

GREENE COUNTY HABITAT WORK CAMP INFORMATION SHEET

GENERAL: The purpose of Greene County Habitat for Humanity is to build and renovate houses in partnership with families in need of decent shelter. We feel called by Jesus Christ to be involved as partners in this endeavor. The visiting work camps spend most of their time working on the houses we are building or renovating. There may be times when work camp members may be asked to help in our warehouse, or with office work such as folding newsletters or preparing mailings. This should also be seen as working toward our goal of eliminating poverty housing in Greene County. Each family with whom we work has a need for decent shelter. Circumstances of health, unemployment, or other situations may have contributed to this need. Work camp participants are encouraged to spend time together prior to their arrival here, talking about their views (and stereotypes) of poverty and those we call "the poor." It would also be helpful for some groups to discuss the difference between doing something for someone in need (charity) and doing something with someone in need (partnership). Work camp members are also encouraged to discern their own needs in being involved in a work camp experience with Habitat.

AGE OF WORK CAMP PARTICIPANTS:

The desire to serve in this ministry is the primary criterion for work camp participants. Past work groups have been composed of adults only, youth groups with adult sponsors, and families (with childcare for young children provided by the group members). Senior high age youths are the youngest participants we can consider without special permission.

GROUP SIZE:

We have found that a group of 10 - 15 is the ideal size to have on a work site. We will consider larger groups, but the feedback we have received from some larger groups has been that some of their members felt they were not kept busy enough.

SKILL LEVEL OF WORK CAMP PARTICIPANTS:

Both the ongoing work of our local volunteers and the work of prior work camps make it hard to predict exactly where we will be in a project more than a few weeks in advance of a group's arrival. At times, we have (or can save) a number of tasks on which a relatively less-skilled group can work and feel a sense of satisfaction. At other times, we are at the point where most tasks require semi-skilled or even skilled workers. In some cases, we have found our construction supervisor and/or local skilled volunteers alone cannot provide enough supervision to keep a large group of less-skilled workers busy. This is why we request that you have skilled volunteers in your group who can teach those who are less skilled. Therefore, our Building Committee requests that groups bring skilled workers in the ratio of 1

skilled to 5 less-skilled workers in order to help make the work camp experience a beneficial one for both the group and the Habitat ministry.

ACCOMODATIONS:

We arrange for groups to stay in local churches. Since participants will be sleeping on the floor, they may wish to bring an air mattress, foam pad or even a cot along with their sleeping bag and pillow. Leaders should be sure that their group's participants are ready for 'community living.'

MEALS:

Each group is responsible for the planning and preparation of its own meals. The churches at which the groups stay have adequate kitchen facilities, utensils, dishes and silverware. There are grocery stores throughout the County. There are two larger ones in Waynesburg. Groups prepare their breakfast at the church and usually pack their lunches and eat them at the work site. Dinners are prepared at the church, and a variety of parks offer options for evening picnics. Waynesburg also has its share of fast food restaurants. We have been quite successful in arranging for one sit-down dinner per visiting group to be prepared at some point during your week's stay.

SHOWERS:

The churches, at which groups stay, do not have shower facilities. We will make arrangements for groups to shower at the end of their work day at either Waynesburg College, one of the area high schools or, in summer, at the local swimming pool.

LAUNDRY:

There are no laundry facilities at churches where the groups will be staying. There are laundromats nearby.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES:

Our work camps usually arrive on Sunday afternoon so they have time to settle into the church at which they will be staying, and to become familiar with shopping facilities and the community in general. Usually, on Sunday evening, a member of the Habitat Board or staff will give an orientation to Greene County Habitat, and the work scheduled for the week. Groups normally depart Saturday morning after a thorough cleanup of the church is completed.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

We try to tailor a schedule to the group's desires. Groups normally go to the work site at 8:30 AM, with devotions usually at the beginning of the day. An hour is usually taken for lunch, and the work day ends around 4:30 PM. Groups may work

Monday through Friday with an option to take off one afternoon for an extended activity. One important part of the work camp experience is having the opportunity to work with Habitat families. Since most people, including our homeowners, work during the day, we may prefer to rearrange the schedule to include one or two evenings during the week to ensure that contact is made with the Homeowner family. We will discuss this option with groups if it appears to be necessary.

FREE TIME ACTIVITIES:

There are a number of possibilities for free time activities in and around Greene County. Some of these activities include swimming, hiking, bowling, movies, and museums. More details will be mailed if you decide to apply.

PERSONAL HEALTH:

Group leaders should encourage all work camp participants to have had a physical examination in the past year. All participants must have a current tetanus shot. Often youth are due a booster at around age 14. Special health needs should be made known on the application.

INSURANCE:

Greene County Habitat for Humanity carries an accident insurance policy that provides secondary coverage for those injured while working at our Habitat sites. This insurance supplements the coverage provided by the injured person's own insurance. Groups may wish to investigate their insurance needs and coverage when an injury occurs away from the work site.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MINISTRY:

Work camps are asked to contribute to the financial needs of the Habitat ministry as well as offering their time and talent. The suggested financial amount is \$125.00 per worker. Some groups have wondered about the rationale for this request. Some groups have been insulted by this request and chosen not to apply. Habitat for Humanity is a ministry seeking to link those who have a need for decent shelter with those who have a need to use their gifts and resources to see that decent shelter is provided. We ask work camps to offer their monetary resources to this partnership, along with their time and talent. A Greene County Habitat for Humanity house costs approximately \$60,000. The money we receive from work camps helps us with our challenge to raise funds from individuals, churches, businesses, and grants in a County where the population is only 40,000 people. Thus, it is also for a purely practical reason that we request work camps to help the ministry financially. We provide full-time construction supervision during each work camp, paid in part by the work camp contribution. This provides for needed continuity from week to week as our groups come and go. In addition, materials are also purchased with your work camp contribution. Some groups have raised their

contributions through special fund raisers. Others have been supported by an item in their church's mission budget. Still others have asked participants to provide all or part of the contribution individually. If you need some fund raising ideas, please give us a call. Special note: We are committed to serving God by providing quality work camp experiences. If you feel called to work with us and lack the funds, please contact us and we will be glad to work with you.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

After sensing a call to participate in a work camp with Greene County Habitat, churches and groups must complete a **GROUP APPLICATION FOR WORK CAMPS**. This should be returned as soon as possible with a \$125.00 application deposit. The deposit will be returned if we cannot accommodate your group or if you cancel 60 days prior to your scheduled arrival date.

APPLICATION DECISIONS:

Our Volunteer/Work Camp Committee, in consultation with our Building Committee, makes decisions concerning our work camps at its monthly meetings. If more than one group applies for the same week, the Volunteer/Work Camp Committee, in coordination with our Buildings Committee, will determine which group best suits our needs.

GREENE COUNTY INFORMATION:

For years, Greene County has been dependent on the coal industry. Greene County continues to lead the state in coal production. Two of the largest producing underground coal mines in the Country operate in the northern part of the County. Still, the combination of lower sulfur western coal, alternative energy sources, and increased mechanization have brought about massive unemployment in the coal industry. Greene County's unemployment rate is often twice the state average. Sub-standard housing often goes hand in hand with such realities as unemployment, as does poor health, poor nutrition, illiteracy, elderly, or disabled people living on fixed incomes, unpaved roads, etc. Greene County has many "pockets of poverty." Winding through the hills of the County, you will commonly see a cluster of houses in desperate need of repair - roofs, porches, weatherization, and paint. Of course, there are neighborhoods of nice homes, but often just down the street or even in back of them, one can again be confronted with the heartbreaking reality of poverty. The 40,000 people of Greene County are its pride and joy. Incredibly friendly and hospitable, they are deeply proud of their County and its history. They consider Greene County one of the best places in the world to live and will gladly tell you about it. If you come to Greene County, we hope you will be open to a wonderful, even unforgettable, experience.