Church Relations also rely upon a Church Relations committee or team or at least upon an informal group of supporters to visit churches and nurture partnerships.

**The Church Relations Team Where Everyone Has the Same Function**

Using this approach, the primary role of the Church Relations team is to identify contacts in various churches and to provide “door openers” into as many congregations as possible. Therefore it is essential that the team be balanced. For example, make sure you have Protestant and Catholic members and include leaders from nondenominational churches. Make sure the team reflects the racial and ethnic makeup of the community, include affluent and less affluent members and recruit suburban and urban representatives. If you limit the committee to a particular constituency, you limit access to the entire community and reduce potential support.

Ideal Church Relations team members should be well connected in the faith community and must have a passion for presenting Habitat. They must have good organizational skills and lots of patience. Working with churches can be a long process, but the rewards are great. The Church Relations team leader and team members should be active participants in a church. This gives them credibility.

The Church Relations team leader should have leadership experience and should understand the exciting things that can happen when a church becomes a Habitat for Humanity partner. (See job description on page 8.) He or she is responsible for:
- forming a Church Relations team and training the members.
- organizing the process of recruiting and nurturing church partners.
- serving as an encourager.

Team members should look for people who can open doors at various churches. These door openers are invaluable in guiding Church Relations team members through the protocol of individual churches. They can:
- introduce team members to the correct people.
- explain the processes for making decisions in the church.
- explain terminology of denominations and local churches.
- offer suggestions about ways to approach various churches.

**Creating a Church Relations Team by Matching Gifts with Needs**

Look again at the list of possible responsibilities for a Church Relations staff member.
- Speak at churches and special events.
- Build awareness of Habitat for Humanity as a Christian ministry and how Habitat can help individual churches achieve their mission goals.
- Maintain or be familiar with and help update an efficient database of volunteers, donors, church liaisons and the current status of projects/conversations with each church or potential church partner.
- Respond to requests for information from partners and the public.
- Prepare and distribute a newsletter/other communications to churches.
- Conduct research on churches and develop a profile on each one.
- Represent Habitat at special events and meetings.
• Plan and conduct recognition events and send regular thank-yous to churches.
• Coordinate special projects and organize local events such as the International Day of Prayer and Action, Building on Faith, etc.

If you divided those tasks among several volunteers, who might manage your database, for example? That person may or may not be the right person to make presentations to church groups.

Who is a master event planner and will do a great job at organizing a recognition event? Is that person the best candidate for keeping your Web page up-to-date and answering e-mail?

Who in your Habitat family will commit to be in prayer for every step of your work?

If you develop a Church Relations team by allowing people to work out of their gifts and passions, you have the potential for great enthusiasm and success. When people are excited about and feel confident in what they do, they give energy to the task. It is often easier to recruit people for their gifts rather than to find people to serve on one more committee.

This approach does come with some specific administrative needs. Someone has to be in charge and has to seek out people with various gifts to do each task. In some ways, the recruiting for this type of team takes more organizing because the job descriptions are not “one size fits all.” On the other hand, when you ask people to do what they love to do, they are more likely to say yes and to be effective in their work.

The Church Relations Team Organized for a Specific Project

Some individuals, like churches, are attracted to the idea of a project with a definite beginning and ending. Some affiliates put together teams of people to organize a specific project, such as an Apostles Build, where 12 churches come together to fund and build a Habitat house. See page 37 for more information.

A new team may be assembled for the next project. A word of caution, however. Someone must maintain continuity and keep good records for the affiliate. Church Relations is an ongoing effort that requires someone to continually nurture relationships.

The Focus of the Church Relations Team

No matter what the configuration, the primary task of the Church Relations team is to build long-lasting relationships with churches.
Job Description for a Church Relations Team Leader

Responsibilities
The Church Relations team leader is responsible to the affiliate board of directors and is expected to:

- form a Church Relations team and lead the team in fulfilling its responsibilities.
- train team members to make effective presentations.
- serve as an encourager—a cheerleader—for team members.
- develop or be familiar with a system of accountability and documentation. He or she must be able to determine who contacted whom, and with what response.
- call and chair meetings for the Church Relations team and keep the board of directors and necessary committees updated.
- stay in contact with HFHI's Church Relations department to obtain promotional and how-to materials and to learn about denominational/church endorsements and sponsorships.

Qualifications
An effective Church Relations team leader has:

- a commitment to the ministry of Habitat for Humanity and the church.
- previous leadership experience supporting Habitat in his or her congregation or has been a leader and organizer of other church outreach activities.
- a strong understanding of the exciting things that can happen when a church becomes a Habitat partner.
- the desire to share the Habitat story with others.

Job Description for a Church Relations Team Member
(Where All Members Have the Same Function)

Responsibilities
A Church Relations team member is responsible for:

- approaching individuals about involving their churches in Habitat's work.
- suggesting partnership possibilities that seem appropriate for the ministry goals of various churches.
- supporting church leaders with promotional materials, making presentations to churches, answering questions and offering encouragement to church leaders.

Qualifications
Church Relations team members should have:

- the desire to lead congregations into a partnership with Habitat.
- previous experience supporting Habitat through their congregations (or experience with other outreach ministries of the congregation).
- patience—recruiting churches can take a long time.
- willingness to make presentations for Habitat and the skills to speak in public.

Suggested membership
Homeowners, chairs of church mission committees, retired clergy

All team members should be familiar with the information in Habitat for Humanity's Christian Principles (see page 66).
Establishing an Efficient Database

Another important consideration when you are establishing a successful structure is to set up a good database where team members can keep track of volunteers and perhaps even donors. Consider these tips in setting up or revising your database:

- When creating the waiver for volunteers on the work site, be sure to ask for the name of the church where volunteers attend.
- Distribute information cards at fund-raisers and community awareness events.
- When you are gathering information for any reason, ask for church affiliation. Also ask if volunteers would be willing to serve on the Church Relations team.

Work with the volunteer coordinator and the construction supervisor to make sure that all the information gathered is input into the database. Check the data frequently to see where volunteers go to church. Look for trends. Note churches where you need to introduce yourself because you already have interested members attending events or volunteering on the work site.

Assessing Your Messaging

Read through all the brochures, recent newsletters, mailings and so forth put out by your affiliate. Also go through your Web site if you have one. Try to read with the eyes of a newcomer.

- What messages are you receiving?
- If you were a church leader and had been approached to partner with Habitat, would the messages sent out by your affiliate indicate that you are a Christian ministry?
- Are you consistent in your messaging?

What Do You Want to Say?

First of all, how do you describe your affiliate? Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry, not an inter-faith organization or a Christian-based organization. Habitat for Humanity is a Christian organization. Your
board of directors should take the time and be very intentional about how you will describe your affiliate in all your communications.

**Are you speaking the language of the church?** When you communicate with churches, it is essential that you speak the language of faith. For example, note the difference in these two statements:

- The interaction of volunteers, donors and partner families enhances the spirit of community.
- The Bible emphasizes God’s special concern for the poor and calls us to share and to be responsible for the well-being of ourselves and others.

1. **Write it down**

What statement most communicates what you want to say to churches?

---

**Are you thinking partnership?** Many affiliates report that their only communication with churches is an annual solicitation letter. Imagine, in this sense, that your church partners are your parents and the only time you contact them is for tuition. That is not much of a relationship, is it? However, if you develop and nurture partnerships, asking for support at the appropriate time is much easier.

**What Messaging Tools Should You Develop?**

Create a brief newsletter for church partners in which you focus on good news. Tell about current projects, partner family successes, answered prayers, etc. Also include a brief meditation, new prayer requests, thoughts for new projects and other information that you think is important. Keep churches informed long after the dedication service and make them feel like they are part of your community of faith.

- Send cards/gifts to staff members of partner churches. Again—think relationship.
- Many affiliates send e-mail updates to churches to let them know of job openings, current news, etc.
- All church partners should be on the mailing list for the affiliate newsletter.
Becoming Familiar with Church Relations on PartnerNet

HFHI’s Church Relations department has an entire set of pages on PartnerNet created exclusively to support affiliates in their work with churches.

- A copy of this manual can be accessed on the site.
- Church partnership certificates are available.
- Church Relations News, our quarterly newsletter, can be viewed there.

Many other resources that can help you are available on PartnerNet. Log on to PartnerNet at http://partnernet.habitat.org. If you have never signed up to use PartnerNet before, you will need to register, but that is a short process. Once you register and return to the home page, look under “Featured PartnerNet Resources” and click on “Church Relations.” Take some time to browse around and see what is there.
ASSESSING WHERE YOU ARE • AFFILIATE GUIDE TO CHURCH RELATIONS
Assessing Where You Are

Before you begin to make plans about moving forward, it is a good idea to assess where you are and where you have been. If you are fortunate enough to be with an affiliate that has good records and long-term relationships with churches, take time to familiarize yourself with existing church partners. Review the contacts at each church and learn all you can about each congregation.

If you are just starting or restarting your Church Relations program, take a look in old files as well. See if you find the names of any churches that have supported the affiliate at any level. Make notes and start creating profiles (see page 58) for any church supporters.

Affiliate Assessment Tool

The assessment tool (Appendix A) can also help you identify areas where you may need to do some work to strengthen church partnerships. Take a moment to answer the questions on the assessment.

Church Relations staff members will be happy to talk with you about your assessment and will make some recommendations, but you can also do some evaluating yourself. Take a look at the hypothetical assessment in Appendix B. This is what we would glean from the assessment of the fictional Southfield HFH:

1. **Staffing**

   Staffing is always a critical issue for the affiliate. Southfield is fortunate enough to have a full-time Church Relations director and a committee of five outstanding volunteers. Jane Johnson, the Church Relations director, has a good background in nonprofit organizations and attends a church that supports Habitat. The only caution we would mention here is that her experience and exposures are to a relatively small organization (Girl Scouts) and small mainline church. This isn’t bad; however, it is important that Jane be a student of churches other than mainline denominations and that she learn about many of the new, larger churches in her area.

2. **Committee Structure**

   We are going to show this as an area that has a real opportunity for improvement. First of all, there is no written Church Relations plan to define the group’s actions and desired outcomes. (See page 24.) Getting a written plan in place should be a top priority. Secondly, the committee may need some energizing. The group includes only six participants who meet quarterly. Our suggestion for increasing momentum would be to switch to regular monthly meetings, with a couple of months off a year. Enlarge the committee by a couple of energetic folks as well.
3. **Current Church Partnerships**

   This is another area that has a real opportunity for improvement. Six churches have built between two to four houses per year for the past five years. First of all, we are grateful for those outstanding six churches. God bless their open hearts and generosity. However, Southfield is not going to eliminate poverty housing in its area by just working with those six churches. There are over 240 churches in the Southfield community. Many new churches are attracting families like magnets. They are also appealing to many of the folks from the six partner churches. It is essential that Jane puts together a plan for ongoing affirmation and thanks for the six core churches and also that the affiliate expands its base of partner churches.

4. **Communication**

   It is difficult to evaluate communication without seeing and reading some of the key communication pieces the affiliate uses for Church Relations. However, you want to look at three key factors: (a) the regularity of communication pieces; (b) the strategic messages included in the material; and (c) the design quality of the pieces.

5. **Systems**

   This area has room for improvement and is commonly overlooked in Church Relations. In the case of Southfield HFH it appears there are no important systems in place to keep data, track information and recover vital statistics. For instance, there is no means for tracking the church affiliation of board members, volunteers or donors. This information can be absolutely critical to making a contact with a new church.

6. **Expanding Church Partnerships**

   Southfield HFH has not taken a great deal of initiative in expanding new church partnerships. In the past year they have only introduced the affiliate to one new church. This is not a good thing. Furthermore, if you look at the pattern of church-built houses over the past five years, there is very little movement.

**Taking Action on Improvements**

   The most important thing about completing the assessment is to determine two to three action items and improvements that need to be made based on the assessment. Determine what they are, write them down and share them with trusted colleagues. Use them as a means to reach your goal to move to the next level of attracting and nurturing church support.
Looking at Where You Want to Be

When you evaluated your church partnerships, what did you find? Formal and informal research has taught us that many affiliates consider their strongest church partners to be somewhat larger, upper-middle-class churches in mainline denominations. Often, these congregations are primarily white. It is in these churches where affiliate leaders have had the most connections to create partnerships. Is this true of your affiliate?

The advantage of networking with people we know to recruit church partners is that it allows us to work within our comfort zones, and it gives us some measure of confidence that we will succeed. The drawback is that we tend to limit ourselves to being in ministry with a small group of churches that often are very similar.

However, information provided by affiliates tells us that we still have a lot of work to do even in these congregations. Many affiliates tell us they have never made an initial contact with some of the Lutheran, Episcopal, United Methodist and other churches often identified as mainline.
Reaching Out to More Churches

- Small Churches
- Evangelicals
- Nondenominational Churches
- Mega Churches
- Interfaith Partnerships

The good news for affiliates that wish to be in ministry with more diverse churches is that we might have more success than we ever imagined. A 2003 poll done by the Barna Research Group, for example, showed that 51 percent of the pastors polled who were aware of Habitat for Humanity said they believed their churches were “very” or “somewhat likely” to work with Habitat.

Small Churches
Many small churches that have limited resources don’t feel that they can contribute to a Habitat project. They are barely keeping their own doors open, and people often say they just don’t see how they can help build a house. Again, focus on opportunities. Meet with church leaders. Listen to what they think their strengths and passions are. Then pray about the opportunities that you have to be in ministry together.

Small churches may be able to provide the labor for a project that is funded by another group. They may be able to take a special offering three or four months in the future. Find out if there are skilled workers in the congregation who could be invaluable on the work site. Ask smaller churches to help with food or ask them to fund a specific portion of the house (such as the doors). Consider an Apostles Build project (see page 37). Often when churches are presented with a reachable goal, they find a way to succeed.

Never, however, underestimate small churches. Congregations of less than a hundred people have funded and built Habitat houses. One new church in Texas built a Habitat home before they built their own worship facility. They wanted to be known as a servant church.

Evangelicals
Reports indicate that evangelical congregations are the fastest-growing churches in the United States. Many Habitat for Humanity affiliates are realizing the amazing potential of partnering with these churches. What do we mean by evangelical churches?

An evangelical is someone who (a) believes the Bible is the word of God and is an authority in the life of the church and a Christian; (b) believes that humanity is lost and needs salvation through Jesus Christ; and (c) believes that we have a responsibility to share the gospel with the world.

- Evangelical churches are found throughout the United States and the world. There are many evangelical churches within mainline denominations.
- Evangelical churches should not be confused with fundamentalist churches. There are some evangelical churches that embrace fundamentalist beliefs; however, the vast majority of evangelical churches are not fundamentalist.
- Evangelicals are diverse in their theology and politics. Some evangelicals are more conservative than others. Some are more inclined towards conservative political views. However, there is a large percentage that could be described as centrist or moderate. It would be a mistake to confuse the current cultural labeling of “evangelicals” because of a perceived political position with the important historical and theological foundation that defines an evangelical.
Good Suggestions

Practical Suggestions for Approaching Nondenominational and Evangelical Churches

1. Make prayer a priority throughout the process.
2. Realize that there are many similarities between mainline churches and nondenominational and mega churches.
3. Develop a thoughtful process based on the target audience. Don’t simply utilize the same processes you’ve always done unless you are confident they will work.
4. Be sure to clearly communicate that Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry. You may want to share a copy of Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles.
5. Tell stories of transformed lives! Include stories of how the lives of volunteers and homeowners have been changed through involvement with Habitat.
6. Emphasize partnership. It is important to approach these churches with the idea of partnering with them to transform lives and communities—not to simply get a donation for a house. We need to position Habitat to serve the mission and goals of the church—not vice versa. In the end, this will benefit everyone involved. The long-term benefit to an affiliate that builds a partnership will far exceed soliciting a financial donation.
7. Be flexible. Because of the strong programming focus and calendar, you may find it difficult to plug churches into an already existing event (Building on Faith, Day of Prayer, etc.). The ideal approach would be to explore how you could help develop a partnership that would work for them.
8. Lead with common areas. Be careful not to emphasize or lead with those areas that might represent a theological or practical area of disagreement. Don’t change who you are to get them involved, but simply use good judgment on areas that might create tension. Take the right tools. There are a number of new resources being designed to help you make a better connection with these churches. For more information contact the Church Relations department.
9. The glitz is in the blitz! Some larger churches may feel a high level of enthusiasm for a blitz build. If your current affiliate structure isn’t geared towards providing such an opportunity, consider what it would take to get the information and training needed.
10. Special events—Ask a committed evangelical leader/pastor to invite 8–10 other pastors/key leaders to a dinner or golf event or sponsor a dinner or dessert event in a supporter’s home and invite key people you already know. Use this as a springboard for developing relationships and getting a church involved.
11. Nurture the relationship over time. If there has been no real contact between Habitat for Humanity and a particular local church, it is unlikely that the church is going to sign on the dotted line and write a check at the first visit. It is important to understand the necessity of nurturing the relationship over time.
Nondenominational Churches

Nondenominational churches have no formal connection with a denominational structure. This does not mean that they function independently of any other churches. Many of the fastest growing nondenominational churches are actively involved in associations that influence their philosophy and programming. For example, there is a wide range of mission and curriculum organizations that provide support in specialized areas.

- Nondenominational pastors tend to be entrepreneurial in their approach to ministry and programming. Because many of these churches tend to be newer churches, their leadership will often be from a younger generation than the leadership of many small to midsize mainline churches.
- Some nondenominational churches may emphasize certain spiritual gifts, particular worship styles, ethnic diversity, racial reconciliation, etc. Understanding these factors will influence how you approach the church.
- Nondenominational churches can sometimes be perceived by outsiders as not interested in social/compassion ministries and not concerned about things outside their own church. Generally speaking, this is absolutely an incorrect perception. These churches are heavily involved in all sorts of mission and ministry opportunities.

Mega Churches

The technical definition of a mega church is one with over 1,000 people in attendance on a Sunday; however, in many church growth studies, that number is increasing to 1,500–2,000. This is not membership. These are bodies in chairs (not many pews to be found).

- They tend to be either more contemporary or have an emerging contemporary component.
- Many are like shopping malls. There is something for everyone.
- They place a high value on excellence: printed pieces, programming, communication and presentation.
- They are highly pragmatic. They focus on what works!
- They have a “Mecca church” mindset, meaning they look to a model church for inspiration and modeling—Willow Creek Church in the Chicago area, Saddleback Church and Calvary Chapel in California, North Point Community Church in Atlanta, Cincinnati Vineyard, Lakewood Church, etc.
- They are highly complex and institutional.
• Many of them are frequently involved in significant building programs.
• They can be inwardly focused, to some extent, because they ask the questions “What’s in it for us?” or “What’s in it for our people?” It’s important to realize that this is not always a negative thing. It is simply a matter of being passionate about impacting lives as a church, and they focus heavily on this issue.
• Many have a very strong emphasis on personal spiritual transformation. There is a growing focus on practicing spiritual disciplines to experience spiritual transformation.
• Many have a strong “seeker” component. A “seeker” is somebody who doesn’t attend church but is open or seeking spiritual reality in his or her life. This means the church will design services and special events entirely for spiritual seekers. The event is designed for the church family to bring friends who are seekers.
• They are often program driven churches. They have many strong and well conceived segment ministries (children, students, singles, etc.) and a clear programming agenda.
• They are often marketing marvels. Some of that marketing is internal to help people attending worship services get more involved in the life of the church. Some of the marketing is external to help people not attending a church to consider visiting a special event or seeker oriented service. Many of these churches have as many as 1,000 guests a week! It’s not unusual at all to see more than 150 visitors in the smaller mega churches. They develop an entire assimilation/marketing strategy to the people who are visiting.
• They are into changing lives. They are highly relational.
• They tend to hold strongly to a culture and language. They can hold so tightly that they are resistant to those who don’t embrace their culture or share their language.
• They love a good cause (like Habitat) and can find the money for what they believe in and believe God is in.

Interfaith Partnerships

In many communities, when people of different faiths build a Habitat for Humanity house together, tension gives way to laughter and individuals find new respect for one another.

Coming together for the common goal of building a house with a neighbor in need has proven to be a successful way for bringing healing to divided communities and creating a sense of unity.

Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry, and we believe that building houses is a practical expression of Christian concern. It is not the goal of Habitat supporters, however, to force anyone to change his or her faith. One does not have to be a Christian to work with Habitat or to be a Habitat homeowner.

Part of our Christian heritage is to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ who extended love and compassion to all. Habitat invites people of all faiths and no faith to join our efforts to eliminate poverty housing.

Building Relationships

Upon learning that Habitat welcomes people of all faiths, one supporter, who is Jewish, said, “It makes me quite happy to know Habitat is a responsible organization that is open to partnerships with people and organizations of all faiths, while still proudly holding to its own faith. It is unfortunate, but I think that kind of acceptance and responsibility is too often lacking on all sides in today’s society.”

Sometimes our desires to be politically correct and our fears of offending others get in the way of being authentic. At a clergy breakfast attended by a Jewish rabbi, a pastor stood up and berated the speaker for talking about Jesus. He was sure the rabbi had been offended. After the breakfast, the rabbi
approached the speaker and said not only was he not offended, but said he was glad that the speaker spoke so passionately about his faith.

A passionate response from people of many faiths can have a dramatic and uniting impact in local communities. Volunteers from As-Siddiq Mosque in Burton, Mich., helped build a Habitat house in an effort to help others during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The concepts of mitzvah—doing good deeds in the community—and tikkun olam—repairing the world to make it a better place—first led members of Congregation B’nai Israel in Bridgeport, Conn., to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. The things that unite us can be so much more powerful than that which divides us. Individuals and faith groups can put aside their differences to transform lives and neighborhoods through projects such as the ones described on page 21.
Multi-faith Builds
Habitat for Humanity affiliates in many communities have brought Christians, Jews and Muslims together for projects called “The House of Abraham,” which recognizes the common heritage of all three faiths.

Affiliate leaders at Genesee County HFH in Michigan intentionally scheduled small groups from various faiths to work together every day. “We wanted to create a mix and let people get to know one another. We wanted to show that God’s love is for every human being on the planet,” said Joseph Richard Preville, development director of the affiliate.

The “Holy Toledo Build” in Ohio also brought together Christians, Jews and Muslims to build a home, but another result was the creation of new and powerful friendships. Asif Bhatti, a member of the Islamic Center in Toledo and chair of the project, said the house was a symbolic gesture that broke down many barriers. He said people were tired of sitting around tables talking about what they might do. It was time to act, instead of just talk.

During a similar project in Winston-Salem, N.C., organizers said their build allowed participants an opportunity for honest dialogue and newfound respect for one another.

A Spirit of Humility and Cooperation
As with any partnership, the key to developing interfaith projects is building relationships. Approaching new partners from a spirit of humility and cooperation sets the stage for success.

It is important to acknowledge the opportunity for each person to live out his or her faith. Inherent to many people of faith is the call to serve the poor, to make the world a better place and to be in service to others. Understanding that building a Habitat home is a clear expression of faith for people of many beliefs is a wonderful way to include diverse faith partners in a building project.

Establishing a strong steering committee that is careful in its planning and attention to detail is essential for an interfaith build. Members who are open and eager to learn about one another can create an environment that is respectful and comfortable for everyone. Those who trust our coming together around our common beliefs often witness how a Habitat work site can become a place of peace and reconciliation. And many individuals who are willing to step outside of their circles have made new and lasting friends.
As Habitat for Humanity affiliates expand their relationships and partner with more churches, they increase their ability to serve more families.
Getting From Where You Are to Where You Want to Be

The key to enhancing your church partnerships and ultimately to helping more families get into houses is a two-fold process:

• Deepening relationships with existing churches
• Developing relationships with new churches

Deepening Relationships with Existing Churches

If you enjoy support from churches, think about how you could enhance those relationships. How could you make those partnerships stronger?

• Have an appreciation event to thank church partners.
• Send a note of appreciation for faithful support.
• Invite church leaders to breakfast—just to say thank you.
• Learn birthdays of staff members and send cards/gifts.
• Send photos/updates about significant events in the lives of homeowners.

As in your personal or business relationships, do the small things that it takes to nurture a relationship. Then when the time is right, have conversations with church leaders about ways that you can do even more to be in ministry together in your community and around the world. Listen to what each church is seeking to do. What are their ministry goals? Then see how working with Habitat might match those goals. Urge faithful church partners to help you reach other churches and to be a catalyst in your faith community.

Seeking New Church Partnerships

Think about possible new church partners. Where do you start? If you live in a large community, the telephone directory may have hundreds of listings, and the Saturday newspaper may have a whole page of information about churches. Search engines such as the following can also help you locate churches and religious organizations:

• http://www.webcrawler.com/info.wbcrawler/yellow-pages/
• http://www.metacrawler.com/
• http://yp.yahoo.com/

Note: You will need to go to the “change location” feature on the upper-right-hand side and insert your area code/city name in order to search your designated area.

On this one, be prepared to get more information than you need but also to find a church or religious organization you may have otherwise missed.

You can also find churches that are members of the Willow Creek Association and other dynamic and influential groups of rapidly growing churches. See Appendix C for information on identifying churches in these networks and suggestions for making connections with member churches.

**Learning About an Unfamiliar Church**

When you determine which churches to concentrate on, learn all you can about them. Ideally, you can talk to people who attend. They can tell you about ministries that are important and can tell you whom you should talk to. If you don't have personal contacts in the churches:

- check out a Web site.
- attend a service and pick up every piece of literature you can find.
- ask if anyone knows someone who attends that church.
- talk to other pastors.
- contact HFHI's Church Relations department. If the church is part of a larger network, we may have some insights for you.
- try to find out exactly whom you should talk to at each church. In some congregations, the missions chair in a men's or women's group would be ideal. In a mega church, your point of entry would probably be a church administrator. In a small rural church, you may need to contact the pastor on Sunday morning because he or she may have another job.

**Putting Together a Profile for Each Church**

Whether you are collecting new information for unfamiliar churches or formatting data from old records, put together a profile from each church. You decide how to set it up, but include information such as:

- Name of church
- Contact person
- Address and phone
- Previous builds with Habitat
- Other support
- First contact made by whom? on what date? to whom? response?
- Visits made? by whom? when?
- What are the passions of this church? What are their ministry goals?
- Next steps? by whom? when?

See Appendix D for a suggested profile tool.

**Developing a Specific Church Relations Plan**

As you develop strategies for creating deeper partnerships with existing church partners and for reaching new churches, it is a good idea to put a written plan into place. This plan should not focus on “how many houses we will build.” That is the outcome we strive for, but it is not the immediate focus.
Remember, the key to effective Church Relations is to build relationships. So if that is the goal, what are the six or eight specific things you will do in the next six to 18 months to enhance your relationships with churches? For example:

- Make six contacts with new churches.
- Invite to lunch key leaders of 12 current partners to say thank you.
- Develop an electronic newsletter for churches and identify a recipient at each church.
- Seek opportunities to make presentations at eight churches (new churches and existing partners) to tell the Habitat story.
- Attend 12 worship services or events at area churches.

Write it down

Take the time to write down your Church Relations plan.
Making Contact with Churches

Setting Up a Schedule for Phone Calls and Informal Visits

Invite pastors to breakfast or lunch and just talk. Learn about what is going on in their congregations and talk about the community. Don’t have a “Habitat ask” on the agenda. Make these visits purely a means of relationship building. Create a calendar and schedule the calls and visits. Make them an intentional part of your plan.

Establishing a Follow-up System

Developing relationships with churches is often a gradual process that requires regular attention. If you create a plan, such as setting aside the first working day of each month to review the status of each church you have contacted and to make phone calls, you will have a built-in discipline of keeping yourself updated and staying in touch with partners. If you don’t put such a system in place, this essential process will likely get put off as something you “must get around to.”

When Churches Come to You

No matter what your plan, you have to be prepared for the call from an excited church member. Whether the church wants to donate a sink or fund and build an entire house, the person who answers the phone must be knowledgeable, polite and skilled in responding in positive ways. Rather than presenting obstacles, find ways to let an enthusiastic church help you. Turning down callers or putting them off can be disastrous. Putting their excitement to work can be awesome. Find a way to say yes.

- Suggest that church members get a taste for Habitat by sending volunteers to work on a current project. Then find a place for them to have a good experience.
• Explain the need for funding. Often churches don’t realize that they need to raise the money for a house. Help them figure out ways they can raise all or part of the money. Suggest partnerships.

• If land acquisition is a problem, invite church members to serve on the site selection committee. If you don’t have a list of potential homeowners, ask for help on the family selection committee. Be honest. Explain that you need more people to get certain tasks done before you can build a house.

Special Concerns in Large Communities

Affiliates that serve large areas with many churches may also choose to work through denominational bodies such as districts, synods, associations and so forth. These groups can help involve many congregations within the community. Some evangelical associations, such as the Willow Creek Association, may have member churches in your area as well. Their endorsement can be a significant influence on local congregations.

HFHI’s Church Relations department can offer suggestions for working with these groups and can help you make contact with leaders who can endorse Habitat’s work and encourage participation of local churches.

Take time to understand the workings and the protocol of these bodies and realize that working through these groups may involve other affiliates. A Lutheran synod, for example, may serve churches in several counties.

Reaching Many Churches at One Event

Many affiliates have been successful at reaching new churches by speaking at ministerial association meetings, informal gatherings of pastors or by organizing their own clergy breakfasts. Regardless of the setting, the idea is to tell the general Habitat message to a large group of churches at one time.

Ask local pastors to help you get a time to speak at a local ministerial association meeting or at informal gatherings. Remember, Habitat for Humanity is a ministry. Ask if you can become a member of the ministerial association and thus become an active voice in how to be in ministry in your community.

If you plan a clergy breakfast, make sure that you limit it to one hour, that you have good food, that you send written invitations and that you make several phone reminders. It will likely take a great deal of preparation to assure a good turnout, but if you work hard at inviting pastors and if you get pastors from existing partner churches to work with you to invite their friends, you will likely have good attendance. Reach out to churches you have never had relationships with before. Make sure you have a good program, that you get names and contact information for each attendee and that you do not let the pastors leave without a challenge. For example, if you are in need of land, invite every church to pray for you that you will be able to find land for your next house.

These large events are efficient at reaching many pastors at one time, but you must follow up with personal calls and visits. There is no substitute for personal contact.

Churches can support your ministry in a variety of ways: by sponsoring houses, by supplying volunteers, by hosting a prayer tent and by passing out food to neighbors as a way of building community.
Making the First Visit to a Church

After you have made strategic selections of churches that you are going to visit and have learned as much as you can about their ministries, you are ready to make contact.

Ask God to give you a sense of respect for each church, particularly those with which you are not familiar. Consider these two important equations for building partnerships with churches:

- Information + Understanding = Appreciation
- Appreciation + Respect = Partnership

Once you have set an appointment with the right person in a new church, keep these points in mind:

1. **Listen...listen...listen. Ask good questions.**
   
   During that first meeting, work hard to get your hosts to talk. Listen to what they say about their church. Ask good questions. Find out what is important to them.

   *Be crystal clear that Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry.*

   It is crucial that the people who visit churches are able to clearly and concisely convey that we are a Christian ministry and that church partnerships are a vital part of our history and our future. Practice the exact words you will use. For more information, read *Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles* (see page 66).

   *Make your conversation about the church and its mission...not about Habitat.*

   Today’s churches are mission driven and program saturated. Many outside organizations are competing for the church’s attention and finances. We have the opportunity to position our ministry as helping the church accomplish its mission. Notice the distinct differences in approach:

   - This is who we are and what we are doing. Come join what we do.
   - This is who we are and what we are doing. How might we partner with you to accomplish your mission?

2. **Remember the power of the story!**
   
   Many churches love to tell stories of life change. The Bible is full of accounts of transformation. Make your presentation personal and tell how involvement in Habitat has impacted your life. Tell stories of homeowners and volunteers. Churches are more interested in impacting lives than building houses. Offer churches the opportunity to change the life of a family forever!

3. **Share the benefits of partnership.**
   
   Tell how other churches have benefited through their partnerships with Habitat. Explain how Habitat partnerships help churches put action behind their faith, experience spiritual growth, build community, see God at work outside the walls of the church, respond to the biblical command to serve the poor and so much more.

4. **Remember it’s a God thing!**
   
   This dynamic movement called Habitat started because of a movement of God. It has grown because God is moving and God is blessing. Pray about the meeting in advance and ask a couple of faithful people to pray for the meeting when it takes place.

   During your conversation, you may sense an excitement about a particular partnership possibility and you may know exactly what direction to proceed with this church. Agree to pray about the possibilities and set a time to return with a formal proposal or to talk further with others in the church as needed.

   On the other hand, you may not know what the best partnership approach may be after just one meeting. Take time to pray about the things you have heard. Ask God to bless the staff, the families, the mission and the work of the church. Then come back with a proposal for ways you can be in ministry together.
COME JOIN THE FUN!

HARBOR HABITAT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

JUNE 20TH thru JUNE 24TH

WHAT: HARBOR HABITAT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

WHEN: MONDAY THRU FRIDAY JUNE 20TH THRU 24TH
10:00AM TO 3:00PM

WHERE: BOBO BRAZIL CENTER (HULL PARK) 4072 CASS STREET

WHO: AGES K THRU 5TH GRADE (AT HULL PARK)
AGES 6TH THRU 12TH GRADE (INSIDE BOBO BRAZIL CENTER)

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR EACH CHILD / YOUTH ATTENDING VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AND YOUTH TRAINING

EXTRA PROGRAM HOURS: 3:00-4:30PM (INSIDE BOBO BRAZIL BUILDING)
Partnership Proposals

Take seriously the pledge to pray about your partnership. Even if you approached church leaders with ideas of a specific plan, be faithful to your intent to listen to their ministry goals and to your commitment to pray.

Send an immediate hand-written note in which you thank the church leaders for meeting with you. Note that you will be in touch very soon to set up a time for looking at a proposal that you will develop after you have had time to pray and reflect on your conversation.

How Can You Be in Ministry Together?

Often we refer to our partners as sponsors. Churches and other groups who provide the money and labor to build a house are the sponsors of that house. However, if our mindset is more partnership than sponsorship, we are guided by an entirely different attitude. Ask every church to be in prayer for the ministry of Habitat for Humanity locally and around the world.

If you have already discussed a specific direction and you still feel that is a good course after praying about it, describe that partnership proposal in writing. If you did not talk about a specific partnership option in your face-to-face meeting, create a proposal that includes several options, based on your conversation. Choose from options such as these:

Local Building Opportunities

Transform a Neighborhood—Some churches have gotten so excited about the idea of changing lives that they want to transform entire neighborhoods. As the Rev. Mike Fechner, the leader of a group of Dallas area churches said, “We want to claim this land for the Lord.” Their two-house build in 2005 has become a multi-house project.

Make a Multi-year Commitment—A number of churches have made a commitment to build one or more houses a year as part of Habitat for Humanity’s effort to eliminate poverty housing one family at a time.

Fund and Build (Sponsor) a House—Ask the church to raise the money and provide the labor to build a house. This requires the affiliate to determine a sponsorship price for churches. This price may not be the actual cost of construction. You can reduce the church sponsorship price by crediting in-kind contributions and by applying house payments and major gifts to the cost of church-sponsored houses. The tithe should also be added to the sponsorship price. (See page 33.)

Often larger churches are approached about funding and building a house on their own, but don’t limit what God can do. Even small churches have sponsored a home.
Join a Coalition—Churches that do not feel they can raise the funds for an entire house may wish to share the expenses with other congregations. One of the most successful models for coalitions in the United States in recent years has been an Apostles Build project where 12 churches come together in service, like the original 12 apostles of Jesus, to share the funding and labor needs to build a Habitat house. See ordering information for the Apostles Build project manual on page 66. Note that when many congregations are involved, the project can be more complex to organize.

Churches may wish to partner with congregations in their neighborhood or with other congregations of their denomination. You might also suggest creating partnerships among churches of varying traditions that are not located near one another.

Larger congregations or churches that have more resources and more experience with Habitat can be great mentors in these projects. They can serve as an anchor church and invite smaller churches to join them in the coalition.

Partial Sponsorship—Smaller congregations that want to support a project but that cannot sponsor or co-sponsor an entire house can partner with other congregations to provide the funding and/or labor for a specific part of construction. These congregations may, for example, provide all the funding and labor for a roof, or they may purchase all the supplies and paint the interior of the house. If you provide this option, create a written description of the costs and amount of labor required for various construction tasks.

Some churches develop their own specialized crews. For example, they may provide the volunteers to frame each house the affiliate builds. Be creative in developing funding and building plans that are attractive to churches in your area.
Introductory Options—If you are looking for ways to give churches a positive taste of Habitat, consider asking them to:

- provide prayer support.
- supply volunteers for construction crews and committees.
- provide space for Habitat meetings or for the affiliate office.
- prepare and serve meals for construction workers.
- make a financial contribution that may or may not be tied to a specific project.
- offer devotions at work sites.

Global House-building Opportunities
Habitat for Humanity offers opportunities to partner with families locally and around the world.

Tithing—From the beginning, HFHI built in a means for supporting building projects in developing countries. Each Habitat affiliate is asked to set aside 10 percent of the money raised locally to support a Habitat project in another part of the world.

Sponsoring a Church Relations Staff Member—Churches, denominations or other groups can sponsor a Church Relations coordinator in another country.

Global Village Teams—Churches that wish to organize a single mission trip can work through HFHI’s Global Village department to plan a house-building project.

Creating Individual Partnerships—Churches such as the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Christ the King in Lexington, Ky., invested in the success of local communities. In addition to helping build Habitat houses and rebuilding a church in Ghana, Christ the King helped members of the community to establish a bread co-op that enabled member families to generate income.

Global Church Partnership—The goal of this program is to create long-lasting relationships among church partners who work together in holistic ministry. In addition to building Habitat houses, partners minister to local communities in other ways according to God’s call.

Partner churches commit to building a number of houses over a period of time, generally three to five years. Building often takes place during special events—often during Holy Week or during Building on Faith, HFHI’s annual celebration of church partnerships.

Houses are often blitz built. Finishing the houses when the majority of volunteers are still present adds excitement to a project. The publicity and visibility of blitz builds increases awareness in the host country of the need for decent shelter and of the Habitat program.
Visiting church partners contribute roughly 90 percent of the funds for the building project and send short-term mission teams to assist with the building. Host church partners contribute approximately 10 percent of the funds as well as volunteers to work alongside partner families and international volunteers.

Church partners pray for one another, worship together and share dreams, struggles and joys as they discern God’s call to serve in other ways. For more information, see http://www.habitat.org/cr/gcp_default.html.

Building on the Excitement of a Global Trip
Churches that get their first taste of Habitat by going on a short-term building trip often come home very excited about building houses and being in ministry with families and communities.

When local Habitat affiliates stay in touch with those groups and build relationships with the sending churches, often those congregations become local Habitat partners as well. It may take time. The church may choose to plan another international trip for a year or two, but with some nurturing, the sending church may decide to build locally.

In that case, everyone wins. The local church meets a variety of ministry needs, and it expands its missions both locally and globally. The local affiliate nurtures a new partner and an international church relationship grows. It is a different approach to developing a local partnership, but it is an approach based on the desires of the church.

Community Development Opportunities
Habitat has a vested interest in communities. Our goal is a decent house and a strong community for all God’s people. Strong communities help people develop into all that God intended. Churches can help strengthen the communities in which your affiliate builds—the target communities—in a variety of ways.

Churches in the target community can help by providing lists of families who could be potential homeowners and by providing leads for building sites. They also can work with the family support committee to provide services to homeowners. Neighborhood churches may already have in place services such as employment counseling, child care and after-school programs, tutorial and other educational programs, health awareness programs, small business development and so forth that can strengthen the lives of Habitat’s partner families and the communities in which they live.
Special Events and Campaigns for Church Partners

Building on Faith

Building on Faith is HFHI’s annual celebration of church partnerships. Habitat groups around the world are encouraged to organize church-sponsored building projects as a global sermon of God’s love.

The Church Relations department works closely with affiliates to help them learn how to reach out to new churches and nurture strong and sustainable church partnerships. Originally designed as a one-week event in September, Building on Faith has expanded to a season of church partnerships that, ideally, will be scheduled sometime from June to September. Possibilities include:

• announcing a partnership.
• planning a groundbreaking.
• building one or more houses.
• beginning a multi-house build.
• stepping out with churches to claim a neighborhood for Jesus Christ.

Building on Faith culminates on the International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat (the third Sunday in September). Many affiliates proclaim that Building on Faith was the event that helped them get their churches motivated or that jumpstarted their Church Relations program.

HFH of San Antonio marked the 100th house supported by churches and faith groups with an 18-house Building on Faith project, and HFH of El Salvador built 20 houses during Building on Faith 2005 as they launched a five-year campaign to build 500 houses with church partners.

Building on Faith is the perfect opportunity to invite the support of churches where you may not have contacts. Often churches are excited about joining a community effort that involves many other congregations. Ask the pastors of existing partner churches to introduce you to other clergy.

Habitat for Humanity groups have planned wonderful Building on Faith events that have ranged from starting their first house to organizing multi-house blitz campaigns and powerful, praise-filled worship services. Other possibilities include:
• blitz framing a house or houses.
• finishing a bold project and dedicating a house or houses.
• providing construction volunteers for a church-sponsored project.
• donating cash or other in-kind goods and services.
• inviting churches to construct the walls of a house in their own parking lots and then bringing them together for a house raising celebration and blessing.
• planning a candlelight walk through a community in which you are building houses and inviting the faith community to participate.
• participating in a Global Church Partnership project (see page 33).
• inviting congregations to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of their church or denomination by funding and building a house.

The International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat

Since 1983, HFHI has observed the Day of Prayer by encouraging churches around the world to set aside the third Sunday in September to pray for those inadequately sheltered. The Day of Prayer was established to make housing a matter of conscience in the faith community. Our vision is to place on the hearts, minds and souls of all people the idea that poverty housing is unacceptable.

For affiliates participating in Building on Faith, the Day of Prayer can provide a great opportunity for thanksgiving and celebration. A Day of Prayer worship service is a wonderful time to come before God in gratitude and thanksgiving for the blessings of Building on Faith and for other blessings experienced throughout the year.

The Day of Prayer also can be a new beginning. As we offer ourselves to God in service and seek God’s direction, we can be empowered for new projects and new mission opportunities.

Affiliates can take advantage of this special day to come together in prayer. Invite the office staff, board and committee members, homeowners and volunteers to gather for prayer and thanksgiving. Offer thanks to God for the blessings of this ministry and pray for your work and the individuals involved. Pray for the churches in your community and pray that God will help people use their gifts and put their faith into action.

Churches can observe the Day of Prayer in a variety of ways. Your Church Relations team can encourage congregations to:
• shape the worship service during the third Sunday in September around the theme of loving God by serving one another.
• incorporate into the worship service the prayer for shelter printed in the bulletin inserts produced each year. (See “Day of Prayer Resources” on page 68.) Churches with Internet access can download inserts from Habitat’s Web site (www.habitat.org) using Adobe Acrobat Reader. Under the Site Map, click on “Your Church and Habitat” and then “Day of Prayer.” You will find a link to the bulletin inserts.
Do something big on the Day of Prayer. Churches can plan a dedication, groundbreaking or community worship service. They might organize a walk from several churches to the building site, invite guest speakers to churches, provide time for homeowner and volunteer testimonies and so forth. This is a time to bring together faith and action. It is also a time to bring together house building and housing advocacy.

### Apostles Build Projects

Many affiliates have found great success in an Apostles Build project in recent years. This is simply bringing together 12 churches to serve, as the apostles of Jesus served, by helping their neighbors in need. In this case, the churches fund and build a Habitat for Humanity house. This has allowed many small churches to participate that previously did not think they could afford to be Habitat partners.

Apostles Build projects are not limited to small communities or churches, however, nor are they strictly limited to 12 churches. Apostles Build projects have been successful in larger cities as well. Sometimes a faithful church partner will serve as an anchor church and provide more of the funding to allow smaller churches to participate with a smaller financial commitment. See page 66 to order an Apostles Build project manual.

### Building on the Dream

Churches may get excited about Building on the Dream—an opportunity to fund and build a Habitat house as a way to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Your affiliate may be able to tie the kickoff of this event into local celebrations of Dr. King’s birthday in January.

Even if you are not able to build in January, you can plan an event on King’s birthday as a time to call attention to the need for affordable housing, and you can make invitations to determine if Building on the Dream would help fulfill the ministry goals of any of your area churches.
Working on Habitat for Humanity projects changes lives.
Making Presentations

Once you have met with one or two key leaders in the church, you may be invited back to make a presentation to a larger group or to the entire congregation. Some affiliates have put together skits or short musical productions to present at a congregational dinner or other informal setting. If you are allotted 10 minutes at a business meeting, however, such a presentation probably would not be appropriate.

The moving testimonies of homeowners and volunteers are very effective in delivering the Habitat message. Church members often get excited when they discover that Habitat offers them a concrete way to live out their faith.

Whatever your approach, make sure you cover these points:

- Explain Habitat in general and give an overview of how the partnership works. Quickly dispel the misconceptions that we give houses away, etc. Give details about the partnership program you are suggesting for that congregation. Show a brochure or map of the site where you will build.

- Be bold in celebrating God’s blessings upon this worldwide ministry. Churches need to know that Habitat for Humanity is a Christian organization.

- Speak from the heart to proclaim that working on Habitat for Humanity projects has transformed people’s lives—homeowners, volunteers and even bystanders.

- Make it clear that Habitat is not in competition with the church. Together, Habitat and the church are servants of God. Emphasize how your partnership can enhance the ministry goals of this church.

- Use the appropriate language for each group. Evangelicals or nondenominational churches, for example, are more likely to be responsive when they hear messages such as, “Habitat for Humanity builds houses because we want to transform lives and communities.” Other groups might be more interested in hearing about Habitat’s “theology of the hammer,” which invites people of all faiths and no faith to work together to serve God by serving others. This does not mean we change who we are. We simply use the things we have in common with different churches to attract their support.

- Habitat for Humanity and the church share many of the same goals and principles. For example, both seek to answer God’s call to serve the poor.

- Habitat is a hands-on, grassroots ministry that gives people an opportunity to put love into action.
Include information about tithing. Point out that Habitat builds locally and in developing countries and explain that affiliates are encouraged to set aside 10 percent of the money they raise locally to build homes in another location. Churches can choose where they wish their tithe money to go, and they can send work teams to help build the houses they are funding.

Share local and global homeowner stories. This makes the ministry of Habitat for Humanity real.

Give personal testimony about how a church can be energized when it gets involved with Habitat.

Include Scripture, such as Acts 20:35 (more blessed to give than to receive); Luke 3:11 (whoever has two coats); 1 John 3:17 (if anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need); James 2:17 (faith without works is dead).

Explain that Habitat needs all kinds of people—construction volunteers, people to prepare food, organizers, encouragers, committee members and so forth.

More detailed Speaker’s Notes are available in Celebrations—a worship resource created by the Church Relations department (see page 66)—and on the Church Relations pages of PartnerNet, Habitat's extranet information system (http://partnernet.habitat.org).

Invite the church to join you in Habitat’s ministry. Never give the impression that you are begging for money. Instead, offer the very positive invitation to be a part of a ministry that you believe in with all your heart.

How to Respond to a No

Some churches may not be ready to join you in partnership, and you must be willing to accept that gracefully. Sometimes, a little more encouragement might be needed. For example, if a church tells you that they are entering a capital campaign and cannot afford to take on a Habitat commitment, tell them about a church in Iowa that tithed (even above 10 percent) on their capital campaign, and the tithe was enough to fund an entire house. The church was committed to the belief that if they could spend more than a half million dollars on themselves, they could spend $50,000 to help a family have a decent place to live.

Even if the answer continues to be no, however, assure the church leaders that you will continue to be in prayer for their church and thank them for their time.

At regular intervals (every three to six months) drop a note to the pastor or church contact—just a message to say hello and to stay in touch. Invite them to any faith community functions (clergy breakfast, etc.).

Remember that pastors change, circumstances change and hearts change. Continue to pray about every opportunity to partner with churches in your community. Trust that God will guide you to the right people at the right time.

After a Church Says Yes

Follow up with a personal letter of thanks and an outline of your agreement. You may want to simply put your agreement in the body of a letter, or you may want to create a letter of intent.

Even though the agreement is not legally binding, it does outline the commitments of both Habitat and the church(es). Be sensitive to and flexible with congregations that are uncomfortable with the idea of
signing a covenant or anything they perceive as a contract. The letter of intent is for sponsorship or co-sponsorship partnership programs. You can create a similar form for any partnership agreement.

If you have not done so already, give a representative of the church a copy of the Congregation’s Guide to Sponsoring a House as well. (See page 66.) This resource can help churches begin organizing their project. Continue to involve the church in the planning of the project and pray together as you proceed. Constantly keep before your affiliate the concept of partnership.

Sample Letter of Intent

Letter of Intent
This agreement is established between Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) and ______________________. In signing, the parties agree to the following:
1. Habitat will select the partner family and provide both a building lot and construction supervision.
2. ______________________ will pray for the ministry of Habitat and will exert its best effort to provide the labor ( ___________ crews for ________ days) and funds ($ ______________) to construct the house.
   Construction is scheduled to begin ____________________ (date). The payment schedule is as follows:
   a. $ ________________ in cash is due 30 days before construction begins.
   b. The balance will be due at framing inspection.
   c. A contribution of _________ that will be used for construction of a Habitat house in a developing country is due at the dedication service.
3. Habitat agrees to sell the ________________ house to the partner family at no profit and will use the family’s house payments to enable other people in need to obtain decent housing.

In partnership,

_________________________   ______________________________
Habitat Affiliate President      Pastor or Authorized Lay Leader

Thanking and Encouraging Church Partners

Do your best to ensure that churches have a good experience with Habitat.
• Keep in touch with coordinators in the congregation and be available to answer questions.
• Clear communication is essential. It may be quite some time between making the decision to build and hammering the first nails. Help keep the excitement factor high. Report every step of progress.
• Sometime during the process, offer to have someone from the affiliate tell his or her faith story during a worship service.
• Introduce the partner family at the appropriate time and, with the family’s permission, encourage the church to invite the family to worship services and other events at the church.
• Make sure the affiliate keeps its end of the bargain. For example, the affiliate should make sure materials are on site at the proper time and that adequate supervision is in place.
• Send letters of thanks and encouragement all along the way. You cannot thank people too many times.
• Take photos of church members working on the site and send to churches for newsletters/scrapbooks.
• Have lunch with church leaders—for no reason. You don’t have to talk Habitat. Just build relationships.
• Make sure that the work site reflects a Christian environment. If you promote Habitat as a place where people can put their faith into action, make sure that church members are not met with extremes in language and behavior that would cause them to question Habitat’s credibility as a Christian ministry. Walk around the site each day. Shake hands and get to know people.
• Plan recognition events such as a banquet and worship celebration. Present certificates, plaques or other items to recognize the partnership efforts of each congregation.
• Send a framed picture and updated information about the partner family to the church. Perhaps take a group photo of volunteers with the family.

After Construction Is Complete

Once a church has built a house or houses, one of the big challenges for an affiliate is to keep the congregation excited. The core group of organizers may be weary from planning—and building. More than likely, however, they are also very excited. The key is to harness that excitement at the right time. Soon after the dedication, gather the group and pray together.

Consider how God can use your team to help another family within the next year or so. What is God calling you to do in your community or perhaps in another area of the world? Consider ideas such as these:
• Suggest a blitz build to a congregation that has never participated in one.
• Form new partnerships. Invite diverse churches to work together.
• Challenge churches that have always built with other congregations to sponsor a house by themselves.
• Challenge churches to step up their involvement. If they have never sponsored or co-sponsored a house, encourage them to do so. If they have built one house, urge them to sponsor or co-sponsor two this time. Offer them a new goal.
• Plan a bold Building on Faith event (see page 35) that involves many area congregations.
• Encourage churches to participate in global projects (see page 33) and to send a work team to another country.
• Discuss the possibilities of advocacy and community development.
• Develop a theme or new focus for each church project. Give churches, committees and the media something new to hang their hats on each year.
• Tie in to community celebrations, denominational events or religious observances.
• Call upon churches to be mentors to other congregations.
• Encourage churches to use the Habitat for Humanity Vacation Bible School curriculum entitled Under Construction, by Smyth & Helwys Publishers. Find out more about the program on the Under Construction Web site (http://www.helwys.com/uc/index2.html).
• Suggest that churches host a community worship service or family orientation event. Recruit passionate supporters to speak at other churches.

Keep the congregations engaged. Regular contact will keep their interest and help them create some exciting possibilities for themselves. They will feel needed, and that is the message you want them to hear. Churches are your most reliable long-term base of support.
Housing Advocacy Opportunities

Habitat has always had a two-pronged goal—to raise awareness of the problem of poverty housing and to be a part of the solution. Our goal is to make it religiously and politically unacceptable for anyone to live without decent, affordable housing. Advocacy is part of Habitat for Humanity's strategic plan. Affiliates are mandated to be advocates for persons in need of shelter.

Habitat partner churches can play a critical role in the new advocacy mission thrust. A major call of the Old and New Testaments is ministry with and for the poor. Thus, partner churches can play a key role in this consciousness-raising effort. They can provide the faith roots to motivate new calls to action. Churches and other religious groups can make clear God's biblical call to end poverty and can share the imperative for decent housing. Partner churches can:

- lead in the identification and elimination of the root causes of poverty housing.
- mobilize community leaders to help shape local, state and national public policy toward eliminating poverty and poverty housing.
- lead in the formation of local partnerships toward transforming communities whose goals are that all persons have a decent place to live whether through homeownership, public rental, private rental or other means.
- be instrumental in influencing faith groups on college and university campuses and in high school settings toward understanding and responding to the biblical call to end poverty and poverty housing in the world.
- work through Habitat campus chapters as well as directly with faith groups on campuses.
- influence denominations and other national and international bodies to work for the elimination of substandard housing.

Once a congregation has settled down after the excitement of building a house, affiliate leaders may wish to stay in touch with organizers and suggest ways they can continue to adopt housing as an ongoing cause in the church.

Suggest that they do research and hold informational meetings. Guide them through the process of communicating with legislators. Urge church members to write articles describing their experiences for local newspapers and church publications. Encourage them to work within their denominations or other church networks to recruit other churches. Ask for volunteers to be speakers at various events. Churches understand the power of telling the story. Help volunteers find opportunities to give their witness so they might change laws, opinions, hearts and minds.
Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Focus

In addition to involving churches, the Church Relations team can serve in other ways. The team can make intentional efforts to maintain and sharpen the affiliate’s Christian focus.

Consider these possibilities:

- **Rotate responsibility within the affiliate for arranging and leading devotions on the work site, at every board and committee meeting and at other Habitat gatherings.**
- **Organize worship services and opportunities for prayer.**
- **Lead an affiliate retreat that focuses on Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles, a document that outlines the basics of Christian discipleship upon which Habitat was built. (See page 66.)**
- **Set direction for working with other faiths. Make it clear that Habitat is a Christian organization that welcomes people and organizations of all faiths—and no faith—to partner with us. Invite participation from all interested persons, with the understanding that we do not require conversion to the Christian faith, just as we will not deny our faith to recruit volunteers or accept support.**

Living Out the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Habitat for Humanity proclaims that every house we build is a sermon of God’s love. It is our Christian faith that motivates us and enables our mission. Like any organization that must raise money, promote itself to the community, adhere to schedules and depend upon volunteers, we have many tasks to do. However, as servants of the Lord who are called to minister to real people in real need, we are empowered by a mighty and merciful God. We witness to the power and love of Jesus Christ each time we build a house, strengthen communities and make people aware.

“We have chosen, as our means of manifesting God’s love, to build adequate and durable homes with those in need of shelter, carrying 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.”

—From Habitat for Humanity’s Mission Focus
Appendix A

Affiliate Assessment Tool

The purpose of this tool is to take a snapshot of how your affiliate is doing in the area of Church Relations and to discover some potential opportunities for improvement. Please be as accurate as possible.

Note: This form is available electronically on PartnerNet. Search under "Church Relations Assessment Tool."

Name of affiliate _______________________________________________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________________________________________

City ____________________________________________ State ________________ ZIP ____________

Contact person for Church Relations ____________________________________________________________

Daytime phone ________________________________________________________________________________

E-mail _________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you have a written plan for Church Relations?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Is there an active committee for Church Relations?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

If yes, who are the members of the committee?  _____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

How often does the committee meet?
☐ Weekly      ☐ Monthly      ☐ Quarterly      ☐ Less frequently
Is there a paid staff member responsible for Church Relations?  □ Yes  □ No

If yes, how many hours per week are dedicated to Church Relations? ______________________________

Please give us an experience profile of the person overseeing Church Relations (work experience, church connection, volunteer, intern, etc.).

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

List the churches that support your affiliate financially.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

List the churches that provide volunteers.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

List the churches that are currently represented on the board, staff and committees.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
List the churches that support you in other ways (provide lunches, etc.). Be specific.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

What system is in place for tracking the church affiliation of donors and volunteers?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

In the chart below, please indicate the total number of houses built in each year and those built by churches. You may approximate the church portion and use decimal numbers to indicate a partial sponsorship. (In 2003, you built 10 houses and churches built 2.5 of the total, for example.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Houses Built</th>
<th>Houses Built by Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To how many churches have you made a formal introduction of Habitat for Humanity during the past 12 months? What were the names of the churches and the responses?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you read *Church Relations News* (HFHI quarterly newsletter)? □ Yes □ No

Do you utilize the Church Relations resources available on PartnerNet? □ Yes □ No

Has anyone from your affiliate attended any Church Relations training in the past 12 months? □ Yes □ No

Do you regularly communicate with churches that currently support Church Relations at your affiliate? □ Yes □ No

If yes, what format do you utilize? □ Newsletter □ E-mail blast

What do you feel are the two best things the Church Relations team could do to help your affiliate?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Affiliate Assessment Tool—Sample

The purpose of this tool is to take a snapshot of how your affiliate is doing in the area of Church Relations and to discover some potential opportunities for improvement. Please be as accurate as possible.

Note: This form is available electronically on PartnerNet. Search under “Church Relations Assessment Tool.”

Name of affiliate ___________________________ Southfield HFH

Address ___________________________ 1199 N Main St.

City ___________________________ New Atlanta State Texas ZIP ____________

Contact person for Church Relations ___________________________ Jane Johnson

Daytime phone ___________________________ 555-999-8188

E-mail ___________________________ janej@southfieldhfh.org

Do you have a written plan for Church Relations? □ Yes □ No

Is there an active committee for Church Relations? □ Yes □ No

If yes, who are the members of the committee? ____________________________________________

Jane, Peter Henry, Regina Jackson, Julie Walters.

__________________________

Mike Main, Angela Caldwell

How often does the committee meet?
□ Weekly □ Monthly □ Quarterly □ Less frequently
Is there a paid staff member responsible for Church Relations?  □ Yes  □ No

If yes, how many hours per week are dedicated to Church Relations? 40

Please give us an experience profile of the person overseeing Church Relations (work experience, church connection, volunteer, intern, etc.).

Served as a volunteer and worked for local Girl Scout organization. Attends First Methodist Church

List the churches that support your affiliate financially.

First Methodist, Central Presbyterian, Christ Lutheran.

New Saints Lutheran, St. Johns Episcopal, Central Methodist

List the churches that provide volunteers.

All of the above plus First Baptist

List the churches that are currently represented on the board, staff and committees.
List the churches that support you in other ways (provide lunches, etc.). Be specific.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

What system is in place for tracking the church affiliation of donors and volunteers?

Nothing

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

In the chart below, please indicate the total number of houses built in each year and those built by churches. You may approximate the church portion and use decimal numbers to indicate a partial sponsorship. (In 2003, you built 10 houses and churches built 2.5 of the total, for example.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Houses Built</th>
<th>Houses Built by Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To how many churches have you made a formal introduction of Habitat for Humanity during the past 12 months? What were the names of the churches and the responses?

One. New Community Methodist Church. They were positive.

Do you read *Church Relations News* (HFHI quarterly newsletter)?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you utilize the Church Relations resources available on PartnerNet?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Has anyone from your affiliate attended any Church Relations training in the past 12 months?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you regularly communicate with churches that currently support Church Relations at your affiliate?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

If yes, what format do you utilize?  
☐ Newsletter  ☐ E-mail blast

What do you feel are the two best things the Church Relations team could do to help your affiliate?  

1. How do we reach new churches?

2. How are affiliates reaching out to larger churches?
Appendix C

Locating Churches in Associations/Networks

Use the tools below to help you identify churches in your community that may be members of larger associations/networks. If you find matches, read the information about these networks. Knowing the emphases of these larger church organizations can help you make connections with the local churches in your community.

Willow Creek Association

This is an association of churches that is connected to Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill. Willow Creek was founded in 1976 by Bill Hybels and is one of the largest churches in the United States. It remains one of the leading churches in the “seeker church” movement. There are more than 11,000 churches in the association including 90 denominations in 45 countries.

The philosophy of ministry that is advocated by WCA emphasizes churches putting their best efforts into reaching spiritual seekers outside the walls of the church. There is also an emphasis on innovation, creative ministry, contemporary formats and high caliber presentation.

Practical tips for making a contact with a WCA church:

- Keep in mind that some churches associated with WCA may not be implementing many of the philosophical and programming priorities that are advocated by the organization.
- Affirm their desire to reach outside the walls of the church and present a Habitat partnership as an excellent way to accomplish some of the following:
  - Develop increased credibility in the community outside the church.
  - Habitat projects are a great place to invite spiritual seekers to join in the work.
  - Volunteering on a project can be a great activity for small groups within the church.
- Make sure the church leaders know that WCA churches all over the country are partners with Habitat and that Willow Creek Community Church itself is involved in partnering.


Purpose Driven Church Network

This association of churches is connected with Saddleback Church in Orange County, Calif. Rick Warren is the founder and senior pastor. The church has grown to a weekend attendance of more than 28,000. They sponsor a series of leadership conferences for pastors across the world and more than 300,000 have attended. Their influence is dynamic. The latest and perhaps boldest initiative is their P.E.A.C.E. plan. Saddleback’s strategy is to encourage churches to embrace the components of this plan. This creates a great opportunity for affiliates to engage churches. Saddleback’s philosophy is ingrained in the P.E.A.C.E. plan. They are increasingly becoming vocal advocates to churches across the country to get involved with the poor.
Practical tips for making a contact with a Purpose Driven Network church:

- Try to find some creative ways to get them involved as part of the Purpose Driven Church/Purpose Driven Life study series. Part of the “application” of the series is for small groups to serve the needs of the poor in their community. Local affiliates can help churches do just that.
- Affirm their desire to reach outside the walls of the church and present a Habitat partnership as an excellent way to accomplish some of the following:
  - Develop increased credibility in the community outside the church.
  - Habitat projects are a great place to invite spiritual seekers to join in the work.
  - Volunteering on a project can be a great activity for small groups within the church.
- Habitat partnerships are a great way to develop an ongoing program to serve the poor in the local community.

Search under “Purpose Driven” to find out more about these churches.

The Vineyard Church

There are approximately 600 Vineyard churches in the United States and they are one of the fastest growing church-planting movements. They were founded by John Wimber in Orange County, Calif., during the late 1960s. Their philosophy and theology make them ideal partners for Habitat. They emphasize demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ and displaying mercy to people.

Practical tips for making a contact with a Vineyard church:

- Emphasize the opportunity to visibly show the love of Christ to the people in their community.
- Habitat projects are a great way to practice compassion evangelism.

http://www.vineyardusa.org/churches/church_search.aspx

CBF Church (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship)

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a “fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice.” It was founded in 1991 by a group of Baptist pastors who strongly desired to take a more moderate stand on some key issues confronting the Southern Baptist Convention. They are particularly passionate about international mission work but should also be open to local involvement with Habitat for Humanity.

Practical tips for making a contact with a CBF church:

- Be sure to emphasize that a Habitat partnership will allow their church to develop an ongoing ministry to serve the poor in their community.
- Mention that it’s an excellent way to complement an international missions program with some local substance.

http://www.thefellowship.info/churchlink.aspx
Life Giving Church Network

This is a loose network of churches that are associated with New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo. New Life's founder and senior pastor is Ted Haggard, a dynamic leader and speaker, and one of the most influential Christian leaders in America. He also serves as the president of the National Association of Evangelicals and is leading that group to be aggressively more in tune with the needs of the poor. Churches in this network will often be characterized by rigorous Bible teaching and charismatic theology.

Practical tips for making a contact with a Life Giving Network church:
- Be sure to emphasize that a Habitat partnership will allow their church to develop an ongoing ministry to serve the poor in their community.

http://www.lifegivingchurch.com/index.cfm?FUSEACTION=alc.find_church

The Emerging Church

The emerging church is not a formal group of churches as much as it is a coming movement within the local church. These churches are geared for the postmodern culture and are very attractive to younger people. A key component of the emerging church is involvement in community service.

Practical tips:
- These churches can be difficult to connect with but are passionate about the type of ministry Habitat represents.
- Emphasize how Habitat projects have a strong appeal to people who are in their 20s and 30s and are a great way to gain credibility with this group.

http://www.emergingchurch.org/churches.html
Appendix D

Church Profile Tool

The purpose of this assessment tool is to help you profile a prospective church in your area. The information you need to complete this profile can be found on church Web sites, by interviewing people who know the church and by making a visit to the church at a regular worship service. Please be as accurate as possible.

Note: This form is available electronically on PartnerNet. Search under “Church Relations Profile Tool.”

Name of church ______________________________________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________________________ State __________________ ZIP ____________

Phone ________________________________________________________________________________________

E-mail ________________________________________________________________________________________

Web site ______________________________________________________________________________________

Staff Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior pastor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adm. asst.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missions pastor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive pastor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group pastor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth/singles pastors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Church Information

What is the church's denominational/associational affiliation? _______________________________________

Does the church seem to have any connection with the Willow Creek Association or Purpose Driven Church Network? other associations/networks?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

What is the average worship attendance on the weekend? _______________________________________

Do you know what the annual budget is? ________________________________________________________

Describe the church's worship style/format/services.
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

What are the church's vision/mission/value statements?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
By researching the missions/outreach emphasis of the church, can you see any areas of the world or types of ministries they seem most passionate about?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Are you aware that the church has any ministry or outreach to the poor? Give a summary of their missions ministry.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Describe the specific and small group ministries of the church (young adult/singles/women’s, etc.)

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Are there any doctrinal/theological distinctives that might be helpful to note in order to fully understand the church?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Other information
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

History of Habitat Support

List (starting with the most current) all the ways this church has supported your affiliate (e.g., partnered to fund and build an entire house, sent Global Village volunteers, provided food, donated office space). Include dates and be specific.
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Contacts

If the church is a current partner, who is the primary contact person?

Name ______________________________________________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________________________________

City ________________________________________________ State  __________________ ZIP  ____________

Phone (daytime) _____________________  (evening)  _________________  (cell)  _____________________

E-mail  ______________________________________________________________________________________

Is this person a staff member?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

If so, list the position. ________________________________________________________________
Include contact information for additional contacts.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Building a Bridge

Do you know of any volunteer, staff member, board member or major donor to the affiliate who attends the church? If so, explain.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Are you aware of any other key relational contacts your affiliate has with the church? If so, explain.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Do you know of staff members at your partner churches who might be close to a staff member of this church? If so, explain.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Record some of the thoughts you have on how you can make an appropriate introduction of your affiliate to the church.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Church Contact History/Tracking

In this section, record contact communication between your affiliate and the church.

Date __________________________

Contact made by whom? __________________________

Person contacted? __________________________

What was discussed?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Outcomes?

What are the next steps? Who is responsible? By what date?

Date ____________________
Church Relations Materials

General Resources

Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles—Use this document to focus your affiliate on the Christian principles upon which Habitat for Humanity was based.
   Item #1532 $1.19 per pack of 5

Congregation’s Guide to Sponsoring a House—Offers step-by-step suggestions for a church that is funding and building a Habitat house.
   Item #3261 64 cents each

Apostles Build Project Manual—Guides you through organizing a multi-church build based on serving as the apostles of Jesus served.
   Item # 3691 $1.16 each

Apostles Build Videos/DVDs—Introduces the project and explains how churches have come together for successful builds.
   Video Item #1155 $1.07   DVD Item #1155DVD $1.97

Offering Envelopes—Use these envelopes, which include the Building on Faith logo, at any time for collecting Habitat offerings.
   Item #3093 $3.30 per pack of 100

Name Tags—Keep plenty on hand for meetings and work days. The Building on Faith logo reminds everyone that Habitat builds on faith every day.
   Item #3177 $1.79 per pack of 100

Worship Resources

Celebrations—Worship resource that includes groundbreakings, dedications, devotions and more; loose-leaf binder included.
   Item #3347 $3.18 each
Study Tools and Resources

*Kindergarten Sunday School Lesson*—This teacher’s guide for a single lesson is also appropriate for other age groups. Includes Bible lessons and activities.
  
  Item #3382  38 cents per pack of 5

*Youth and Adult Sunday School Lesson*—One lesson for each age group, these sessions focus on the biblical call to care for the poor.

  Available only on PartnerNet at http://partnernet.habitat.org.

*HFH Retreat Planner*—Based on *Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles*, this planner outlines activities for a spiritual retreat.

  Item #3807  $3.92 per pack of 25

*The Theology of the Hammer (book by Millard Fuller, founder of HFHI)*—Describes the biblical foundations upon which Habitat for Humanity was founded and operates.

  *English*—Item #1411  39 cents each
  *Spanish*—Item #1411S  72 cents each

*Theology of the Hammer Study Guide*—Offers suggestions for individual consideration and group discussion of the material in *The Theology of the Hammer*.

  *English*—Item #3289  50 cents each
  *Spanish*—Item #3281  50 cents each

Promotional Materials

*Changing Lives, Changing Communities brochure*—Great four-color brochure provides a brief look at possibilities for partnership with churches.

  Item #1570  $4.10 per pack of 20

*Global Church Partnership brochure*—This four-color brochure emphasizes how churches around the world can work together to share the good news by building Habitat for Humanity houses together.

  Item #7039  $4.40 per pack

*What Is God Asking Your Church to Do? video*—Focuses on international partnerships

  Item #1051  $2.72 each

*Share the Blessings Fund-raising Calendar*—One-month calendar (for use any month) for use by families to remember and contribute to Habitat. May be used with House Banks (see below).

  Item #3079  $1.22 per pack of 50

*House Banks*—Small cardboard house with slot for coin donations

  Item #1600  13 cents each

*Repairing the World brochure*—Designed to invite Jewish congregations to partner with Habitat.

  Item #1557  $1.25 per pack of 25
Building a House of Love—Family devotional booklet includes stickers and daily devotions that emphasize caring and sharing.

   Item #3802  $1 each

Building on Faith Tools

Building on Faith brochure—This brochure offers congregations a brief description of the project, tells how they can participate and suggests opportunities for study in conjunction with Building on Faith.

   Item #3304  68 cents per pack of 25

Building on Faith posters—Use to publicize this annual celebration of church partnerships.

   Item #3114  80 cents per pack of 10

Day of Prayer Resources

The “Litany for Shelter” on the Day of Prayer bulletin inserts can be used in worship services at any time of year.

   Bulletin inserts in English and Spanish are available—paper copies and downloads from PartnerNet each year. Visit PartnerNet at http://partnernet.habitat.org and search under Day of Prayer.

Blitz Building Helps

Accelerated Building Guide—Refer to this guide to help you plan the details of a blitz build

   Available only on PartnerNet at http://partnernet.habitat.org.

Ordering Information

Unless otherwise indicated, these resources are available at Habitat for Humanity’s BuildBrand Resource Center at http://buildbrand.habitat.org or by calling the Help Line at (800) HABITAT, Ext. 2552. Shipping and handling charges are added to all orders, including free publications.

121 Habitat St. Americus, GA 31709-3498
(800) HABITAT or (229) 924-6935 fax: (229) 924-6541
E-mail: churchrelations@habitat.org
www.habitat.org