

DREAMBUILDERS VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



an interfaith community of teens and adults building homes for those in need

2025 edition

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"

1 Peter 4:10 NIV

Welcome to DreamBuilders!

We're so glad you're here. By showing up, you're doing more than just hammering a nail - you're helping a family move one step closer to a safe, stable place to call home. Your time, energy, and willingness to help make a real difference.

This handbook is here to help you. It covers highlights of what to expect and gives you basic safety guidelines, tool tips, and advice from people who have been in your shoes. Whether it's your first build or one of your many journeys with us, your work matters, and we're grateful for it.

You're not just building walls. You're helping to build someone's future.





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¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled", without giving them the things needed for the body, what good^[a] is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:14-18

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DREAMBUILDERS ORGANIZATION



Our Mission...

DreamBuilders is a multi-faith, all-volunteer organization committed to transforming lives through building and repairing safe, affordable housing for individuals and families in need. Rooted in compassion and community service, DreamBuilders unites youth and adults from diverse congregations. We work locally, nationally, and internationally on construction projects that restore dignity, security, and hope. Through hands-on service, DreamBuilders empowers volunteers to make a lasting impact and meet critical needs in communities affected by poverty, disaster, and hardship.



DreamBuilders

An interfaith community of teens and adults building homes for those in need

- Founded in 2002 at St. Mark's, Highland
- Have touched the lives of over 500 people in need
- We work locally, nationally, and internationally
- Our projects are focused on disaster relief regions
- Our reputation:
 - Very organized
 - Hard working
 - Quality work



ARC Home Renovation Project (2016)

DreamBuilders Leadership Team

This is an ALL volunteer team

- **Ascension** – Buck Lyon-Vaiden
- **Christ Church** – Stacey Frith, Cathy Gold
- **St Mark's** – Bill & Pam Brazis, John McBeth, Brian Rezac, Lisa Viglotti
- **Temple Isaiah** – Marge & Arthur Gold, Amy & Ben Levitt, Doug Silverstein
- **Trinity** – Herb Malveaux, Michelle Uhler
- **Independent** – Carolyn & Skip Steiner, Dave Lazas, Verna Karolenko, Drew Fisher, Candi Krug

DreamBuilders Member Organizations



Ascension, Westminster, MD



Christ Church, Columbia, MD



St. Mark's, Highland, MD



Trinity, Elkridge, MD



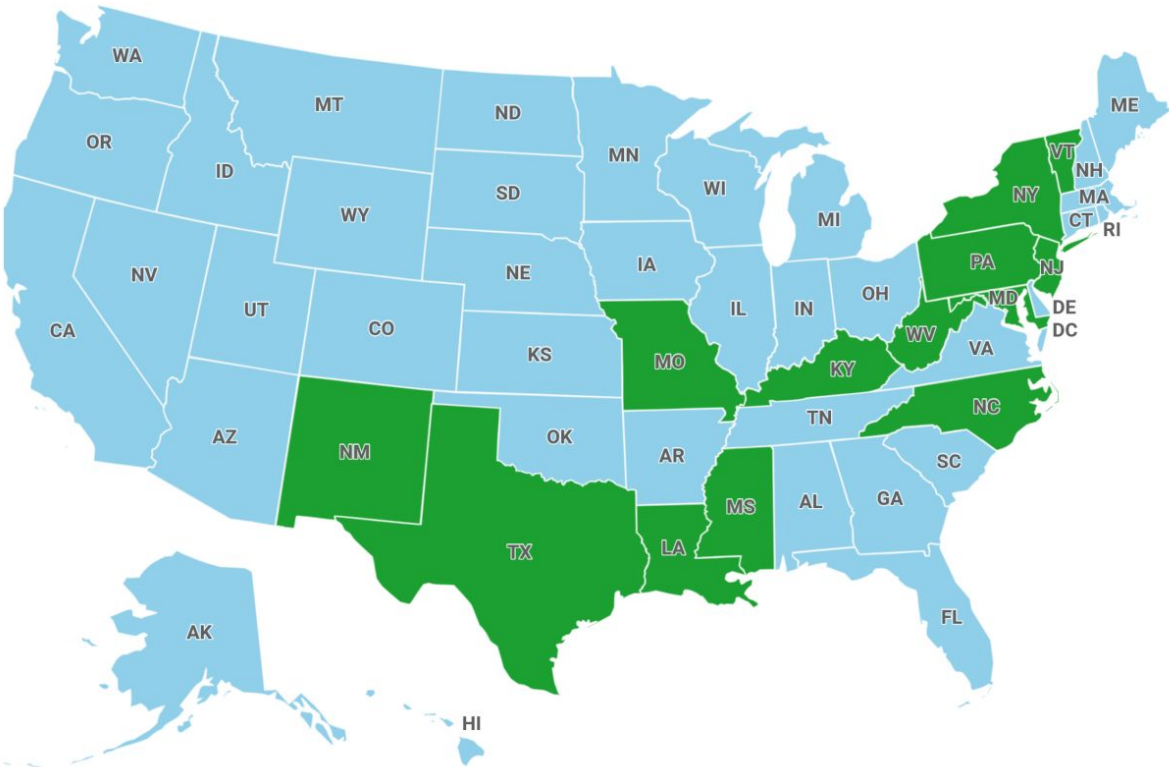
Temple Isaiah, Fulton, MD

Example Partner Organizations

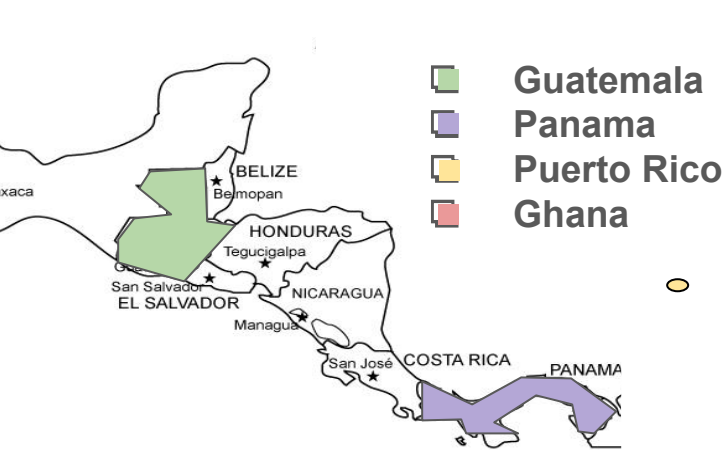
- St. Bernard Project (SBP)
- The Fuller Center for Housing
- Rebuilding Joplin (Joplin, MO)
- COVER Home Repair (Vermont)
- ARC of Howard County
- Rebuilding Together – Howard County
- Appalachia Service Project (ASP)
- Housing Development Alliance (Hazard, KY)

Where We Have Worked in the U.S.

13 States



Puerto Rico, and 3 Countries



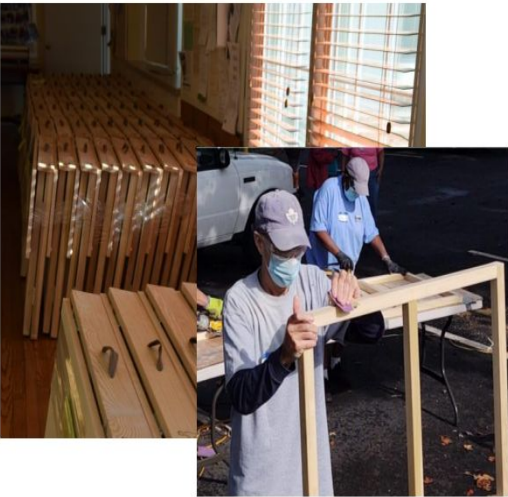
“Tzedakah and acts of kindness are the equivalent of all the mitzvot in the Torah.” Jerusalem Talmud, Pe’ah 1:1 (“Tzedakah” means charity, but also justice—giving is a moral duty, not just generosity.)

Some Statistics As of 06/25

- 53 mission trips (week long)
 - Over 1,730 volunteers have participated
 - Over 69,400 volunteer hours
 - Average team size: 34
 - Thirty two blitz builds
- Local projects
 - Arc of Howard County
 - Guardian Angel Project, Baltimore City
 - Baltimore Station, Baltimore City
 - Rebuilding Together-Howard County, Ellicott City
 - Support of military families
 - Folding desk project during COVID (500 desks built)



2009 Blitz Build in WV



2020 Folding Desk Production

“One who turns his eyes away from one in need is like one who worships idols.” Talmud, Bava Batra 10a (Helping others isn’t optional—it’s central to ethical living.)

DREAMBUILDERS FUNDING

We are Not for Profit

An outreach mission of St. Mark's Episcopal Church - 501(c)(3)



99.9% of funds collected directly fund projects

"There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land." Deuteronomy 15:11

Where does the Money Go?

- Travel and living expenses for work teams
 - Airfare
 - Van rental, gasoline
 - Groceries
 - Lodging expenses
- Materials for building projects
 - Sponsoring a Blitz build costs \$25,000 or more per home!

DreamBuilders Funding Sources

- From Member Organizations:
 - Outreach Committee donations
 - Special Fund Raisers (e.g., Christmas Marts, Matzohball Run, etc.)
- Corporate donations
- Individual donations
- DreamBuilders Fund-Raising Events
 - Spaghetti Dinner & Silent Auction
 - DreamBuilders night out at Bushel and a Peck Kitchen & Bar
- Missioner fees
 - A portion of the trip fee helps to cover the cost of the blitz builds

Corporate Sponsorships

- Do you (or your guardians) work for a company that makes donations to charities?
- Ask them to support our mission. We have 3 levels of corporate giving:
 - Platinum Level \$10,000
 - Gold Level \$5,000
 - Silver Level \$1,000
 - All sponsorship contributions are welcomed, regardless of amount
- Benefits include:
 - Recognition on our web site and Facebook pages
 - Recognition at all DreamBuilders events (spaghetti dinner, DreamBuilders night out)

Different Ways You Can Support Us

- Help us raise funds for our blitz builds
 - Consider an individual donation
 - Solicit corporate sponsorships
 - Donate items for our silent auction at Spaghetti dinner
 - Come up with a new fund-raising idea
- Recruit volunteers for our projects
- Volunteer to help at our fund raisers (meal preparation, serving dinner, manning tables selling coffee/chocolate or wine)
- Volunteer to help plan/execute our mission trip in June:
 - Driving (adults needed for passenger vans or SUVs)
 - Meal planning
 - Worship planning
 - Entertainment planning
 - Team assignments
 - Work Team Leaders
 - Housekeeping assignments

"If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness..." Isaiah 58:10

Annual Project Selection Process

- **Fall:** Leadership team identifies candidate locations
- **Winter:**
 - A local “partner” organization is identified
 - “Scouting” teams travel to any new locations
 - Scouting teams present to leadership team and make recommendations
- **Locations we consider:**
 - Disaster relief regions
 - Impoverished areas
 - Local needs (ARC home renovation, Ellicott City flood recovery, military family home renovation, etc.)



Surviving The Downpour

One memory I can look back on from West Virginia is surviving downpours that flooded the ladies sleeping area and moving to the kitchen in the wee hours to get a few hours of sleep before driving back. I can laugh at it now!!”

Southern Twang

“Last year in KY we visited the Emergency Room with an injured participant, who was not seriously injured. The nursing staff letting in Bill Brazis with the southern twang of here’s Mr. Billie!! It was hilarious!!”

A New Appreciation of Poverty

“You will take away much more than you give in appreciation of the level of need, seeing what poverty looks like – much different from Howard County – and gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.”

Hearing the Stories of the People we were Helping

“Favorite trip memories – meeting some of the flood victims, hearing their stories, meeting people who are moving into the homes we built in past trips.”

Encouraged and Supported while Struggling with a Hammer

“My first DreamBuilders trip was to Biloxi, MS where we partnered with Habitat for Humanity (HfH) following Hurricane Katrina. My first job assignment on the first morning of work was to pound 16 penny nails. My skill with a hammer didn’t exist. Soon I had a pile of bent nails. I felt like I was wasting precious time and resources and that, perhaps, I should not have taken a spot on the trip. One of the site managers with HfH assured me that was not true. She insisted that building relationships was an important part of the mission. Relationships with both those for whom and with whom we build houses.”

“I was paired with someone I didn’t know. Together we learned to hang siding, building a friendship as we built a house. We are still friends.”

PAST MISSION TRIPS & PROJECTS

DreamBuilders in Pittsburgh, 2019



On June 23-29, twenty-two DreamBuilders worked in the Enright Court neighborhood located in East Liberty, a suburb of Pittsburgh, PA. The build was made in collaboration with several non profit groups: East Liberty Development Inc., Full Quiver, and Rebuilding Pittsburgh. Despite the heat, the champions worked on both interior and exterior demolition and reframed walls (including one roof) and installed vinyl siding, windows, doors, and interior drywall. Local neighbors of the Enright Court community also teamed with our group! The mission experience was a great week of collaboration, fellowship and hard work, serving an impoverished area of the City of Bridges.

Here are a few examples of the over 50 week long mission trips and countless local DreamBuilder projects.



DreamBuilders helped repair severely damaged two homes in Puerto Rico in 2019. Above: Clarissa's home in mid-construction, two years after the deadly storm..

Category 5 Hurricanes Maria and Michael caused death and destruction in Puerto Rico (2017) and Panama City, FL (2018) . You . Twenty months after Hurricane Maria struck the island, recovery continues outside of San Juan and in rural areas. In May 2019, our team helped repair two homes in the northeastern coastal town of Loiza. We worked on demolition, mudding and sanding drywall ceilings; priming and painting interior and exterior walls, installing wood trim, caulking, cementing doorframes and patching around windows, and more. We were grateful to work with a native Puerto Rican fellow missionary who grew up in Maryland. Special thanks to Sterling Quality Water for sponsoring Julio, who did outstanding work. .





Dreambuilders helped rebuild homes in **Houston** and **Baton Rouge** devastated by the unprecedented flooding from Hurricane Harvey in 2016. We partnered with SBP (formerly the St. Bernard Project) in both cities to help the communities recover.

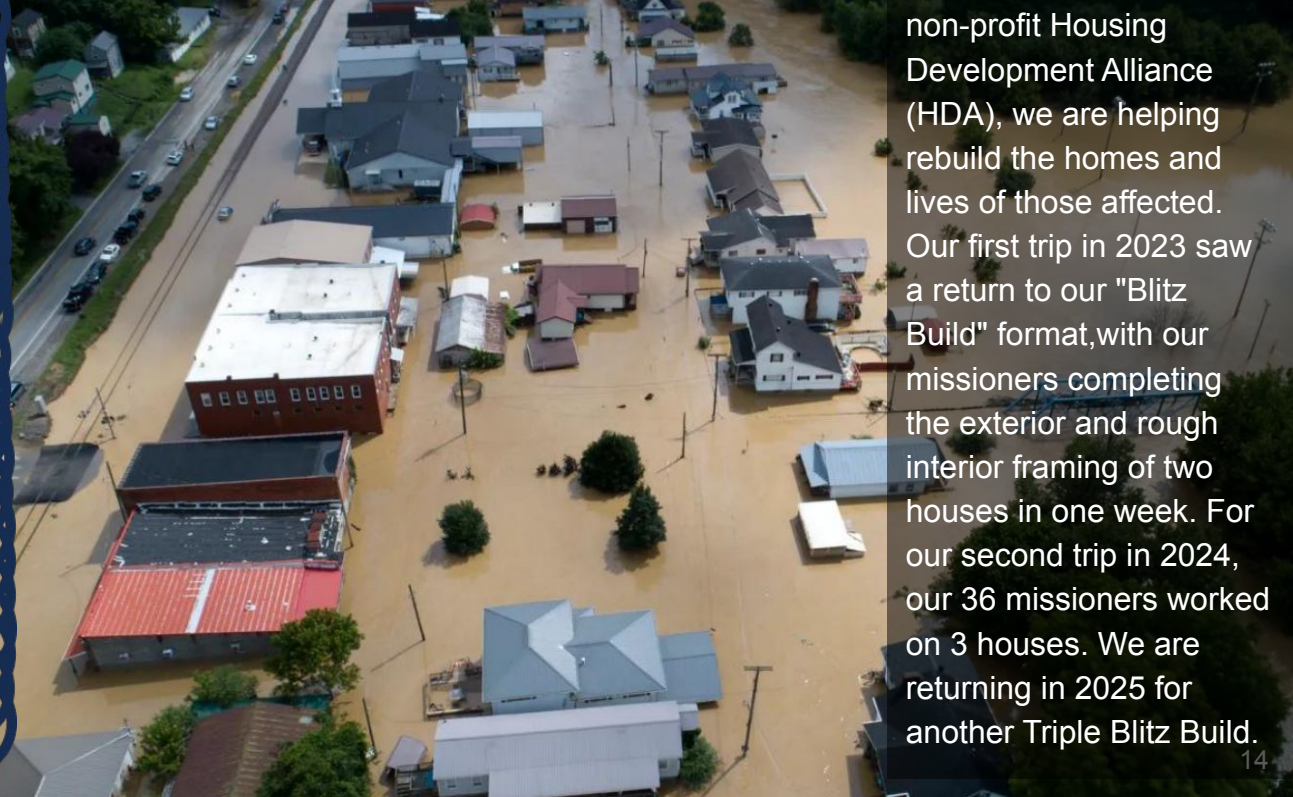
During the Coronavirus pandemic, DreamBuilders pivoted from construction projects to building **folding desks** for school children. With classes being held virtually, the need for a dedicated workspace was even greater. Many students live in close quarters with several other family members. Sometimes the entire family lives in a single room.

DreamBuilders designed the desk, developed the manufacturing process and recruited volunteers to build desks. The first of many "production runs" was held in August, resulting in 118 folding desks.



DreamBuilders distributed the desks through our local public schools.

Hazard, and much of eastern **Kentucky**, was hit July 28th, 2022 by what meteorologists called a "1,000-year flood." It damaged close to 10,000 homes, cost over 40 people their lives and left many families already in financial hardship with nothing.



In partnership with the non-profit Housing Development Alliance (HDA), we are helping rebuild the homes and lives of those affected. Our first trip in 2023 saw a return to our "Blitz Build" format, with our missionaries completing the exterior and rough interior framing of two houses in one week. For our second trip in 2024, our 36 missionaries worked on 3 houses. We are returning in 2025 for another Triple Blitz Build.

VOLUNTEERING WITH US



7 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW



- We are a **Faith Based** organization
 - Christian and Jewish Services on week long mission trips
 - Daily devotionals, prayers at meals
- **No Skills are Required**
 - You will learn everything you need
- There is a **Mandatory Meeting** held for the week-long trips
- We are **Sticklers for Quality!**
- We have an **Outstanding Safety Record**
- We **Work Hard** and **Play Hard**
- You will get a **First Hand Look at Hardship**
- It Will be **LIFE CHANGING**



LOCAL WORK DAYS

Our week-long “Blitz Build” trips often get the spotlight, **but the need for safe, quality housing is found in every community, including ours.** Grab your hammer and join us in an important project that hits close to home! Local projects offer a chance for us to help our immediate neighbors and as well as allow those who can’t commit to a week-long trip to still make a huge impact in the lives of those in need.

No experience is needed, just a willingness to learn! DreamBuilders is responsible for bringing the tools needed.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

- One day only
- Age Requirement: 14+
- Typical work day 8a-4p
- Lunch is provided
- Volunteers provide their own transportation to and from the work site
- We work with partner organizations

SAMPLE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

- Rebuilding Together-Howard County
- ARC of Howard County
- Bridges to Housing Stability

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES:

- Demolish floors, walls, and kitchen cabinets
- Frame walls, hang drywall and cut door openings
- Install flooring, installation, handrails, and custom doors
- Build wheelchair accessible ramps
- Paint walls, ceilings, doors, windows and trim



WEEK LONG TRIPS

Each year DreamBuilders leadership identifies one or more destinations for a week long work trip to help those who cannot recover on their own.. We choose areas impacted by recent natural disasters (hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, etc.), which have had sufficient time to clear debris and begin the process of reconstruction, and are free of crime and potential health hazards. We find local organizations to partner with who provide the land, select the families contribute a portion of the materials. We also confirm that there is sufficient accomodations for our volunteers.

No prior experience is required! Many of our volunteers have never done anything like this before. Experienced people will teach you all of the skills that you need, and you will do nothing that you are not comfortable with.

Completed houses Dreambuilders helped create on a Blitz Build.



A Typical Week

We travel on the 1st and 7th days and work in between. As a faith-based organization, we hold a Christian service once or twice during the week and a Shabbat service on Fridays.

Our group splits into house teams, usually with a more experienced missionary who has gone on past trips working as team lead. At each house, smaller groups may work together if the task needs many hands, such as passing roof trusses/framing up onto the walls, or be given individual tasks (one group installs windows while another shingles the roof). Our partner organizations also have people on site who supervise and guide us every step of the way.

After our work day is done (usually 3p-5p), we head back to clean up, cook dinner, do chores (bathroom cleaning) and enjoy fellowship through games and activities. Sometimes people are tired and just want to rest in the evenings, and that's ok, too!

Sunday

- Meet at Temple Isaiah 7:30a/8:30a
- Spend the day driving to the site
- Unpack, Orientation, Icebreaker

Monday-Friday

- Work day 7a-4p
- Evening free time/dinner/services
- Friday - Potential Fun day, baring weather/unforeseen delays
- Friday - Shabbat service in the evening

Saturday

- Clean, Pack Up and drive home to Temple Isaiah

Meals

- **Continental Breakfast** - Adults set up, Teens clean up
- **Lunch** - Make your own. Place in coolers to transport to work site.
- **Dinner** - Team cooks. 1 or 2 nights dining out.

Travel Days

We travel together in rented SUVs with pre designated drivers. **Wear your DreamBuilders t-shirt** and write your name on the tag! Arrange for a friend or family to drop you off and pick you up from Temple Isaiah.

Sunday arrival

- Load your luggage in any of the SUVs
- Choose your SUV and remain with it until we arrive at our site
- The Temple will be open for bathroom access
- Teens number and decorate cars

Saturday departure

- Cleanup. Pack. Drive Home. Depart around 8:30a
- An hour from Temple Isaiah call your ride to give them our ETA

Rental Vehicles - Driver Instructions

- Pick up rental vehicles **before noon** on Saturday
- Rental fees are prepaid
- Accept the Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) optional insurance
- Decline all other extra charges offered
- Each driver has a binder with important information (including PII - please keep it safe)
- Save gasoline receipts and place in envelope in binder
- Return binder Saturday when we arrive back at Temple Isaiah
- Return rental **by 11:30a** Sunday



BLITZ BUILD TRIPS

Working on a Blitz Build is an incredible experience. Over the span of five work days (Mon-Fri), we will go from just a foundation to a house that is completely finished on the exterior: walls, roof, doors, windows and sometimes even a porch (depending on the design)!

Watching the house take shape so quickly is deeply rewarding, especially knowing that you and the team are working to bringing life-changing stability to a family.

Typical tasks on a Blitz Build are:

- Laying down subfloor
- Framing and raising walls
- raising and setting roof trusses/framing
- putting plywood/OSB/sheathing on the walls and roof
- shingling the roof
- installing doors and windows
- putting siding on the house
- painting (sometimes)



RULES AND EXPECTATIONS





BEHAVIOR

- Follow the instructions of the staff members.
- No improper or threatening language of any kind. (swearing, racial slurs, sexually explicit or suggestive comments, etc.)
- Women may not visit men's "dorms" and men may not visit women's "dorms". Only fraternize in the common areas.
- No tobacco, drug, or alcohol use at any time. You will be sent home at your own expense. *NO second chance.*
- At the volunteer center, teens may not leave the designated area without an adult 25+ years of age.
- No adult and teen missionary may travel alone as a pair, unless they are parent and child.



CONSTRUCTION SITE RULES

- Construction sites can be dangerous.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Paying attention to what you are doing reduces risk of injury.
- Wear proper worksite clothing. No sandals, no open-toed shoes, clothes you don't mind getting dirt or paint on, hats.
- Work with a buddy.
- If you see something that doesn't look right, QUESTION IT.
- If you are asked to do something you are not sure of, ASK one of the site staff to help you out.
- If you are uncomfortable doing a task, say so.
- If you injure yourself or see someone else injured, seek immediate attention.



Safety is a shared responsibility. Support your teammates by modeling safe habits and offering friendly reminders as needed.

Safety Etiquette

- Pay attention to the initial safety briefing the first day on site. It includes important terms, general safety instructions, and initial jobs allocations.
- When in doubt, ask. If in semi-doubt, still ask.
- Work as a team. Stay positive, be flexible, and lend a hand to others if they need it.
- Respect others' space and concentration, especially near tools.
- Keep your phones in the car. No electronics (music, video players, etc.) on site unless you're on break.
- Encourage a culture of caring. If you see something unsafe, say something.



PLEASE READ CAREFULLY and ask your site leader if you have any questions.

Safety Rules

Safety is a shared responsibility. Support your teammates by modeling safe habits and offering friendly reminders when needed.

- *Never* use a power tool without proper training. Teens under 16 cannot use power tools.
- *Always* wear safety glasses when using power tools.
- If one person is on a ladder, someone else *must* be on the ground holding it.
- Do not leave tools on top of ladders: "Head Banger"
- If anyone is working overhead, everyone on the ground *must* wear a hard hat.
- *Never* lay a board on the ground with a nail sticking through it: "Gator"
- *Don't* leave nails lying around, especially on the road.
- *Never* stack boards vertically against the wall.
- "STOP!" command. *Everyone stops.*



SPECIFIC SAFETY DETAILS

General Safety Principles

- **Follow all directions from site leaders.** Our trained leaders are here to help you work safely and efficiently. Always check in with them before beginning a new task.
- **Never work alone.** Always have a buddy or group nearby—especially when working with power tools or at heights.
- **Know your limits.** Speak up if you're unsure how to use a tool, lift a material, or perform a task. There's no shame in asking for help.
- **Stay alert.** Construction sites change rapidly. Be aware of your surroundings, including people, tools, supplies, vehicles, and weather conditions.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **Hard Hats.** Wear one when anyone is working overhead, such as on ladders or the roof, to protect against falling objects.
- **Safety glasses.** Required on site and essential to use when working near power tools.
- **Work gloves.** Protect your hands from splinters, sharp edges, and rough materials.
- **Sturdy, closed-toe shoes or boots.** Shoes must have good grip and protect your feet. No Crocs, sandals, or flip-flops allowed.

Electrical Safety

- Keep **cords** out of wet areas.
- Do not use **damaged** extension cords or tools.
- **Power down and unplug** tools before adjusting or moving them.
- Move electric tools under cover when it's **raining**.

Elevated Work Safety

Volunteers work from ladders and trusses, especially during roof framing and sheathing.

- **Set up on stable ground.** Never place a ladder on uneven or loose terrain. If necessary, level with scrap wood/rock or reposition.
- **Maintain three points of contact.** Two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.
- **Follow the 4-to-1 ladder rule.** For every 4 feet of ladder height, place the base 1 foot away from the wall or support.
- **Only one person on a ladder at a time.** If necessary, have one person at the base while you are climbing up/down to insure stability.
- Work only when conditions are dry. **Wet surfaces** are slippery and unsafe.
- Use **roof brackets and walk boards** where available.
- Avoid sitting or stepping on **unsupported trusses**. Always verify they are properly secured before stepping onto framing.

Environmental Awareness

- **Clean up hazards right away.** Stop work to address safety risks like nails protruding from boards on the ground, unstable stacks of materials, or tools left in unsafe places.
- **Watch your footing.** The ground may be uneven, rocky, or muddy. Communicate when you see a hazard.
- **Stay hydrated.** Sun exposure can quickly lead to dehydration. Drink water regularly even if you're not thirsty and have a small bladder.
- **Use sunscreen and take breaks.** UV exposure at higher elevations and tropical latitudes is more intense.
- **Prepare for weather.** Morning fog, wind, or afternoon thunderstorms may affect work. Bring rain gear and layer clothing.
- **Insect Repellent:** Use bug spray to protect against ticks and bug bites. Mosquitoes are more active after rain, especially in humid, grassy, or wooded areas. Reapply repellent as needed throughout the day.





Condensed

HDA Safety Worksite Rules

A useful guidelines for ANY work trip

- 1) **Safety first.** Ask your leader, “What is the safest way to do this?”
- 2) Always wear **long pants, full-length shirts, and sturdy, closed-toe shoes** at the work site. In hot weather, T-shirts and sleeveless shirts/tank tops are allowed, just be sure to wear **sunscreen!** NO: shorts, capris, bare midriffs, sandals, Crocs, bare feet - *no exceptions*.
- 3) One **volunteer vehicle** must remain at the work site at all times during the workday for emergencies.
- 4) **No horseplay** at the work site. Work sites are full of safety hazards and distract others who are working.
- 5) **Respect other people’s property.** Something that may look like garbage to you is valuable to someone else. This community may be different from what you are used to; practice sensitivity.
- 6) **Practice proper tool use!** Ask for help first, then try it if you are given permission. Never stick your hands into **anything moving**, such as a mortar mixer. Ask how to properly handle **chemicals/compounds** like concrete mix.
- 7) **Don’t do anything you’re not comfortable doing.** Do **get assistance** and try new things. You will be surprised how much you can learn in one week!
- 8) **Pay attention to those around you.** Use **verbal queues** particularly in a tight space. Ex: “I’m behind you.” “I’m dropping shingles off the roof.”

- 9) **Ask before climbing** onto a roof or walkboard. Make sure there is room for you, the surface can hold you, and **of any soft spots or other hazards**.
- 10) **Avoid creating work site hazards.** For instance, pull nails out of boards when making a dump pile.
- 11) **A clean worksite is safer.** Everyone must help keep the work site clean. This is one of the most important things you will do each day.
- 12) For privacy purposes, **no video equipment or cameras** are permitted on the work site without specific permission.
- 13) Do not bring **expensive belongings**.
- 14) Return all **borrowed tools** at the end of each day.
- 15) If you need to **take a break**, hang out in the **designated rest area**. This is for your safety.
- 16) Take **pride in your work** and do your best!



Do Everything With Joy...

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24



"I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God." Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

BUILD SITE TOOLS & TIPS



For every house is built by someone, but the builder of
all things is God. Hebrews 3:4



TYPICAL TOOLS USED

Practice tool use in a safe area with scrap materials before using it on a job.

Hand Tools

- **Claw Hammer** – Drives nails or removes them using the claw end.
 - Grip near the base for power, strike nails squarely, and lever the claw under nails to pull them out.
- **Hand saw** – Manual saw for straight cuts in wood.
 - Use a firm grip, start with short strokes, and maintain a straight path with even pressure.
- **Level** – Ensures objects are horizontally or vertically straight.
 - Place level on edge of surface and adjust until the bubble is centered between lines.
- **Speed square** – Triangular tool used for marking quick, accurate angles. • Place flat side against edge, then trace along desired angle (usually 90° or 45°).
- **Siding Gauge** – Used to set the proper reveal (exposed height) on horizontal siding panels for consistent spacing.
 - Placing the siding gauge on the installed board, snap the new siding into it, ensuring each panel is evenly spaced and level before fastening. Make sure the gauge is pushed up all the way before snapping it into place to ensure accuracy.



Love, Sweat and Sawdust

Power Tools

- **Cordless drill/driver** – Battery-powered tool to drill holes or drive screws.
 - Select the right bit, hold the drill perpendicular to the surface, and apply steady pressure while pulling the trigger.
- **Impact driver** – Compact tool that delivers high torque for tough screws.
 - Use impact-rated bits, grip firmly, and allow short bursts rather than continuous pressure for control.
- **Circular saw** – Handheld saw for straight, quick cuts in wood or sheet goods.
 - Set blade depth just below the material thickness, support your cut, and push smoothly along a guideline.
- **Miter saw** – Stationary saw used for accurate straight or angled cuts.
 - Hold material firmly against the fence, align your mark, start the blade, and lower smoothly.
- **Pneumatic nail gun** – Air-powered tool that rapidly drives nails.
 - Keep both hands clear of the trigger until ready, press the nose firmly against your target, and fire with control.
- **Jigsaw** – Small saw ideal for curves or detailed cuts.
 - Use the correct blade, clamp your workpiece, and guide steadily along your line without forcing turns.



DIGITAL TOOLBOX



How to Measure and Cut Drywall



Exterior Painting: Prep and Finish



How to Hang Drywall



Painting Touch-Up & Tips



Patching
Drywall



Recaulking a
shower



How to Caulk Stuff



DRYWALL

PAINT & CAULK



Replacement
Windows



Repairing
Screens



Installing
Window Blinds



Installing
Exterior Doors



Replacing a
Doorknob



Replacing Door
Weather Stripping



Cleaning
Mold+Mildew



Restoring
Cabinets



Replacing a
Toilet Seat



Removing
Wallpaper



Replacing Air
Filters

WINDOWS, DOORS & HOUSE INTERIOR

**Short videos
for Week Long
Trips and Local
Work Days of
common tools
and tasks. Use
as an on-site
resource or to
prepare pre-trip.**



Safety Basics
HfH Volunteer



Circular Saw Safety



Miter Saw Use



Using a Nail
Gun Safely



Using a Brad
Nailer



Cordless Drill
Basics



Hammer Claw
Tips



Using a Chalk
Line

POWER & HANDHELD TOOLS



Shingling a Roof



Installing Soffit
& Fascia



Cleaning
Gutters Safely



Framing a Wall with Studs



Wall Nail
Placement



How to Lay
Subfloors

ROOF, WALLS, SUBFLOOR

INSTALLATION & FRAMING

Siding, Shingles, Doors & Windows

- Level each row of **siding** before nailing.
- Overlap shingles** carefully to avoid leaks.
- Check for squareness before securing **framing**.
- Ensure the **door is level** before attaching hinges
- Level and shim windows** before securing.
- Use a stud finder before **drilling above windows**.



TOOL TECHNIQUES

Saws, Screws & Nails

- Let the **saw** do the work—don't force it.
- Finger OFF the **trigger** until ready to fire.
- Cut **miter joints** with a steady hand.
- Start **screws** before lifting drill overhead.
- Use **nails** for speed, screws for strength.



FINISHING

Paint, Caulk & Concrete

- Paint **top to bottom** to avoid drips.
- Seal edges with **painter's tape** for clean lines.
- Keep a **damp rag** nearby while painting.
- Use **masking tape** to start/stop a bead neatly.
- Add water slowly** to avoid thin concrete.



CLEANING

Tool Care & Cleaners

- Wipe down tools** to avoid rust.
- Scrub mildew** with vinegar or peroxide, not bleach
- Boiling water + baking soda + vinegar** = magic.



TIPS FROM PAST VOLUNTEERS

Practical Work Tips

- **Measure twice, cut once**
- **Listen closely** when being shown how to use tools, especially power tools/saws.
- **Speak up** if you see something you are concerned about
- Load **tool belt** with extra nails for hammering and nail gun
- It's important to **communicate your location** when working around people. Don't assume they will see you
- A **clean site** makes for a happy foreman – pick up as you go
- Use **YouTube videos** to look up how to do things like installing flooring
- There is **always something you can help with** before/after meals, preparing food, clean-up, restocking, etc.
- You are building someone's future home so **do the best job you can**, whatever your task

Wear This

- Wear **gloves** when carrying wooden boards
- Wear **work gloves** to protect your hands
- Wear any kind of **gloves** that are comfortable
- Set the example for safety; use **safety glasses and hats**
- Wear **safety glasses** at all times.
- Wear your **name tags** and always wear **sunscreen**

Partners

- Always work with a **partner** for safety reasons, as well as to help each other out and develop new skills
- Each **partner** is probably better at something than the other. Teach and learn from each other as you work.
- Honor the **buddy system**

NOTE: Duplication left in place to show points repeatedly emphasized.

Use Professionals, Ask Questions & Acknowledge Mistakes

- When in doubt, **ask your foreman**. Ask even if you're pretty sure, too
- **Ask for help** if you're uncertain how to do something. It's **ok to say no** if you're uncomfortable with a task
- **Ask questions** before doing things, it's better to be certain you know what you are doing
- **Understand/listen to direction** well before tackling projects so you don't have to redo it multiple times
- If you are not sure of what you have been asked to do, **DO NOT** be afraid to **ask questions** or for clarification, the carpenters/leaders are more than happy to clarify/show first.
- Instructions from the **professionals is valuable training**
- Be willing to **try new skills**; the other volunteers will be happy to teach you.
- Come willing to **help, learn and be changed**
- It's okay to make **mistakes**
- The easier you acknowledge **mistakes**, the faster they can be corrected
- Be willing to do it over if you make **mistakes**

Self Care

- Be **well rested** before (and for) the trip
- Don't work on the roof **if you're tired**
- **Take breaks** when you need them, especially if it's hot, even if it's early for a break
- Drink plenty of **water**! It's usually very hot!!
- Stay **hydrated**
- **Keep an eye out** for your friends

Have Fun, Make Friends & Step Outside your Comfort Zone

- Make new friends, try things outside of your **comfort zones** – it will be an exceptional experience!
- It's great to go with a **friend** – but you will make many new ones on the trip
- **Work hard & have fun!**
- Take in the experience, **enjoy** every moment!!
- This work changes lives – be prepared for an **incredible experience**



Work gloves
to protect
your hands

Stay
hydrated

Use
shaded
safety
glasses
while
working
outside

Use
the
buddy
system

An Oreo
break is
always
okay!

Don't fret if
you don't have
your own tools—
there are
usually extras!

Ask questions
before doing—
it's better to be
certain than have
to take apart
and do over

Alumni Tips

Be sure to
use
sunscreen!

Be well rested
for (and
before) the trip

A clean site
is also a
happy foreman

Measure
twice,
cut once

Be willing to
do it over
if you make
mistakes

Bring sturdy
gloves

Bring ear
plugs if
you're a
light sleeper

It's okay
to make
mistakes



TOOL SAFETY - FUNNY BUT TRUE

Shoes, Gloves, and Other PPE

1. Wear closed-toe **shoes**. This isn't a flip-flop kind of party.
2. **Gloves** help you keep your hands, and your manicure.
3. **Hard hats**: because heads aren't replaceable, but hats are.
4. **Earplugs**: for protecting hearing, not blocking out team leaders
5. **PPE** stands for 'Please Protect Everything.'

Heights

1. Don't stand on **buckets**. They're not ladders. They're just optimistic containers.
2. **Ladder** Rule #1: The top step is lying to you.
3. **Ladders** are tools too. Especially when you need one and don't have it.
4. **Ladders** are not pogo sticks. Climb responsibly.
5. Test your balance in yoga class, not on **scaffolding**.
6. You can't "walk it off" if you fall off the **roof**. Be Careful.

General Behavior

1. **Safety** isn't just a suggestion. It's a group project.
2. Stay **hydrated**. Dry volunteers break easily.
3. No **running** on the job site. This isn't the Hunger Games.
4. If you wouldn't do it with **your grandma** watching, don't do it here.

TOOL SAFETY FUNNY BUT TRUE

Construction Skills

1. **Measure twice, cut once**. Then remeasure because you don't trust yourself
2. **Lefty-loosey, righty-tighty**. Unless you're upside down, then good luck.
3. If it won't budge, **WD-40**. If it won't stop budging, **duct tape**.
4. Always **clamp wood** before cutting. Unless you enjoy chasing airborne lumber.
5. A **dull blade** is more dangerous than a sharp one. Because it's angry.
6. Want to know if the **blade's** sharp? Try scrap wood, not your finger, unless you're into spontaneous blood loss.
7. Don't carry all your tools at once. You're not a **human toolbox**.
8. The right **tool** makes you look skilled. The wrong tool makes you look like a YouTube fail.
9. "I saw it on **YouTube**" does not count as training.
10. **Clean your tools**. They work harder for people who treat them nice.
11. Never force a **tool**. It has feelings and will take revenge.
12. If your tool has a **manual**, read it. Or at least pretend to while googling.

Still not sure which end of the hammer to use.



TOOL SAFETY FUNNY BUT TRUE

Power Tools

1. **Power** tools are not lightsabers. Don't duel.
2. If your **tool** starts growling, either its possessed or you're using it wrong.
3. If your **tool** sparks, smokes or screams, put it down and walk away slowly.
4. If your **drill bit** is smoking, it's not celebrating. It's dying.
5. When a **saw** starts smoking that's not a special effect. Stop.
6. If it **smells weird, looks weird, or hums**—tell a supervisor.
7. If you use the wrong **screwdriver head**, it will let you know. Loudly.
8. Always use the right **blade** for the material. The wood blade doesn't love metal.
9. **Cordless drills** need charging. Just like you need lunch.
10. Always **unplug the saw** before changing the blade. Or risk becoming a cautionary tale.
11. Never assume the **power** is off. It might be having a quiet moment.
12. **Cords** are tripwires in disguise. Be kind—tape them down.

Measured once, cut twice, still wrong



Hand Tools

1. The **tool belt** is for tools. Not snacks. (Well, maybe 1 granola bar.)
2. Your hands are not **clamps**. Stop pretending.
3. The **level** doesn't lie. You might. But it won't.
4. The **tape measure** will snap back. Every. Single. Time.
5. Yes, that's the right **wrench**. Until it isn't. Keep three nearby.
6. **Screwdrivers** aren't chisels. Stop making them sad.
7. Respect the **nail puller**. It's petty and will stab you for fun.
8. The **hammer** is for nails. Not drywall. Or coworkers.
9. If you yell "Catch!" and toss a **hammer**, we're sending you home.
10. **Hammers** have a preferred side. The handle side is not it.
11. **Hammer** the nail, not your coworker's feelings. Or fingers.
12. Keep your **thumb** out of the strike zone. You're not playing whack-a-mole.
13. Don't lick the **paintbrush**. Even if it looks like frosting.
14. Use your **safety goggles**. Your eyes are not safety-rated.
15. **Goggles**: because sawdust in your eye is a terrible souvenir.
16. **Safety glasses** make you look cool. Squinting in pain does not.

Professional nail-benders since 9a



TOOL SAFETY FUNNY BUT TRUE

General Helpful Phrases

- Where is the bathroom? – ¿Dónde está el baño?
- Where is the exit? – ¿Dónde está la salida?
- Can you help me? – ¿Me puede ayudar?
- I need help – Necesito ayuda
- Where is...? – ¿Dónde está...?
- I'm lost – Estoy perdido/a
- I don't understand – No entiendo
- Please speak more slowly – Por favor, hable más despacio
- Please speak more loudly – Por favor, habla más alto.
- Can you repeat that? – ¿Puede repetir eso?
- Is there drinking water here? – ¿Hay agua potable aquí?
- Where can I find shade? – ¿Dónde puedo encontrar sombra?
- It's very hot – Hace mucho calor
- When is lunch? – ¿Cuándo es el almuerzo?
- Where is the first aid kit? – ¿Dónde está el botiquín de primeros auxilios?
- I have lost a lot of blood! – He perdido mucha sangre
- Are you okay? – ¿Está bien?
- Call a doctor – Llame a un médico
- Is there a priest nearby? – ¿Hay un sacerdote cerca?



Spanish Construction & Safety Terms

- Hard hat – Casco de seguridad
- Work gloves – Guantes de trabajo
- Safety boots – Botas de seguridad
- Scaffold – Andamio
- Ladder – Escalera
- Power tools – Herramientas eléctricas
- Cordless drill – Taladro inalámbrico
- Miter saw – Sierra de inglete
- Hammer – Martillo
- Nails – Clavos
- Screws – Tornillos
- Tape measure – Medidor de cinta
- Speed square – Cuadrado de velocidad
- Tape (general) – Cinta adhesiva
- Danger – Peligro
- Caution – Cuidado
- Work zone – Zona de trabajo
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) – Equipo de protección personal
- First aid – Primeros auxilios
- Emergency – Emergencia
- Call 911 – Llamar al novecientos once
- Do not touch – No tocar
- Stop – Alto / Deténgase
- Hazardous area – Zona peligrosa
- Falling objects – Caída de objetos
- Slippery surface – Superficie resbaladiza





BINGO: Bragging Rights

DreamBuilders Bingo #1: **Rookie Wins**
Perfect for first-timers: basic but rewarding experiences.

B I N G O				
Hammered nail w/o bending	Met someone new	Used a paint roller	Took a shade break	Wore safety goggles
Picked up trash	Took in the view during a break	Placed a ladder safely the second time	Refilled a water bottle	Watched video from previous trip
Used a level	Heard someone whistling	★ FREE ★	Slept through the snores	Cheerful to the cranky volunteer
Helped a teammate	Used a power tool (safely)	Got paint on your clothes	Remembered name tag	Took a selfie at lunch
Found a creative fix	Cleaned up your dropped nails	Ate your third snack of the day	High-fived someone	Reflected on the day

Lunchtime brag break! Share your wins (and whoopsies) and find out who's closest to shouting BINGO!

DreamBuilders Bingo #2: Skill Builder

Stretch your skills and support others!

B I N G O				
Wrote your name on your tools	Carried tools for someone else	Learned a new safety rule	Used your mouth to hold something	Spoke up before too late!
Saw a project from start to finish	Made someone laugh	Took initiative	Used a broom or dustpan	Drank 3+ bottles of water
Painted trim or corners	Heard someone whistling	★ FREE	Got a complement from the foreman	Taught someone a skill
Finished without dropping any nails	Fixed something unexpected	Cleaned brushes or rollers	Helped with lunch setup without snacking	Took a selfie with a teammate
Witnessed a kind act	Shared your story	Took part in the reflection session	Thanked a team leader	Carried water for someone else



DreamBuilders Bingo #3: Nailed It!

Nearing the home stretch

B I N G O				
Measured twice before cutting	Used a nail gun w/o injury	Broke for lunch early	Found a creative use for scrap wood	Seemed hard but was easy
Volunteered for task despite being tired	Kept working in the rain	Found a new use for dirt	Used a level twice	Shared your favorite tool
Your Team is ahead of other teams	Miscut despite measuring twice	★ FREE	Slept despite the snores	Avoided Sunburn!
Seemed easy but was hard	Wore out the battery on a tool	Kind of tapered off after noon	Kept working despite the heat	Caught yourself as the cranky volunteer
complimented someone	Left metal tool in the sun	Measured three times!	Made an unexpected friend	Wrote your name on your shirt






DreamBuilders Bingo #4: Team Spirit

"If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."

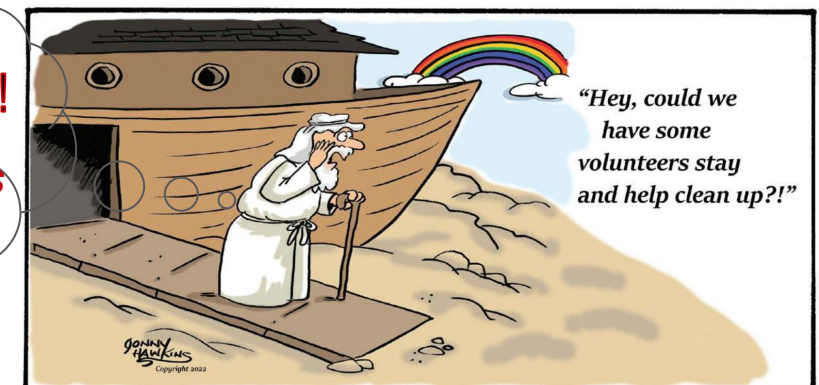
B I N G O				
Matched outfits with teammates	Gave a high five chain or did "The Wave"	Did a stretch break together	Shared lunch with someone new	Got teammate contact info
Played music while working	Took a group photo	Decorated a name tag	Team nickname!	Ahead of schedule!
Heard an "Origin Story"	Crushed other team, then helped	★ FREE ★	Talked about next year	Got paint on someone else
Took a silly group photo	Named your claw hammer "Bob"	Did a "tool pass" relay	Created a cheer for another team	Learned 3 teammates' names
Thanked someone publicly	Cleaned up another team's area	Team huddle	Wore matching safety gear	Gave a pep talk

Swap stories to see who nailed the most tasks (or just nailed themselves)!

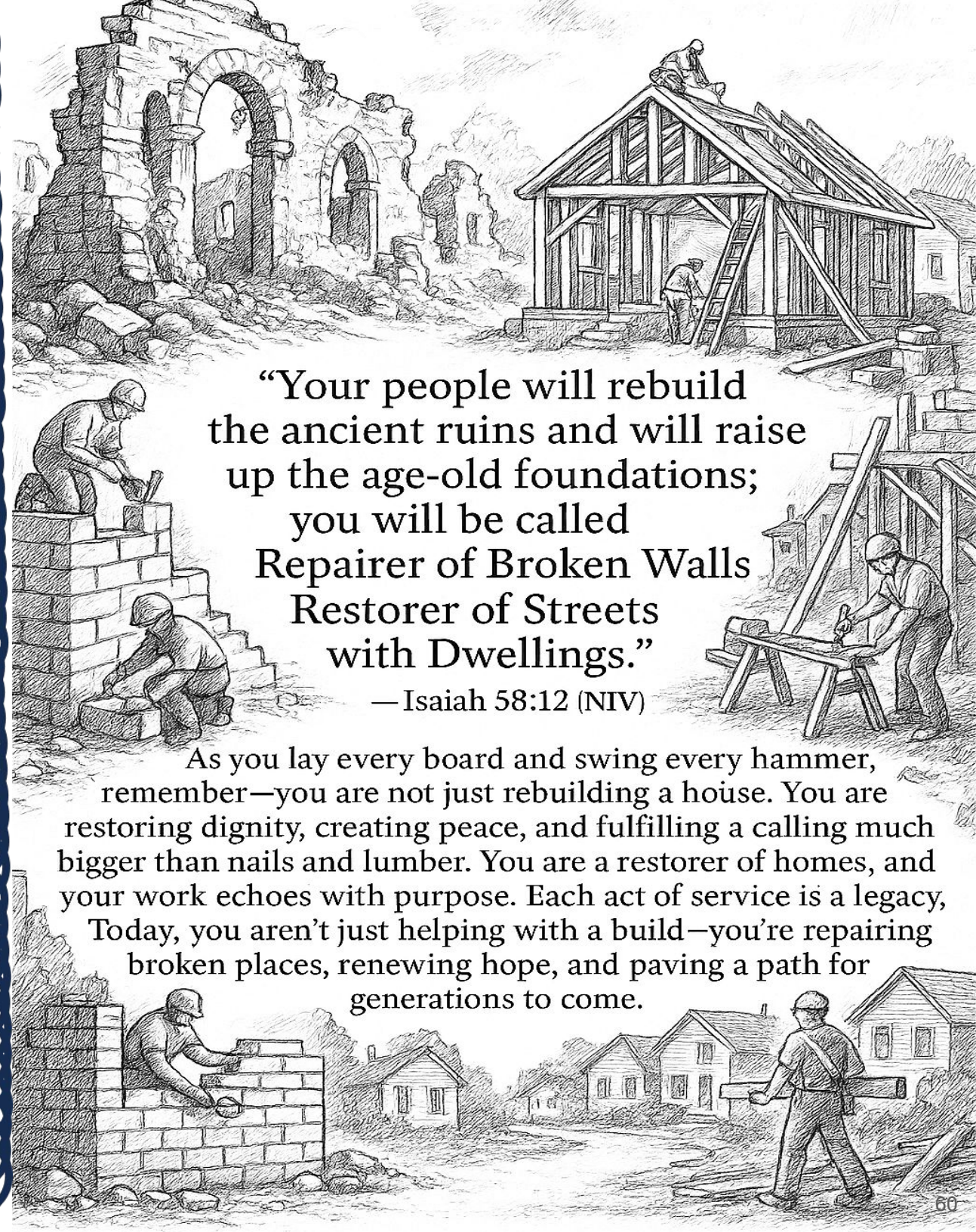
Who Knew CLEAN UP could be this FUN?!

-  **End-of-Day "Golden Broom" Award**
 Give a goofy traveling trophy to the best cleanup crew or individual or individual with the best attitude or hustle during clean up. Let them write their name on it for bragging rights or help decide the winner the next day.
-  **Hidden Surprise Game**
 Hide a small treat (snack, sticker, silly prize) under a pile of scrap wood or near a cleanup zone. First to find it wins!
-  **Before & After Photos**
 Take pics of messy vs clean areas. Everyone loves a good transformation shot—and it's great for social media too.
-  **Trash Toss (Carefully!)**
 Place a bucket or tool bag and challenge folks to gently toss rags or soft tools in from a distance. (Safety first!)
-  **Timed Challenge**
 Set a timer: who can organize the most tools, sweep the biggest area, or pick up the most debris?

SAFETY FIRST!
 Have fun but safety is ALWAYS the top priority.



DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION



“Your people will rebuild
the ancient ruins and will raise
up the age-old foundations;
you will be called
Repairer of Broken Walls
Restorer of Streets
with Dwellings.”

— Isaiah 58:12 (NIV)

As you lay every board and swing every hammer,
remember—you are not just rebuilding a house. You are
restoring dignity, creating peace, and fulfilling a calling much
bigger than nails and lumber. You are a restorer of homes, and
your work echoes with purpose. Each act of service is a legacy,
Today, you aren't just helping with a build—you're repairing
broken places, renewing hope, and paving a path for
generations to come.

PACKING LIST



PACKING ADVICE

Helpful Insights from past Volunteers

- **Pack** one bag with tools and one with clothes
- Make sure you bring everything on the **packing list**. It is comprehensive
- **Mark all of your tools** with your name. **Masking tape** is great for a nametag.
- Consider a **tool vest** instead of a tool belt for hip or lower back discomfort
- Definitely helpful to have a **tool belt**!
- Snug fitting, flexible cloth **work gloves** with durable fingertips work better than loose fitting leather gloves for gripping and picking up small things like nails
- If you wear **contact lenses**, helpful to get **safety glasses with sides** on them
- **Tinted safety goggles** are great for outdoor work
- Use **shaded safety glasses** when working outside
- A **wide brim hat** covers your ears, prevents sunburn & keep you cooler
- Get a **really good hammer**. It makes all the difference in the world
- A **triangular "speed square"** is a helpful tool. Get **plastic, not metal**; metal gets burning hot if left in the sun
- Bring a **measuring tape**, smaller is lighter to carry around
- Bring **carpenter pencils** AND a **retractable cutting blade** to sharpen them
- Bring **earplugs** to sleep if you're a light sleeper
- Bring **flexible fabric band-aids** for blisters, splinters or small scrapes
- Bring **sunscreen**, **neck cooling towels**, and a **hat (floppy or baseball cap)**
- Use **sunscreen**!
- The DreamBuilders **slide show** is a great reference
- Don't fret if you don't have your own tools, there are **usually extras**!

Duplication left in place to show points repeatedly emphasized.



PERSONAL ITEMS & TOOLS

some items may vary by work trip

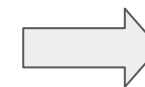
Personal Items

- ☐ Pack Personal Items in one Bag
- ☐ Sleeping bag or sheets, blanket, pillow
- ☐ Work clothes (*long pants & long-sleeve shirt for roof work*)
- ☐ Light coat or sweatshirt
- ☐ Work shoes (*safe sturdy shoes, heavy-duty sneakers OK, NO open toed shoes or flip flops*)
- ☐ Shower shoes
- ☐ Hat (*wide brimmed or baseball cap*)
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Towels (*suggest 2 towels & 2 washcloths*)
- ☐ Large contractor trash bag (*for dirty clothes*)
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Neck Cooling Towels (*optional/helpful*)
- ☐ Insect Repellant (*Deep Woods recommended*)
- ☐ Water bottle with name
- ☐ Extension cord and/or power strip to charge phone
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Swimsuit and beach towel
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Earplugs (*for sleeping*)
- ☐ Fabric Band-aids (*for blisters, splinters, scrapes*)
- ☐ Spending money (*for young adults*)

Tools to Bring

- ☐ Pack Tools in a second, separate bag
- ☐ Tool belt, tool vest, or waist pouch
- ☐ Work gloves
- ☐ Safety glasses (*consider tinted or with sides*)
- ☐ Hard Hat
- ☐ Claw hammer
- ☐ Carpenter's square or speed square (*plastic better*)
- ☐ 25' Tape measure (*smaller is lighter*)
- ☐ Small level (*6-8 inches - optional/helpful*)
- ☐ 3–5 carpenter pencils
- ☐ Swiss army knife to sharpen pencils (*optional/helpful*)
- ☐ Bandana or face mask (*optional/ helpful for breathing around saws and heavy dust*)
- ☐ Anything you feel would help that you want to carry

Mark all tools WITH YOUR NAME!



Read the Packing Advice from past volunteers. They have some great insights which will help you be better prepared and packed for the trip!

**USE A DRY ERASE MARKER
TO CHECK OFF YOUR PACKING LIST**



Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. Matthew 25:40



Website



Facebook

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