



Jimmy Carter and Habitat for Humanity

As president of the United States, Jimmy Carter was deeply committed to social justice and basic human rights. He and his wife Rosalynn left the White House in search of meaningful ways to contribute in these areas. They have found a perfect match for their ideals in the housing ministry of Habitat for Humanity International.

“God blesses us beyond our expectations. It’s difficult for people like you and me who are rich to know how to share it. Habitat, above any other organization I know on earth, gives us a chance to break through that shell.”

— Jimmy Carter, former U.S. president

Jimmy Carter Work Project

The seed of the Jimmy Carter Work Project was planted in March 1984 when former President Carter worked at a Habitat site in Americus, Ga. For two decades now, he has led the annual event that bears his name. The JCWP is an internationally recognized event of HFHI, in which Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter join Habitat volunteers to build homes and raise awareness of the critical need for affordable housing. The project is at a different location each year.

“We have become small players in an exciting global effort to alleviate the curse of homelessness,” Carter has said. “With our many new friends, we have worked to raise funds, to publicize the good work of Habitat, to recruit other volunteers, to visit overseas projects and even to build a few houses.”

Since leaving office, Carter has gained a reputation as a tireless champion for social justice. “Habitat has successfully removed the stigma of charity by substituting it with a sense of partnership,” says Carter. “The people who will live in the homes work side by side with the volunteers, so they feel very much that they are on an equal level.”

Worldwide View Shared by Carter and Habitat

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit Christian housing ministry dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and making decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat has built about 200,000 homes worldwide. Volunteers work with future homeowners to build or renovate houses, which are then sold to partner families at no profit. The money from the sale of each house goes into a revolving Fund for Humanity to support future building projects.

“Habitat has opened up unprecedented opportunities for me to cross the chasm that separates those of us who are free, safe, financially secure, well-fed and housed, and influential enough to shape our own destiny from our neighbors who enjoy few, if any,



of these advantages of life,” says Carter.

While the former president is a noted carpenter (the White House staff gave him tools for his workshop when he left the presidency), Rosalynn also has gained building experience with Habitat.

The former first lady describes her work on a Habitat project in *Everything to Gain*, a book that was co-written by the Carters: “I didn’t think I could use a hammer and I didn’t want to use a hammer. At first it took me 15 or 20 strokes for each nail, but before the week was over I could drive one in with only four or five strokes!”

President Carter has said, “I get a lot more recognition for building houses in partnership with people than I ever got for the Camp David Accord or for SALT II or for all our projects in Africa or Asia or anything I do now since I left the White House. I can walk down the aisles of airplanes talking with people and invariably the number one thing that everybody says is, “Tell me about Habitat.”

Historic Jimmy Carter Work Project Sites

- **1984/1985**—New York City
- **June 1986**—Chicago, Illinois
- **July 1987**—Charlotte, North Carolina
- **June 1988**—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Atlanta, Georgia
- **June 1989**—Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- **June 1990**—Tijuana, Mexico, and San Diego, California
- **June 1991**—Miami, Florida
- **June 1992**—Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland
- **July 1993**—Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
- **July 1994**—Eagle Butte, South Dakota
- **June 1995**—Southern California
- **August 1996**—Vác, Hungary
- **June 1997**—Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee
- **June 1998**—Houston, Texas
- **March 1999**—Metro Manila, Bacolod City, Tagbilaran City, Dumaguete City, General Santos City and Parañaque, Philippines
- **September 2000**—New York City; Jacksonville, Florida; Plains and Americus, Georgia
- **August 2001**—Seoul, South Korea
- **June 2002**—Durban, South Africa
- **June 2003**—Anniston, Alabama; LaGrange and Valdosta, Georgia
- **October 2004**—Puebla and Veracruz, Mexico
- **June 2005**—Benton Harbor and Detroit, Michigan
- **October 2006**—Lonavala, India

