



## **Volunteer Construction Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **What is Habitat for Humanity?**

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world, and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County supports that goal by seeking to eliminate poverty housing in our local community.

Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need.

### **How does Habitat work?**

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and financed with affordable no interest loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor — sweat equity — into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

### **What is a day like on the site?**

*We work from 8:45 am – 4:30 pm and take about an hour for lunch; promptness is expected.* Everyone needs to be present at 8:45 am so that the Habitat representative will be able to start introductions, safety and construction instructions, an outline of the work to be done, and an opening prayer. Those present will then be divided into smaller groups to work on specific jobs. Please inform the Site Supervisor at the beginning of the day if you have physical limitations because volunteers will be performing physically demanding construction work.

### **What tools will each volunteer need?**

Each volunteer is required to bring his or her own personal tools including a hammer, measuring tape, utility knife, carpenter's pencil, work gloves and a tool belt. Please label all tools before arriving so they can be identified as yours. If you are unable to bring tools of your own, Site Supervisors will often try to assign tasks which do not require personal tools.

### **What else do I need to bring?**

Volunteers should also bring a lunch, unless the volunteer coordinator informs your group that lunch will be provided. Water, coffee, and tea are provided at the site, but please bring your own marked, identifiable, reusable cup and/or water bottle to help us preserve our planet.

### **What should volunteers wear?**

Since the temperature can change frequently, it is best to dress in layers. It is also helpful to have rain gear and sunscreen handy. Please wear clothes that are loose-fitting, but not baggy. Also, please wear sturdy shoes (shoes that leave no toes or heels exposed).

### **Is there an age limit?**

*Volunteers under the age of 14 are not permitted on a Habitat building.* Volunteers between the ages of 14 and 16 are limited to landscaping, painting, and other light, non-hazardous activities. Volunteers under the age of 18 are not allowed on the roof, nor to use power tools or engage in demolition work. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a Release and Waiver of Liability for Minors signed by a parent or legal guardian-before coming out to the building site.

### **What skills does a person need?**

No construction skills are necessary to volunteer; all skill levels are welcome. Skilled volunteers are asked to mentor and teach new volunteers.

### **What do I need to do before volunteering for the build?**

Complete a New Volunteer Orientation which will include the following:

- 1) Read our safety instructions and sign our Release and Waiver of Liability. You may also want to watch our safety video available on the 'Volunteer' page of our website.
- 2) Sign up for a day through VolunteerUp or the Volunteer Coordinator.
- 3) If you completed an on-line New Volunteer Orientation, please be sure to bring your Release and Waiver of Liability with you to the jobsite!

### **What if I want to continue volunteering after the initial workday?**

You are welcome to come out as often as you wish. We would appreciate the help! Please be sure to schedule each day you volunteer either through VolunteerUp or the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Who is responsible if someone gets hurt while working at Habitat?**

The Release and Waiver of Liability form signed by each volunteer expressly states that the volunteer assumes the risk of injury or harm in the activities and releases Habitat from all liability for injury, illness, death, or property damage resulting from the activities. Habitat does provide medical insurance that is an **Excess Accidental Medical Program** designed to provide coverage in the event of an accidental bodily injury or death. Volunteers are covered while they are participating in a Habitat-sponsored activity, and this coverage will wrap around the volunteer's personal health insurance. If the volunteer does not have any health insurance, then this policy becomes primary. The maximum benefit period for all volunteers is two (2) years.

### **What about working with the future owner of the home?**

Building relationships with our partner families is just as important as the houses we construct. Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County's process is designed to ensure that future homeowners are an integral part of the building process. Future homeowners are trying to earn "sweat

equity" hours so they can begin working on their own homes, and we encourage our volunteers to get to know our partner families.

*Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County!*