Apostles Build Project
A Guide for Affiliates and Church Partners

Church Relations Department
Preface

How Does an Apostles Build Project Fit into the Work of Your Affiliate?

In an Apostles Build project, 12 churches come together to raise the money and to provide the labor and prayer support to build a Habitat for Humanity house. An Apostles Build project is a dynamic and practical project-driven way to invite the faith community to join you in ministry.

Many affiliates find that an Apostles Build project opens doors to building relationships with new church partners—particularly with small churches and churches in rural communities. Often churches that do not see themselves as large enough or financially able to build a Habitat house get excited about being able to share the funding and volunteer commitments with 11 other churches.

An Apostles Build project may be your introduction to working with the faith community. It might be your only project involving churches this year. For affiliates that have a history of support within the faith community, an Apostles Build project might increase your capacity and allow you to build an additional faith house. The bottom line is that if more churches are involved, an affiliate has the potential to build more houses and more families can move into their own homes.

The true success of an Apostles Build project, however, cannot be measured in houses built and churches recruited. The miracle occurs when God touches hearts like that of homeowner Cindy Lind. Standing in front of her home on Grace Street in Lincoln, Neb., Lind said, “I am so grateful to the churches. They are like the 12 apostles who sat around the table with Jesus. My faith has grown so much.”

About Habitat for Humanity International

Habitat for Humanity International, based in Americus, Ga., is a Christian ministry dedicated to eliminating poverty housing. Habitat has built 200,000 houses and more than one million people now live in Habitat homes they helped build and are buying through no-profit, zero-interest mortgages.

www.habitat.org
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Part 1

What Is an Apostles Build Project?

It is amazing how an idea can connect with something deep in our hearts to excite and motivate us. In many communities, churches have responded to a simple idea called an Apostles Build project to construct houses in partnership with families in need.

In an Apostles Build project, 12 churches, or coalitions of churches, come together to build a Habitat for Humanity house. They raise the money and provide the labor and prayer support to build a house in partnership with a local family. The idea of going out into the community to serve others, in the way that Jesus’ apostles served, has attracted individuals in many churches. With Habitat for Humanity, churches can share God’s love by building houses.

The word *disciple* comes from the Latin word for pupil or learner. Jesus chose 12 disciples as his closest associates. They traveled with Jesus and learned from him.

In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the 12 on a mission. He “gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness” (verse 1). The passage continues by listing the names of the 12 who are then referred to as apostles.

An *apostle* is someone who is sent on a mission.

**Apostles Build Churches**

In a Habitat for Humanity Apostles Build project, 12 apostle churches or coalitions of churches are charged with assisting in Habitat’s mission to provide decent shelter in partnership with families in need. They are called out into the community to serve.

**Coalition**—In terms of a Habitat for Humanity project, a coalition of churches is simply a group of churches that works together to fund and build a house. An Apostles Build project might involve two levels of coalitions:

There is mystique, prestige and status associated with being apostles, who were the first helpers. Also, there just happened to be 12 of them, and it takes us 12 working days to build a house. An Apostles Build project gives churches a defined commitment in terms of money and time and adds structure to their participation.

—Tom and Bonnie Chamberlin, executive directors, Berkeley Co. (S.C.) HFH
When 12 churches work together to share the costs and labor commitment, each church is considered an “apostle church,” and together they form a coalition to sponsor one or more houses.

Sometimes, one or more of the apostles in a project is made up of more than one church. For example in Greene County, Ohio, one of the apostle partners was comprised of 18 United Methodist churches that worked together under the direction of their own coordinator. They formed a coalition to serve as one of the 12 apostle supporters of the project.

The Benefits of an Apostles Build Project

In a successful partnership, both parties benefit from their common work. An Apostles Build project has the potential to help both the Habitat affiliate and the church partners.

Benefits for Affiliates

An Apostles Build project can be the idea that gets churches excited and convinces them to become housing partners.

Bringing together 12 churches to build a house is not new. Many affiliates have organized builds called “A Circle of 12” that focused on the 12 disciples or the 12 tribes of Israel. Many of these projects were very successful. However, when affiliates began to use the name Apostles Build, many churches responded with tremendous new energy. The image of serving as the apostles served might be the image that attracts specific congregations to become powerful partners in ministry.

[We have] come to partner with the African-American church community in a new and far-reaching way. Two prominent churches stepped boldly forward in leadership for this [Apostles Build] home and have indicated intention to continue participation.

— Kay Taylor, development director, Chatham (N.C.) HFH

We had never really had a Church Relations program before. Organizing an Apostles Build project helped us recruit smaller churches. It gave us something specific to present to churches, and they really loved this idea.

— Erin Stephenson, executive director, McMinnville (Ore.) Area Habitat for Humanity
Benefits for Churches

The benefits of working with Habitat for Humanity are numerous—especially for the faith community. Building a house gives people a concrete way to put their faith into action. An Apostles Build project calls people to leave the halls of the church and to serve in the way that the original apostles served. Working on this project allows people of faith to be the body of Christ in the world.

Another positive feature of an Apostles Build project is that it has a definite beginning and a definite end. Busy people can schedule the time that they can give to this project, and churches can work the project into their calendars.

Many churches report that when they become Habitat for Humanity partners, they experience revitalization throughout the congregation. Some note that membership grows and that giving increases because people want to be a part of a vibrant church that reaches beyond itself. Churches often report that members get excited about other mission opportunities after working on a Habitat project.

An Apostles Build project also has the potential to build community among churches that have never worked together before. After being a part of this joint project, they may decide to worship together or to cooperate in other ministries. They may learn about opportunities at various churches that may benefit one another’s members.

Volunteers can meet new people and develop friendships with individuals from their own churches. Participants from one mega church, with campuses in two locations in town, told how they got to know members of their own church through a Habitat project.

Our church was turning blue and passing out from inactivity before Habitat came along and resuscitated us.

—The Rev. Al Kinsey, pastor of St. Michael Lutheran Church, an apostle partner in Berkeley Co., S.C.

During the last four years, we have built five houses, we have led the community in fund raising for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and we have added a $2 million addition to our church building. I can trace all that activity back to our first Habitat house.

You don’t do outreach as an investment, but it just works out that way. A Habitat partnership is definitely a two-way street, but there are multiple lanes coming back into church life.

—The Rev. Pat Driskell
First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Lubbock, Texas
Quotes from Pastors

A Sign of a Healthy Congregation

I think people have an expectation that Christianity needs to have depth—words are not enough. It is almost catching when a few people in a congregation have the opportunity to do something good in Jesus’ name. Habitat helps novices find ways of doing good.

—Bishop Gary Hansen
North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Working Together to Make Something Happen

Working with Habitat provides us with a sense of missional identity. Building this house has allowed us to be a proactive player in God’s justice raining down in this community in the form of affordable housing.

—The Rev. Greg Cruice
New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Mandeville, Louisiana

Creating a Deeper Relationship with God

I think the number one benefit for our congregation is spiritual. Working with Habitat helps us create a deeper relationship with God. For large churches like ours, projects like Habitat help us get new members more mainstreamed in the congregation. It gives people a chance to find a ministry they can be involved in. It also allows us good experiences for fellowship and group building.

—Dr. Paul Clayton
Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Jackson, Tennessee
Part 2

Getting Started

The suggestions below can guide you as you consider an Apostles Build project for your community.

a. Pray
Prayer is essential for any ministry. Seek God’s guidance. Is this what God is calling you to do?

b. Get Approval from the Board of Directors
It is essential to fit an Apostles Build project into the big picture for the entire affiliate. For example, you want to make sure that land is available and that a partner family has been selected. Coordinate possible construction dates with other projects the affiliate has planned. Realize that this project will affect every committee and that a number of actions have to be taken by affiliate leaders for every build. Take the time to plan carefully from the beginning and work in partnership with the affiliate leadership. Once you receive approval from the board, you can begin making specific plans.

Checklist of preliminary issues to discuss with the board:

- Do you have land available?
- Do you have a partner family selected?
- Does the construction schedule allow for an Apostles Build house to be built in addition to the houses already planned for construction? When?

What do you need to discuss with the board to host an Apostles Build project?

Who will present the idea to the board and when?

After the meeting with the board, put agreements in writing. Careful record keeping is a must for an Apostles Build project.
Attributes of Good Project Team Members

- Team members should have a commitment to the ministry of Habitat for Humanity and the church.
- They should be eager to serve as ambassadors for Habitat and should be willing to make presentations and invite churches to participate.
- Team members should follow through with assignments and be able to attend regular meetings.
- The team leader should serve as an encourager and should stay in contact with team leaders.

Put Together a Project Team

One person cannot coordinate an entire Apostles Build project. This is a task that requires a project team, and that team needs a leader or coordinator. The team may be a special task force of the Church Relations committee, or it may be a short-term group that is organized specifically for this build. Ideally, the team should have about a year to plan.

Some affiliates look to former board members to serve on the project team. Other good prospects are homeowners and regular construction volunteers. Look for passionate people who have contacts in various churches.

Initially, the project team should include three to five members. After outlining the project (see Part 3 in this guide), the first task of the project team is to recruit churches. As congregations make the commitment to join the project, the team will grow. Each church should designate a liaison to join the project team.
Potential Team Members for an Apostles Build Project

Fill out the form below to guide you in thinking about team members and to help you set deadlines for contacting them. You will need to make plans to recruit more people than you need. Not everyone can serve right now.

Who would do a great job in recruiting churches to join the Apostles Build project? Make plans to recruit six to eight team members in hopes that three to five will agree to serve. Stay in touch with other organizers about results of recruiting.

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<th>Who will ask him or her to help?</th>
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Who else from the affiliate should be on the team (construction, volunteer, PR representatives)?

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<th>Possible Affiliate Team Members</th>
<th>Who will ask him or her to help?</th>
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Who should lead this project? ___________________________________

Who will ask him or her to lead? ___________________________________

By what date will you commit to have the team in place? ___________________
Following the steps outlined in this section can help your team develop an overall strategy for a successful Apostles Build project. Having a definite plan in place will also make it easier to recruit church partners. (See suggestions for recruiting churches in Part 4.)

Each congregation that commits to being an apostle church should name a liaison to join the project team. As you begin adding representatives from the partner churches, you can review the plan and start making specific assignments. The level of detail for this plan will continually increase as you begin implementation as suggested in Part 5.

3. Establish a Building Schedule

Construction supervision is the responsibility of the Habitat affiliate. Some affiliates and their partners like the excitement of a blitz build. Others find advantages in spreading out the building schedule over more days to involve more people.

Work with affiliate representatives to coordinate this project with the plans of the rest of the affiliate. Determine a beginning date, the dates of construction and an ending date.

What kind of building schedule are you planning? Are you planning to complete the house in 12 work days, over 12 weeks, etc.?

Who at the affiliate will be responsible for supervising construction (site preparation, inspections, permits, building materials, etc.)?

When do you anticipate construction to begin and end?

Will you request that work teams from churches work only on assigned days or will you recruit volunteers from all churches to work each day of construction?
b. Set the Sponsorship Amount

The project team should work with the affiliate leadership to determine a sponsorship price for the Apostles Build house. Your affiliate may already have a plan in place for setting the price for sponsors. That figure may or may not be the same as the actual cost of construction.

If you do not have sponsorship costs established, consider these factors: cost of land, cost of materials, your tithe and overhead costs. Note that you may be able to acquire funding from banks, foundations and even government entities to “buy down” the cost of the home, thereby making it more affordable for sponsors. Check with your regional office or your affiliate support manager if your affiliate has not established a sponsorship amount.

c. Establish the Cost for Each Apostle Church

Many affiliates attempt to divide the cost and labor for the house equally among the 12 apostle churches or coalitions. In some cases, however, not every church is able to contribute the same amount of money to the project. Churches that have more resources may be able to raise more funds. That means a smaller church with a willing labor force might be able to participate in the project with a smaller financial contribution.

Tithe — Habitat for Humanity is a global partnership. In recognition of and commitment to that global partnership, each affiliate is expected to tithe at least 10 percent of its cash contributions to Habitat’s international work. Tithing is a biblical concept. Deuteronomy 14:22 says, “Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year.” Habitat for Humanity honors that command to set aside a tithe of the money raised locally to help build a home in another community.

Often the cost of construction in a developing country is much lower than in the United States, so churches that tithe on the money they raise often are able to build a home in their community, while also building a home in a developing country.

Affiliates and their church partners can choose where to send the tithe money, or the money will be sent where it is most needed.

The idea of tithing can be particularly attractive to churches with a strong commitment to global missions – it might just be the piece that attracts them to the project.
d. Establish a Plan for Scheduling Volunteers

The project team will need to develop a plan for ensuring that you have an adequate number of volunteers on site each day. Some affiliates schedule specific churches to work specific days. Other affiliates seek to build community by asking for a certain number of volunteers from each church to work on every construction day.

e. Create a Plan for Meals and Snacks

Many Habitat for Humanity church partners take turns providing breakfasts, snacks, lunches, etc. This is a great way to involve people who love to cook or people who don’t want to swing a hammer. Begin thinking about what meals and snacks you will provide. Don’t forget plenty of water.

f. Examine Ways to Involve Youth and Children

People of all ages and abilities can make a difference as they use their gifts to serve God. An Apostles Build project offers an exciting opportunity to mobilize the next generation of people who can help to ensure the future of Habitat’s ministry and its mission of eliminating substandard housing.

*Investing in the Future* (Item #3313; $5) is an age-specific program manual written by the Campus Chapters and Youth Programs department of Habitat for Humanity International. It suggests activities that are age-appropriate, safe and legal for young people of varying ages. This 40-page manual includes detailed examples of past activities with youth and local Habitat affiliates, a section on child labor laws for the United States and core elements of successful youth activities. *(See page 32 for ordering information.)*

Appendix A also offers ideas for ways that children and youth can support the Apostles Build project.
3g. Meet the Partner Family

With all the logistical concerns in planning a big project like this, it is imperative to focus on the idea of being in partnership with each other and with the partner family. Make sure the prospective homeowners are a part of the process from the beginning. Pray for them and ask them to pray for you. Create a brief biography to share with churches.

As you get to know the prospective homeowners, ask family members if they would be willing to speak at presentations to churches. Emphasize that in almost every instance, when partner families speak to congregations, church members respond. Having homeowners make presentations to prospective apostle churches is a great way to recruit church support. The time that prospective homeowners spend visiting with and speaking in churches can be counted as sweat equity hours.

3h. Create a Project Time Line

Once you have discussed the many components of the project, you can begin to put together a time line for your Apostles Build project. Use the time line on pages 12-13 to help you in your planning. Customize it to make it work for you. You may want to begin by assigning deadlines for key events such as:

■ Obtaining commitments from churches
■ Developing a campaign
■ Collecting the first installment of funding
■ Groundbreaking
■ Beginning construction
■ Dedication

As you begin to work out the details, you will be able to develop a master project schedule that includes more detail. (See Part 5.)
Possible Time Line for an Apostles Build Project

Month 1
- Present the project idea to the Habitat affiliate board of directors and get approval.
- Create a team to run the project.
- Establish preliminary plans.

Month 2
- Compile a list of churches to approach and begin recruiting churches.
- Add a representative from each church to the project team.
- Organize awareness and fund-raising campaigns within each church.
Months 3-10

■ Continue recruiting churches and liaisons from each church for the project team.

■ Hold monthly meetings of project team and communicate regularly with one another.

■ Continue awareness and fund-raising campaigns within churches.

■ Work with affiliate leaders to confirm that all preparations are set (land acquisition/preparation, deeds, zoning, permits, subcontracting scheduling and materials acquisition).

Month 10

■ Plan groundbreaking event (incorporating apostle church representatives).

■ Begin planning for community worship service and/or dedication.

Month 11

■ Begin construction.

■ Confirm details for community worship service and/or dedication event.

Month 11

■ Plan groundbreaking event (incorporating apostle church representatives).

■ Begin planning for community worship service and/or dedication.

Month 12

■ Dedicate the home.

■ Thank participants.

■ Pray about what God is calling the faith community to do next!
i. Create a Brochure or Flier

As you prepare to contact churches, consider creating a brochure or flier. It is always helpful to have something printed to leave behind after making presentations. The flier or brochure should briefly tell about the details of your project. Include an explanation of an Apostles Build campaign, the benefits to churches, the commitments you are seeking, etc. Find a volunteer who can make the brochure inviting.

See Appendix B for a sample brochure developed by one affiliate.
Part 4

Recruiting Church Partners

a. Make a List of Churches to Approach

One of the most attractive aspects of an Apostles Build project is that it is a perfect opportunity for a wide variety of churches to come together to be Christ’s hands and feet in the world. Consider these strategies for recruiting church partners:

■ Invite long-term partners to serve as mentor congregations and primary supporters. Ask them to recruit other congregations.

■ Learn where board members, volunteers and other supporters go to church. Ask them to introduce people from the project team to their congregations. Board members, in particular, and other affiliate supporters should serve as ambassadors for the affiliate.

■ Ask churches that provide regular or even limited support to step up their commitment and to become an apostle.

■ Make it a priority to contact people in small churches that may have never been partners before. Offer them the option of partnering with other churches to be one apostle partner.

■ Use this project to bring together a diverse coalition of churches (many denominations, church sizes, races, etc.).

More than likely you will need to make plans to contact more than 12 churches. Some congregations may not be able to join the project at this time.
Make a list of all churches that you will invite to participate in the Apostles Build project.

Note: As you fill out the following chart, remember that an ambassador is a person who can make introductions to the right people at a specific church. Ambassadors may or may not be members of the project team.

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<th>Church Name</th>
<th>Ambassador for That Church</th>
<th>Team Member Who Will Contact the Church</th>
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Target date for receiving commitments from the 12 apostle churches____________________

In addition to filling out the table above, be sure to keep clear, concise records of decisions made and next steps to be taken concerning each congregation.
b. Talk to the Right Person

Over and over affiliates report how essential it is to find the right person to talk to in each congregation. Seldom do you identify that person through sending a letter or even making a phone call. It takes a concerted effort and personal visits to identify and connect with the person in each congregation who has a heart for Habitat. This may or may not be the pastor or the person who answers the telephone.

Again, board members and other supporters can help identify enthusiastic mission people in each church. Ask your ambassadors to introduce you to the right people and to help you set up meetings to talk about the Apostles Build project. As your conversations proceed, find out the proper procedures for talking with the people who make decisions in each church.

c. Make a Presentation

When you have the opportunity to make a presentation to one or more groups within the church, emphasize the idea of inviting churches into ministry.

Explain briefly about Habitat for Humanity and an Apostles Build project.

- Tell about Habitat’s foundation as a Christian ministry.
  
  Read more about this in the manual entitled Habitat for Humanity’s Christian Principles (Item #1532). See page 32 in this guide for access/ordering information.

- Explain the benefits to the church. See the quotes on pages 3-4 in this guide and use quotes from pastors in your community. (See page 4 in this guide.)

- Tell about the successes of your affiliate and your partner families.

- Explain about family selection, no-interest mortgages and sweat equity. Make it clear that Habitat does not give houses away.

- Tell the significance of an Apostles Build project and about the opportunity to serve as Jesus’ apostles served.
Share a powerful story.

- What is the best heart-warming Habitat story you know?
- What is a powerful homeowner story you can tell?
- What is a wonderful time when God showed up and made the impossible, possible?

What story will you tell?
Make notes in the space at right.

Invite the congregation to participate in a wonderful opportunity for ministry.

Asking for funding can be an area of concern for many people, but it is all a matter of mindset. Never approach a conversation with the idea of begging the church for help. Focus instead on inviting churches to prayerfully consider becoming an apostle and joining you in ministry.

Be aware that you may need to make more than one presentation per church and that you will likely need to field questions throughout the process.

**d. Suggest Fund-raising Ideas**

As you talk about the specific commitments for each church, offer suggestions for raising the money. Emphasize that generosity breeds generosity. Often, raising the funds is the easiest part. Explain that for many Habitat for Humanity projects, the majority of funds come from individual donations. However, significant funds are raised during special events, and these projects help keep the project before the congregation and help keep excitement building. Offer to churches the ideas in Appendix C in this guide.
**Formalize the Agreement**

When creating any partnership, it is a good idea to put agreements in writing. When working with 12 or more churches, it is essential to go the extra mile to communicate clearly and to keep accurate records. If you have multiple churches serving as one apostle, it is even more important to outline specific responsibilities. A covenant agreement like the following helps everyone understand the commitments of the affiliate and the churches.

### Letter of Intent for an Apostles Build Project

**Letter of Intent**

This agreement is established between Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) and ________________________________ Church, which will serve as an apostle partner. In signing this letter, the parties agree to the following:

1. Habitat will select the partner family, provide a building lot and will provide construction personnel to oversee the building of the house.
2. ________________________________ Church 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 30 days before construction begins.
B. The remaining 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.

Habitat agrees to sell the house to the partner family and will use the zero-interest house payments to enable other people in need to get decent housing.

In partnership,

____________________________                     ______________________________
Habitat Affiliate President                                         Authorized Church Leader
f. Emphasize Financial Commitments

Many people are attracted to the ministry of Habitat for Humanity because they like the idea of swinging a hammer and working with others to build a house. It is important to make clear, however, that you can’t start building walls if you can’t purchase building materials.

When churches sign the covenant agreement, emphasize the dates upon which funds are due. Point out that each church is being counted upon to be a faithful partner. Raising the money for this home is the responsibility of the project team.

g. Provide Resources

When churches make the commitment to be a part of the Apostles Build project, distribute to each one a copy of *The Congregation’s Guide to Sponsoring a House* (Item #3261). This manual offers step-by-step suggestions and advice for churches that have agreed to help fund and build a Habitat for Humanity house.

You may also want to offer study materials for the congregation to use while planning the project. A kindergarten Sunday school lesson, which may be adapted for other ages (Item #3382) and the Vacation Bible School curriculum entitled *Under Construction* (http://www.helwys.com/uc/index2.html) might be particularly helpful. Habitat for Humanity’s BuildBrand Resource Center on PartnerNet offers other suggested Church Relations resources.
Part 5

Implementing the Project

Once you have recruited the apostle churches and have received written commitments of their intent to participate in the project, the work of the project team shifts to implementing the plans outlined in Part 3. Representatives who join the team from each church can help provide specific leadership for the project.

If you have multiple churches serving as one apostle, that coalition may want to develop its own leadership group with one representative to attend the project team meetings.

Note that not all apostle churches will commit at the same time. The project team may begin to grow while still recruiting more church partners.

Make sure representatives from the affiliate remain on the team to ensure that the project has a strong connection to the total work of the affiliate.

Make it a priority to welcome new team members. Some of the members who have been around since the beginning are going to have more information than others. Make diligent efforts to communicate all information clearly and to include all participants as valuable and essential members of the team.

Even though original team members likely spent many hours outlining general plans for the project, realize that it is now going to require the help of each apostle church liaison to make the project work. As apostle churches are recruited, the work of the project team will include the following:

5. Pray

Team members should continue to emphasize the importance of prayer.

5. Raise Awareness and Money

Discuss ways to raise awareness about the project within each congregation. Churches that spend time teaching their members about Habitat for Humanity and congregations that focus on building excitement often see great results. The more you touch people’s hearts

Create a contact sheet that includes phone numbers and e-mail addresses for everyone on the project team.
and help them understand how owning a home can change lives, the more likely they are to be generous.

The project team is responsible for making sure all money is collected and delivered to the affiliate on time. Team members might discuss ideas for joint fund-raising projects or might offer suggestions for individual churches to consider, but it is the responsibility of each congregation to raise the money committed to this project.

Point out the fund-raising suggestions in Appendix C that each member of the project team can share with his or her church.

c. Plan Meals and Snacks

The project team should oversee the meal plan for the build. Create a schedule to determine which church will bring what food on each construction day. Try to ensure that a variety of food is provided. Be sure to communicate any food allergies and consider vegetarian preferences. Each church will be responsible for planning and preparing meals, but the project team should have a big picture of the food plan.

Talk to affiliate leaders about the availability of tables, power sources, etc., and give clear instructions for delivering food to the site. (Make sure food delivery people have a place to park.)

d. Plan Devotions

At every Habitat gathering, we turn to God in prayer to offer thanks and to set the tone for the day. One of the great ways to introduce ministers to the ministry of Habitat for Humanity is to invite them to offer devotions at the work site. This allows clergy to observe the great things that happen on a work site and often gets them excited about Habitat for Humanity.

Once churches have committed to the build, someone on the project team should start scheduling pastors to present devotions on each construction day. Note that the devotions schedule will have to be flexible. Often pastors cannot predict their day-to-day activities. However, it is wise to develop a schedule, make reminder calls and always have a back-up plan in place.

e. Publicize the Project

In many communities an Apostles Build project has attracted great media coverage and has been a terrific vehicle for getting the word out about Habitat for Humanity. See the Public Relations suggestions in Appendix D in this guide. All publicity should be coordinated with the affiliate Public Relations committee.
5. **Continue Building Relationships with the Partner Family**

The liaison between the project team and the partner family should continue to develop opportunities for involving the family in planning. He or she should also coordinate visits to churches that request the prospective homeowners to speak.

5. **Ensure Safety and Seek to Help Everyone Enjoy a Good Experience**

Taking steps to keep people safe on the work site is essential. Develop a safety procedures guide like the sample in Appendix E and require every volunteer to sign a copy of the policy. Have someone on site each day whose job is to look around and make sure people are working in a safe environment and following safety procedures.

The project team, working in partnership with affiliate leaders, should also take special care to ensure that the project is successful and that volunteers have a good experience. You want this project to be the beginning of a relationship, not the end. This is everyone’s responsibility. You may, however, want to designate a hospitality coordinator/committee who will designate someone to walk around the work site each day making sure that people have a meaningful job to do. Volunteers gave up their day because they wanted to work. Make every effort to help them feel good about helping with this project.

5. **Involve Everyone**

As the liaisons from each church begin to recruit volunteers, be sure to ask for help with tasks other than construction. Many people can help with local publicity within the church, they can serve on the food committee, they can make phone calls, etc. Don’t forget children and youth. Review the ideas in Appendix A and consider how each church will involve youth and children.

5. **Create Community**

Part of the enthusiasm for an Apostles Build project comes from the ability to create community among churches and church members who may otherwise never get to know each other. Be intentional about scheduling different churches to work together on the site and about celebrating and worshiping together. Work with affiliate leaders to plan worship and celebration events.
- You may plan to raise the walls of the Apostles Build house together. Some affiliates have asked churches to build walls of the house in their own church parking lots and have invited church members to write blessings on the studs. Then all the walls are brought to one area for a wall raising and a day full of picture taking and thanksgiving.

- Organize joint worship services involving all the apostle churches. This is a great way to be a part of Building on Faith, HFHI’s annual celebration of church partnerships each year in September. For details, search “Building on Faith” on PartnerNet.

- Be sure to publicize the groundbreaking ceremony in cooperation with the Habitat affiliate and encourage church members to attend this blessing service. You may view sample groundbreaking services in HFHI’s worship resource entitled Celebrations (Item #3347).

- When you are a week or so away from construction, have a kick-off dinner. Use this time to meet the partner family and to get the project started with some energy and excitement.

- Plan to have each church participate in some way in the dedication service. Services of dedication are also included in Celebrations (Item #3347).

- Work with affiliate leaders to plan a “Project Completed” celebration where all the churches come together for a slide show (including outtakes) and/or worship service. Thank God for this opportunity to be in ministry.

Providing opportunities to build community and to celebrate with the new homeowner family can help volunteers feel like they have been much more a part of something special as opposed to simply “showing up for their work shift.” Seek to create a community of servants that is passionate about building the next house.

**Communicate with One Another**

Put results of meetings/agreements/assignments in writing. Plan project team meetings every month or so to report on progress and to address challenges. Make sure to stay in touch with representatives who cannot be present. Recruit a volunteer to send out e-mail reminders or to make phone calls to remind members about assignments and the next minutes of meetings.
Assignment Sheet

Designate members of the project team to serve in the leadership roles described below. You may already have people serving in some positions. Record names and information in the blanks provided.

Note that the project team will have a coordinator for some jobs, and individual churches will have their own leaders for the same task. For example, the food coordinator for the project team is responsible for establishing a master list of what church brings food each day. The food coordinator at each church recruits people to prepare and transport food. The assignments below are for team members.

**Fund-raising Coordinator**

Helps churches with fund-raising advice. Assures that funds are collected on time.

**Food Coordinator**

Develops and coordinates a schedule that indicates which churches bring meals and snacks for each construction day. Makes reminder calls.

**Publicity Coordinator**

Leads the publicity committee in creating a media campaign. Contacts local media to encourage coverage of the Apostles Build project.

Who will work with the publicity coordinator to develop a campaign?

What media contacts do project team members have?

**Devotions Coordinator**

Invites pastors or others from apostle churches to lead devotions on each day of construction. Sends reminders and always has a backup.

**Partner Family Liaison**

Assures that the partner family is connected with the project. Schedules willing family members to visit churches.

**Safety Coordinator**

Makes sure people are working safely: wearing goggles and hard hats, using ladders correctly, using masks for insulation, taking special care on slippery surfaces, etc.

**Hospitality Coordinator**

Recruits someone to walk around the site each day, helping people find meaningful jobs to do.

**Community Coordinator**

Works closely with affiliate leaders to design events for the Apostles Build churches to create community.

**Internal Communications Coordinator**

Makes sure that accurate minutes are taken and distributed after each meeting, sends out reminders, etc.
Create a Master Project Schedule

As you begin to work with individual churches and begin to coordinate specific plans, you may find it useful to create a detailed master project schedule. Look at the sample on pages 27-28 to guide you in creating a schedule that works for your affiliate.

Responsibilities of the Affiliate

Prior to construction start, Habitat will purchase/acquire the building lot, provide the house plan and make provisions for a survey. The affiliate will also pull the proper permits, prepare the site and pour the foundation.

During the construction period, Habitat will review the construction progress, modify the building schedule as required, find and schedule subcontractors, schedule inspections, order and receive materials, review construction quality, track bills and pay expenses.
Sample Project Schedule

As you begin to work with individual churches and begin to coordinate specific plans, you may find it useful to create a detailed master project schedule like the one suggested below.

**Week 1—Build floor system/form sidewalks**

- Roll joists
- Lay decking
- Lay out walls
- Set forms for concrete

*10-15 volunteers needed*  *(Record names below)*

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Who are your crew leaders?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Who is the hospitality coordinator?

________________________________________________________________________________________

Who will lead devotions?

________________________________________________________________________________________

Who will be the safety coordinator?

________________________________________________________________________________________

Which church(es) will provide meals?

________________________________________________________________________________________
Notes for Week 1

Use the suggestions above to create the same master schedule for the remaining weeks. Habitat construction supervisors will establish a building schedule specific to your affiliate. They can also suggest the number of volunteers needed each week (usually around 15 people).

Possible Assignments Remaining for a 12-Week (or 12-Day) Schedule

Weeks 2 and 3—Frame and complete all walls

Week 4—Stand trusses, run sub fascia, sheath roof

Weeks 5–7—Windows, siding, Sheetrock and shingles

Weeks 8–9—Interior trim/doors

Week 10—Paint

Week 11—Landscape, storm doors

Week 12—Finish detail
Part 6

Apostle Church Responsibilities

The project team is responsible for organizing the big picture—for communicating the specifics of the project to each church. The actual tasks, such as fund raising and recruiting volunteers, must be done within each congregation. Consider these suggestions for each apostle church.

a. Pray

Pray for this project. Many churches lift the project up each Sunday during worship. Some churches have created a prayer journal where people can record/read prayers for the project. Others plan prayer vigils or even a month of prayer to focus on specific prayer requests.

b. Coordinate Volunteers

Someone in the congregation needs to be in charge of recruiting construction volunteers. Organizers should make it clear exactly how many people are needed on what dates. Then work within the systems of your congregation to sign people up. The master construction schedule will indicate how many people with skills will be needed, as well as how many people that only need a willing heart.

Have someone call a week ahead of time to confirm that volunteers will be ready to work on their assigned dates.

c. Provide and Deliver Food

Someone from each church should recruit helpers to prepare and deliver food to the work site on assigned days. This is a fantastic way to involve people who love to cook or people who have gifts in areas other than construction.
d. Develop Awareness and Fund-raising Campaigns

How will you get the word out in your church? An intense campaign that keeps Habitat for Humanity before the congregation for a month or so is very effective. Consider these possibilities:

- Lift up in prayer the Habitat project and all persons in need of shelter.
- Put a brief article in each issue of the newsletter and bulletin about the ministry of Habitat and this build in particular.
- Have “Mission Moments” each Sunday for a month during which volunteers spend two or three minutes telling about a specific aspect of Habitat. Let people know how they can help. Sample “Mission Moments” can be found in the HFHI worship resource entitled Celebrations (Item #3347).
- Work with the local Habitat affiliate to invite a partner family to speak during a worship service to explain what a difference owning a home has made in the life of his or her family.
- Plan a Habitat Sunday where everyone comes to worship in work clothes. Take a special offering or have a special pledge Sunday and use construction hats as offering plates.
- Get children fired up by inviting them to use HFHI’s fund-raising calendar (Item #3079). Also use the Apostles Build project as the subject of a children’s sermon.
- Consider the ideas listed in Appendix A for involving children and youth.
- Organize fund-raisers like the ones suggested in Appendix C.
- Keep the congregation updated about funds raised to date. Give information about the partner family when available. Distribute maps to the build site, etc. Put in a prominent place a visual reminder of fund-raising progress (such as a thermometer or a drawing of a house that is colored in proportion to the amount of money raised).

6. Capture the Moments

Encourage volunteers from each church to take photos, make slides or PowerPoint presentations, record videos, write down special moments, create scrapbooks, etc. Keep a bulletin board in the church fellowship hall and/or a page on the church’s Web site updated with pictures of ongoing progress. The congregation will be glad to have a record of this ministry opportunity.
Part 7

Ongoing Affiliate Responsibilities

- Send a written thank you note to each Apostles Build partner upon the signing of a covenant agreement and when the project is complete.

- Provide regular updates for church newsletters and committee meetings.

- Make sure the construction site is well run. Habitat owes its volunteers the commitment that building materials will be on site when needed and that construction supervisors will graciously teach newcomers how to do the work that needs to be done.

- Invite one pastor to breakfast or lunch once a month during the course of the project. Staying in touch with the church partners, recognizing and appreciating them and keeping them informed are essential.

- Offer challenges to repeat the build next year. Suggest that the apostle groups split and help guide two Apostles Build projects the following year. Urge the churches to take a break, but always present opportunities for future involvement.
Conclusion

Thank you for considering an Apostles Build project as a way to serve more of God’s people in need through hands-on work by concerned churches! We know that God will bless your efforts! Throughout the process, feel free to contact us in the Church Relations department. We are happy to answer your questions and refer you to other affiliates that have successfully implemented this model.

Ongoing Church Relations

An Apostles Build project is just one tool for recruiting church partners. Consult the Affiliate Guide to Church Relations (Item #3260) or contact the Church Relations department for information about establishing or expanding your Church Relations program.

Contact Us

Contact us at (800) HABITAT (422-4828), Ext. 4317 or by e-mail at churchrelations@habitat.org. Please share your stories with us so that you may be an encouragement and inspiration to other communities.

Ordering Information

You may order any of the resources suggested in this workbook from Habitat for Humanity’s BuildBrand Resource Center at http://buildbrand.habitat.org or by calling the Help Line at (800) HABITAT, (422-4828), Ext. 2552 with the name and item number of the resources you wish to order.
Activities for Involving Youth and Children

Many of these ideas are appropriate for multiple age ranges or can be used in a modified form.

Ages 5-7

■ Make a welcome basket for the homeowner family and sing a song at the dedication.
■ Stock the pantry for the homeowner family.
■ Draw or color greeting cards to be sold at a fund-raiser or design thank you notes to be used for the project.
■ Construct house banks to use as a fund-raising tool.
■ Have a coloring sheet contest and put entries in the local paper with facts about the Apostles Build project.

Ages 7-10

■ Make blocks or bricks that can be used to build homes or as fund-raising items.
■ Landscape—learn about the local environment and, with the permission of the homeowners, plant trees and plants in the yard.
■ Coordinate a birthday gift project for partner family children.
■ Tour the work site and learn about sweat equity from a homeowner.

Ages 10-12

■ Speak to classmates about the mission of Habitat for Humanity.
■ Construct and paint window boxes to be used as housewarming gifts or as fund-raising items.
■ Help clear the construction site of debris before or after construction.
■ Design a T-shirt to be sold at an Apostles Build event.
■ Help fold or stuff newsletters or mailings or write thank you notes.
Ages 12-14

■ Design a Web page or newsletter for the project.
■ Register volunteers at the construction site information table.
■ Paint doors and baseboards off site before they are put into the house.
■ Work with a media teacher or class to design and produce a video for the project.

Ages 15-17

■ Start a Habitat for Humanity campus chapter (www.habitat.org/ccyp).
■ Build picnic or lunch tables for the work site or for the homeowners.
■ Tutor younger partner family children.
■ Provide babysitting for children of homeowners or volunteers.
■ Clean the house before the dedication.
■ Talk to a partner family about how Habitat has impacted them, write about their experiences and publish one of their reflections in a newsletter.
■ Organize and serve meals to volunteers on the work site.
■ Shovel gravel into a foundation.
Putnam County Habitat for Humanity

Apostles Build 2006

Building houses, Building hope

Our Mission

Putnam County Habitat for Humanity is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with God and people everywhere, from all walks of life, to develop communities with God’s people in need by building and renovating houses so that three are decent homes in decent communities in which people can live and grow into all that God intended.

Since 1995 Putnam County Habitat for Humanity (PCHFH) has partnered with churches, businesses, organizations, and individuals to build and provide homes for 31 families. That’s one hundred individuals who have experienced the pride and stability provided by home ownership. Each family went through our education curriculum, worked hundreds of sweat equity hours, and then bought their home at cost with an interest-free mortgage.

With the continuing rising costs of housing and a population with more than 38 percent of the households at income levels below $25,000 annually, there is a demand in Putnam County for the work of Habitat. Everyone deserves the opportunity for a safe, decent, and affordable home.

One of Habitat’s natural partners is the church community. Building a Habitat home provides the church an outlet for missions, fellowship, and putting faith into action. The Apostles Build is a new program at PCHFH designed to encourage churches to take part in the ministry by providing the opportunity for affordable housing to those in need right here in Putnam County.

I will show you my faith by what I do.
James 2:18b
Sample Brochure for an Apostles Build Project

What will happen to the home? What will happen to the community? What will happen to the church? The mission?

To answer these questions, we open the doors to our program, the Apostles Build. It is a program designed to integrate the church and the community to build homes for those who need them. The purpose is not just to build a house, but to build a community. The project involves community leaders, church members, and volunteers who work together to create a new home for a family in need.

How will it work?

The process of building a home using the Apostles Build is a collaborative effort. It involves

1. Identifying the community need and selecting a site
2. Forming a partnership with the church and community leaders
3. Identifying and mobilizing volunteers
4. Designing and constructing the home
5. Completing the installation in a short period

By working together, we can empower the community to take ownership of the home and become part of the solution.

Benefits of a Partnership

Partnership with the church and the community has several benefits:

- Increased visibility and awareness of the project
- Strengthened relationship between the church and the community
- Increased community involvement and ownership
- Improved quality and affordability of the home
- Improved community relationships and trust

In conclusion, the Apostles Build project is a unique opportunity to bring the church and community together to build a home, creating a foundation for future success.

Apostles Build 2006
Fund-raising Ideas for Churches

- **Pray about it!**
  
  Prayer empowers us to do God’s work and helps us make difficult decisions.

- **Make Habitat a line item in the congregation’s budget**
  
  This will ensure regular participation in Habitat’s work.

- **Serve up your congregation’s favorite dinner, desserts or ice cream**
  
  Plan a social and spice it up with a speaker or a dance or performers.

- **Trade treasures at a garage sale**
  
  People seem to give more, in every way, when a garage sale is connected with a cause.

- **Make noise with a silent auction**
  
  Offer baskets to biscuits and music to meals. Persuasive organizers can obtain terrific donations from area businesses. Proceeds can number in the thousands.

- **Get creative with a craft show**
  
  Solicit crafters from the congregation and the community to donate items or a portion of sales.

- **Ask for alternative gifts**
  
  A young man at a synagogue raised more than $800 for Habitat as a bar-mitzvah project.

- **Make a model house**
  
  Build a model house in which to collect donations. Place the house in high traffic areas.

- **Distribute Habitat house banks and fund-raising calendars**
  
  Children learn to count their blessings and join in the giving as they collect dimes for every closet in their home and pennies for every light fixture and so forth. The calendars (Item #3079) are $2.50 per pack of 50, and the house banks (Item #1600) are 15 cents each. Visit BuildBrand or call (800) HABITAT (422-4828), Ext. 2552 to place an
order.

- **Buy a brick**
  Create a grid on a poster containing a drawing of a house. Sell sections of the grid and write donors’ names in the spaces.

- **Sell square feet**
  Create a stylized foot on a certificate and have fun selling “square feet” for a house.

- **Organize a 2x4 Sunday**
  Sell the 2x4’s that you will use for construction. Invite purchasers to sign the 2 x 4’s and to write encouraging messages on them. Expand the campaign to include other building materials.

- **Pound it home with a nail sale**
  Paint the tips of nails and sell them—$1 for a bronze, $3 for a silver, $5 for a gold.

- **Step out with the youth for a walkathon**
  Set a high goal and challenge youth to obtain “over the top” pledges.

- **Phone a friend**
  Have the walkathon youth challenge another group in the church to match their donations through a phone tree campaign.

- **Collect a mile of pennies or nickels or dimes.**
  Have your resident genius figure out how much that would net and then get to work.

- **Crank up a concert**
  Invite members or local artists to give a benefit concert for Habitat.

- **Collect aluminum cans**
  Your local Habitat affiliate can tell you about great possibilities in partnering with the Aluminum Association.

- **Promote an alternative Christmas**
  Sell Christmas ornaments or other items. You may prefer to simply ask for donations. Provide gift/acknowledgement cards.

- **Honor special friends at homecoming**
  When you gather to celebrate the heritage of faith in your congregation, ask for donations to be made in honor or memory of
special people. Create certificates.

- **Plan a special offering or offerings**
  Designate a specific Sunday, a holiday, a Habitat month or fifth Sundays as times for special Habitat offerings. Publicize this early and be aggressive.

- **Multiply your talents**
  Your congregation can provide seed money ($100 - $1,000 or more) to be made available to congregation members to carry out a modern version of the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-29). Give members a portion of that money to make more money. When St. Giles Presbyterian Church, in Greenville, S.C., did this, their original $21,000 was tripled to more than $66,000!

- **Try the tried and true**
  Bake sales, auctions, babysitting, preparing mailings for businesses and clean up days for donations are often still great fund-raisers.

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**Public Relations Plan**

Many affiliates have found that an Apostles Build has the potential to generate tremendous exposure through local and sometimes national media coverage. The following information can help you package the event as newsworthy and can help you determine what steps need to be taken when. Early in the process, think about what would make a good story:

- Which homeowners have a touching story?
- How have volunteers been moved by this event?
- Who are the unlikely participants?
- What partnerships have broken down barriers or generated excitement?
- How have children/youth been involved?
- What other “people stories” could you highlight?
Providing leads such as these to local media outlets will give you the best opportunity to get coverage. Contact television and radio stations, newspapers, regional magazines, local religious publications and any other media in your area.

Continue to identify story possibilities as the event progresses. A good story is the hook that will attract media attention. When contacting local media, keep these ideas in mind:

■ Know your audience. What information can you offer about the Apostles Build that would interest the community?

■ Get to know the reporters. Work with their schedules and requests. Return their calls promptly. They have deadlines to meet.

■ Send out complete, accurate and timely information.

■ Invite the media to be a part of the event. Radio shows have broadcast from the site and television stations have done weather reports from construction sites.

■ Hold groundbreakings or house dedications at times that will encourage media coverage (early in the afternoon, for example).

■ Provide reporters with a knowledgeable person who can answer questions. Also identify homeowners and volunteers who are willing to be interviewed.

Identify HFHI

In all information you distribute to the media, include a description of HFHI and how it works. You may wish to summarize the information under “Habitat for Humanity International” found at the beginning of this manual.

Develop a Media Plan

HFHI’s Communications department has developed a very thorough guide that can help you work with the media. Search under “Working
The following tools may help you prepare media information.

Pitch Letter
About two months before your build, consider sending a one-page pitch letter to inform the media about plans for your Apostles Build project. Summarize the idea in one paragraph. Then offer a few details to pique interest and make it clear why this event is important to the community. Provide the name and telephone number of someone who can provide further information.

News Release
You may send several news releases to promote various events. For example, you may wish to announce each of the following:
- The groundbreaking (invite the media for photos and video).
- Celebrity/VIP participation—If you have invited special guests to be a part of your celebration, announce their appearances and availability for interviews.
- Good stories. Again, look for new angles. What makes this event different from other builds?

Media Alert
Your chances of obtaining good coverage increase when you continue to announce your Apostles Build events. Three to five days before a groundbreaking, press conference, photo opportunity, worship service, etc., fax a media alert that highlights the specific event—even if you have included the information in a previous release. Fax a reminder early on the day of the event as well.
Sample Safety Procedures

The work site is always a place where safety is an issue of concern. Floors may not be complete, and people are working on ladders and/or scaffolding, using power tools and doing things with which they may not have any previous experience. To make your time on the site more productive and your experience more positive, please take special note of these safety issues and keep them in mind when you are on site.

WHAT TO KNOW

■ When you arrive at the site, please sign in and list a contact phone number in case of emergency. Make two name tags, one for the front and one for the back. Also, be sure to sign out at the end of the day!

■ Make it a point to learn where the emergency telephone is located. If you are relying on a cell phone or phones, make sure they are easily accessible. Also make sure to write down directions to the work site. In the event that you have to call paramedics, you will want to be able to give clear, accurate directions.

■ Our supervisory staff is not equipped for younger volunteers. As a result, we require that all site participants be at least 16 years old.

■ Your clothing should be suitable for a construction site. When Old Man Winter rolls around, plan to dress in layers. Rain gear may be helpful.

■ Dress shoes and sandals/flip-flops are not acceptable on site at any time. Work boots with thick soles are preferable to sneakers as nails can easily go through the thin rubber soles. However, tennis shoes are allowed, especially on the roof.

■ If you wear contact lenses, please wear glasses to the site. There can be a lot of dust and dirt in the air and there is not a place to wash your hands and rinse lenses. Goggles are available to protect glasses/eyes from debris (required when using power tools).

■ If you prefer to wear gloves when working, please bring a pair because there may not be enough to go around. We have plenty of hard hats available on site for times when they are needed.
have long hair you may want to wear it up—out of a machine’s reach.

- Keep in mind that you are outside and will be exposed to the wind and sun. You may want to wear sunscreen, especially during the summer months.

- Drink plenty of water.

A construction supervisor will provide you with safety instructions at the beginning of each work day.