



SIHH GLOBAL VILLAGE PARAGUAY TRIP 2009

Why did we go to Paraguay?

After a longstanding relationship of tithing a percentage of our donations to Habitat for Humanity Ghana, we made the decision to reevaluate where the greatest need exists. While there is still a need for our tithe in Ghana, we have the ability to tithe to more than one international affiliate.

After much deliberation and evaluation of various international affiliates, we have decided to expand our tithe to Paraguay as well. Paraguay is the 3rd poorest country in South America with an estimated housing deficit of 470,000 homes and few government-funded housing subsidy programs are available. It is important to us to not only give financially to support international affiliates but also to build our Global Village trip program to support them through building with them. They have recently begun their Global Village program and have a need for groups to come and help make it a successful program.



For all of these reasons we took a group of staff, homeowners, volunteers, and donors on a 10 day trip to build with Habitat for Humanity Paraguay. Amy Sanchez, a SIHH Homeowner and our Office Assistant, says of the group, "We went on a mission to build a more decent home for a family in need, and we went with open hearts."



What did we do in Paraguay?

Our main purpose for our trip was to build a home for a deserving family, and that is what we did. Our team, the family, and Habitat Paraguay staff came together to work as a team on the construction of the home. In addition, we were able to enjoy such cultural events as making chipa, traditional Paraguayan bread; visiting a local barrio to witness substandard housing conditions and what is being done in terms of community development; playing soccer with the masons; meeting with leaders of a local indigenous reserve to discuss their situation; spending an afternoon at an eco-reserve rappelling, zip-lining, and hiking; touring Asunción; and a home dedication and barbecue with the family.

Make your world a home

Habitat for Humanity Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has a slogan: "Make your world a home, become an albañil." An albañil is a mason. Habitat LAC encourages each of us to make the difference that is needed to provide adequate housing.

SIHH feels passionately about not letting our mission of providing adequate housing stop with the barrier islands. We realize the importance of being part of a greater community brought together by the same mission. Jillian Cain, our Deconstruction Manager, put it simply in saying getting to know Habitat Paraguay staff and homeowners "felt no different than getting to know the people I work with and serve here, so it was comforting to me that it felt like an extension of my work and our efforts here in the Charleston area." It was remarkable to see the Habitat community we have built in Johns Island grow to include Paraguay.



Faith and hope

Marjorie McCormick, an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer serving with our Family Services department said, "I was very surprised to hear the statistics of how many people have inadequate housing in Paraguay, even though I expected it would be a high percentage, it was still staggering to hear." This staggering percentage is the reason we went to Paraguay with hope and faith to serve.

Jillian said that the hope she brought with her to Paraguay was, "met full on by the sincerity and hard work of the family, staff and masons and has grown into something larger that expects to see our global community grow stronger through our efforts."

Amy shared with us her belief that with faith, "anything is possible," and the hope that brought her to Paraguay has shown her that "you should never give up regardless of the circumstances." As we stood at the end our week at the house dedication before a family in tearful joy, we witnessed the tremendous impact that a small group with a lot of faith and hope is able to make.

