

## Habitat Assists in Tsunami Relief Effort

– By Kortney Siegert

The world was shocked by the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami that killed over 200,000 people and left millions homeless. Each and every one of us was touched by this tragedy that struck just one day after celebrating the birth of our Lord. Thankfully, there are many humanitarian relief organizations working hard to provide assistance to the victims of this catastrophe.

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) has an active presence in six of the 12 affected countries – Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh. The organization is working with local Habitat offices and international partner organizations to assess and respond to short and long-term shelter needs. “It is important that we move as quickly as possible to help these families get into safe and appropriate shelter,” said Paul Leonard, chief executive officer of HFHI.

Habitat for Humanity is now working on plans to house up to 25,000 families in a first-phase effort, then to provide permanent homes for tens of thousands more

in the second phase. In Phase I, the immediate priority is to help families move out of the overcrowded, diseased and crime-infested camps and other temporary shelters, and into transitional housing. “The families most impacted were the very poor, and there is a serious need to get them out of camps and back onto their own land as soon as possible,” said Steve Weir, vice president for HFHI’s work in the Asia-Pacific region.

Phase II involves working with families in transitional housing to build more permanent structures with additional rooms. HFHI’s existing “Save and Build” program will be one initiative used in this effort. This program allows for up to one dozen families to save together until there is enough money for one house to get built or expanded. The savings cycle continues until every family has a permanent home. The “Save and Build” program not only assists families with the smallest of incomes, but it also builds community cohesion and support.

In addition to their two-phase



*In Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, nine-year-old Manimala carries a cement block for her simple, decent new Habitat home.*

approach, HFHI is in the process of developing Disaster Response Technical Centers in at least four countries, which will provide technical expertise and assistance to families. One center, already functional in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka is currently running three shifts a day, producing 3,600 concrete blocks every 24 hours to meet the demands for reconstruction. In addition, this operation is providing opportunities for Habitat families who lost wage-earners to work at the center to earn replacement wages.

For more information about Habitat for Humanity International’s work in Southeast Asia, please visit their website, [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org). ▲

## The ReStore Celebrates its First Anniversary

– By John Veteto, ReStore Manager

Many of you helped us celebrate the Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity ReStore’s Grand Opening on January 17, 2004. It is hard to believe we just celebrated our first anniversary. I am awed

You may remember that, when the store opened, the shelves were only 20 percent filled with materials. There was only one area for receiving, sorting, and pricing of donated items. This single area



*From left to right: Barb Petersen, ReStore Volunteer Coordinator, John Veteto, ReStore Manager, and Dudley Banner, Assistant Manager*

by the transformation of the ReStore and am thankful to be part of helping to build an idea into a reality.

also served to move purchased goods to the customers’ vehicles. It was very crowded, to say the least. At first, there were a handful of volunteers and only one individual knew how to operate the cash register. All materials that were given to the ReStore had to be delivered by the donors.

If you have been to the store lately, you’ve seen how much things have changed. Now all the shelving is fully utilized. We have expanded our original sales area of 7,500

square feet to 10,000 square feet and added a separate area of 3,000 square feet for receiving, sorting and pricing. An additional 2,500 square feet of covered exterior storage has also been added. Our own ReStore truck picks up donated materials every Wednesday and Friday. Many enthusiastic volunteers contributed over 4,500 hours in 2004. Our sales have continued to increase each month. In January of 2005, we added an assistant ReStore Manager, Dudley Banner, to the staff. WOW!

I believe the amazing success of the ReStore is because of God’s graciousness, the high quality of both individual and company donations, and the outstanding dedication of our awesome volunteers. It is my privilege to serve as the Habitat ReStore Manager.

You can help us continue to grow and support Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity. Remember that by donating your re-sellable materials, volunteering your time and talents, and by shopping and purchasing at the ReStore, you are helping families in need in our community. We, and they, are truly grateful. ▲