

**Author:** Meagan Reitz

**Title:**

**About the Author:**

**Keywords:**

**Abstract:**

Meagan Reitz

9/4/08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

I would like to complete my ethnographic studies as a member of Habitat for Humanity. The purpose of the club Habitat for Humanity is to better the housing in the Champaign area. The group is open to any individuals who would like to participate and holds general meetings on campus about once every two weeks. There are also multiple events that the groups hosts. A popular event is build day, which is when group members get together and work on building their sponsored homes. There are three upcoming building days on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. The group also hosts many fundraising events to earn money for building the homes, and upcoming fundraising dates include September 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. I have never been involved in a club like Habitat for Humanity or done any of this type of volunteer work; therefore, I think it would be a good club for me to join because I can begin to learn more and more about the culture within this type of group while working for a good cause.

Meagan Reitz

John Griswold

Rhetoric 105 M1

9/12/08

*Ethnography in a New Habitat*

I am going to complete my ethnographic studies for the semester as a member of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a worldwide Christian organization that works to rid the world of poverty housing and homelessness. One of Habitat for Humanity's main jobs is to rebuild or repair homes so that low income families living in poor quality homes can move into decent homes at an affordable cost. In December 1991, Habitat for Humanity of Champaign joined Habitat for Humanity International and the University of Illinois officially joined Habitat for Humanity International in March of 1993. The goal for Habitat for Humanity at the University of Illinois is to better all the housing on campus and in the surrounding areas by getting connected with families through education, building, and fundraising. As a new member of Habitat for Humanity, I am afraid it is going to be very difficult to try and understand the members of Habitat for Humanity as well as the individuals that they are working for, since both groups of individuals seem to be very different from each other as well as from myself.

Habitat for Humanity is not a group that I would normally join. I am on the University's women's club soccer team and I usually prefer to join clubs that involve sports or a form of physical activity; therefore, I am assuming that Habitat for Humanity is not going to be the type of club I am used to nor are the members going to be the typical athlete types that I am used to surrounding myself with. Although I know little about Habitat for Humanity, there are a few stereotypes, like there are with most groups, that I have heard about the members of Habitat for Humanity. One stereotype that individuals tend to believe about Habitat for Humanity is that all of the group members are very religious and that the group's activities are very religiously oriented. I have also heard people describe the group members as "goody – two shoes". From these stereotypes that I have heard about Habitat for Humanity, it furthers my idea that this is definitely not the type of club that I would join on a regular basis. When I was growing up, my family never went to church and my parents were not religious. I do have many family members who are very religious; however, religion was never a big part of my upbringing. I would definitely not consider myself a bad person because I did not go to church every Sunday but I would also not consider myself a "goody- two shoes". I am by no means a trouble maker or a rebel; however, I do not believe that anyone I know would consider me to be an individual who has never done wrong in their lifetime. Although I am not the typical do-gooder that they are stereotyped to be, I can relate to the Habitat for Humanity members because I do care about the cause they are working for. I think Habitat for Humanity is a great club and I can relate to the group members in sharing the feelings that it is not right for individuals to have to live in such poor homes and neighborhoods. I have no in-depth knowledge about Habitat for Humanity and its members, but from what I know I believe I am very different from the average group member.

I will be spending a lot of time with the group members and I think it is going to be difficult to try and understand what in their lives has made each individual member want to join Habitat for Humanity. I am hoping I will be able to get to know the members but it will be very challenging to understand all of them. I will also be spending a lot of time with the family whose home Habitat for Humanity is building, and I think it will also be very difficult to relate to these individuals. They are building for Sonya, a twenty-five year old single mother of a three year old son, Bryce. Sonya applied for Habitat for Humanity because she could not take her son outside her apartment without worrying about him being surrounded by drugs and violence. I think the biggest difference that I will find between me and the Habitat experience is between the life I have grown up with and the lives of the individuals that Habitat for Humanity works for. Growing up, I lived in a two parent family home with multiple siblings, and both of my parents had good jobs. The neighborhood where my family lived was a very safe, tight-knit community. The majority of people in my hometown had very nice or decent homes and no one ever had to worry about any sort of violence. I think it will be very hard for me to try and understand the lifestyle and experiences of this family. Although I know I am going to be dealing with situations and people who are very foreign to me, I am hoping I will be able to come to understand everyone I encounter in my experience with Habitat for Humanity.

After the semester is over, I think I am going to have learned a lot about Habitat for Humanity, its members, and the people they help. I hope that I will have more compassion and a greater understanding of how it is to have a life where things are not given to you, and where you live in such a horrible neighborhood that your son cannot go outside without worrying about shootings or drug dealers. Not only do I hope to learn about the life of the family that Habitat for Humanity is working for, but I also hope to learn more about all of the individuals who take their time to be in the club and work to better people's lives. I suspect that the group will be very diverse and very different from the stereotypes that I have heard of them. Even though Habitat for Humanity is not an organization that I would normally join, I hope that I will enjoy the semester I spend with them and learn a lot about myself as well as others.

Meagan Reitz

9/16/08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

*Building the Foundation for a New Life*

Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, was Habitat for Humanity's ground breaking ceremony. On Saturday they began construction on the new home that they are building for Sonya and Bryce Brownlee. The ground breaking ceremony began at eight in the morning and their work continued until four in the evening. Within their eight hour work day, they planned to complete the subflooring of the house, which means building the base for the house and its actual flooring. I attended Habitat for Humanity's build day for about an hour, and I walked around the lot that Habitat is building Sonya's home on. I observed and took notes on the area,

the home that they are currently working on, and the Habitat for Humanity members. Since Habitat for Humanity truly cares about the wellness of the Brownlee family, they have put forth a large amount of effort into finding a nice, safe lot as well as constructing a home for Sonya and Bryce.

The lot where Habitat for Humanity is building Sonya's new home is located on Goodwin Street just north of University Street. The lot is in a neighborhood with many other small to decent sized homes, which all have decent sized front and back yards. Their soon-to-be neighbors across the street have three little children who were all outside playing with their bikes and dog. The lot that they are working on for Sonya is a good sized lot with a very pretty, green back yard that has two large, pretty ash trees. As of right now the lot is a mess and is very muddy. On the lot there is a port-a-potty, multiple stacks of different sized plywood, a red truck filled with supplies in the bed, as well as multiple tool boxes and power tools lying around. On one of the stacks of ply-wood there are doughnuts, water jugs, and cups for their breakfast and their breaks. There are about twenty people working at the ground breaking ceremony right now. Everyone working is wearing jeans, tennis shoes or work boots, and a trash t-shirt. Also, they all have safety goggles on or have them with them. The build day began at 8 a.m. and I arrived around 8:45 a.m. and a lot of the workers are already sweating badly or covered in mud. Everyone is working very hard and very quickly, and no one is complaining about the wind and bad weather or about the long day ahead of them. They have a radio playing loud music, and while they are working they get excited when good songs come on and they sing along. There was a lot of excitement when REO Speed Wagon came on the radio station. The atmosphere is very positive. Even though everyone is doing a lot of hard work, they are all still happy. They are all very encouraging and supportive as well. When two of the group members had to carry a heavy object everyone else gave them a cheer when they were finished moving it. They also all work together very well. For each task that they are working on, there are at least two people working on it together. The workers have been very kind to me as well. As I was taking notes, a few workers came up and introduced themselves to me and told me if I had any questions or needed anything at all they would be glad to help. The members of Habitat for Humanity have created a very good environment to build a home at 708 Goodwin Street.

About twenty feet back from the sidewalk they have started building the base of the home, and they have already built the surrounding brick base perimeter of the house. The brick is in the ground and they have created a decent sized rectangle. The house looks like it is going to be around 1,500 to 2,000 square feet. There is about four feet high of bricks all around the base of the home. There is also a smaller, rectangular base on one side of the home's base in the front. It is about four feet by fifteen feet and will probably be their porch. There is a man, on the site in a gray polo shirt, who seems to be in charge of the construction. He carried around the blue prints and he occasionally would tell individuals what to do after they finished one of their tasks. For the most part everyone seemed to know what they were doing, and there was very little down time between each of their tasks. They were usually always at work. Behind the home there is a huge pile of dirt, which I am assuming they shoveled out earlier to create the hole in the ground for the base of the home. There is a large pile of small rocks that people are shoveling into buckets and then dumping into the base. The majority of the workers are standing inside the base of the house. They have started to surround the inside of the brick with Styrofoam, probably for insulation. Three of the workers are spreading the little rocks

around the base with rakes. There are people placing a layer of copper shield all around the top layer of bricks and then laying down a wood base on top of the copper shield. If the weather remains all right then the group plans to have the subflooring completely done by the end of the day with the plywood flooring installed in the base. The house is the main focus of the entire site. Everything that they have at the site is there to help them get the work on the house finished, and everything that the Habitat members are doing is with the house in mind.

From spending an hour at Habitat for Humanity's build day field site, it is clear that all of the members of Habitat for Humanity are very hard working. They are all also very dedicated to their role as a member of this club and to completing the main task, building a home for Sonya and her son. Anyone would be able to determine this from seeing the way they work together on a build day. What is more important about this group that became apparent to me from watching them work on ground breaking day is that all of these individuals are not doing this because they have to but because they want to. They all have joined Habitat for Humanity for a reason because it must mean something important to them. If this did not mean something very important to all of them then there would not have been such a positive atmosphere that was created at the field site. Saturday morning was not one of the nicest days outside. It was a windy, gloomy morning and the entire lot was filled with wet mud yet all of the individuals continued to complete their tasks with pleasure as if they were doing something they enjoyed on the nicest day of the year. The environment that the Habitat for Humanity members create while working on their main goal shows a lot about the group. To these individuals they are not just building some house. They are helping to start a new life for someone else, and from what I saw on their first build day I believe that it is something that truly means a lot to the members of Habitat for Humanity.

Meagan Reitz

9/21/08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

#### *Annotated Bibliography*

Starling, Kelly. "Habitat for Humanity." *Ebony* Nov97 (Vol. 53 Issue 1): 200-204.

In "Habitat for Humanity", Kelly Starling describes in depth the path that Millard Fuller took to establish Habitat for Humanity. She discusses Fuller's life from when he was a young boy up to now where he has become the head of Habitat for Humanity. As a boy Fuller was born to be an entrepreneur. Throughout his entire life he was in love with money and did anything he could to make some extra cash until he reached the age of 30 and his family began to fall apart because of his love for money. At this point in his life he began to realize that money was not the most important thing. He gave up all of his money and completely started his life over. He then began Habitat for Humanity and since then has only worked to better the lives of others.

Starling also discusses how important religion is in Habitat for Humanity and briefly talks about two individuals' different experiences with Habitat for Humanity. One of the individuals

experience involved them as a volunteer and the other was a single mother who had Habitat for Humanity build her and her family a home.

I found this article useful because it really went in depth in the life of the head leader of Habitat for Humanity. I think learning a lot about Fuller can really describe what Habitat for Humanity is all about, and shows you were the foundation for the group began. The article was also useful because it described the emotions that came from individuals who spent time with Habitat for Humanity. It showed how outsiders view the volunteer workers and how Habitat for Humanity changes peoples' lives.

Petty, John. "Habitat Builds Homes, Humanity in Peru." *National Catholic Reporter* 9 (Vol.32 Issue 16): 2.

"In Habitat Builds Homes, Humanity in Peru," John Petty describes his experience building a Habitat home in Peru. He describes the daily routine that they went through each day. He talks about how hard the work that they have to do was but at the same time how good it felt to do this sort of work for someone else. Like in Sterling's article, Petty makes reference to the importance of religion within the Habitat for Humanity environment. He discusses how even though there was a very broad range of religions there they all went through worship services together. The group that Petty worked with for the week became like family to him. He explains how the majority of the group could not have an actual conversation with one another because they all spoke different languages; however, the entire group was able to bond in an indescribable way.

I think that Petty's article is useful because he shows very well the relationships that are formed from working with Habitat for Humanity. Even though he is going through extremely strenuous work all he can say are positive things about his experience with Habitat, and I think that really says something about the Habitat for Humanity experience.

Aiken, William. "Habitats of the Heart." *Commonweal* 91 (Vol. 118 Issue 2): 38-40.

William Aiken is a man who has never been interested in volunteer work. There was nothing about volunteering that sounded appealing to Aiken. However, when he retired he found that he had a lot of spare time on his hands and he had nothing that he could do to preoccupy himself. Since Aiken had a love of building things, he decided to give Habitat for Humanity a shot. In this article he discusses how he came to join Habitat for Humanity, and even though it was something he normally would not spend time doing he came to love it. At the end of this article, Aiken talks about the average homes that they build, how the money behind Habitat for Humanity works, and how the families are chosen.

This article is useful but Aiken discusses how it is to work at a Habitat for Humanity site. He talks about how there is no one in charge and no real set group. He learns that group is set up for anyone who wants to come out and give a helping hand for a good cause. I think that this article shows a lot about Habitat for Humanity since an individual who is completely opposed to volunteer work can come to a Habitat site and really enjoy the entire atmosphere and goal of what they are working for. Aiken's article is also very helpful because at the end he talks about a lot of useful information about Habitat for Humanity, such as how the money works for

paying for the homes they build.

White, Elizabeth Ross. "Habitat Celebrates 20 Years of Building Faith in Communities."  
*Christian Science Monitor* 96 (Vol. 88 Issue 202): 13.

In Elizabeth White's article on Habitat for Humanity she discusses a lot of different topics. She explains a few basic facts about Habitat for Humanity, including who founded the group, what the main goal is, and some of their accomplishments. She also includes a few quotes from Millard Fuller, the founder, who talks about the future goals and plans for Habitat for Humanity as well as the importance of religion in the group. White then discusses how Habitat for Humanity is able to bring together some many diverse groups of people. There are groups of individuals with different religions who are able to come together and work for the same goal. Habitat for Humanity has also expanded to where it has not only become popular on college campuses but also in high schools and younger. One of the last things White discusses in her article are the emotions of a family that they were currently building a house for.

I found this article useful because many of the little facts that were in the article were very informative and show the progress that Habitat for Humanity has gone through since it first began. Not only the progress with the extremely large number of house that they have built and plan to build in the future, but also with the large number of individuals who Habitat for Humanity is reaching out to. The article was also very useful because it showed the emotions of the family that the house is being built for. These individuals are not just chosen randomly.

They also have to put in a lot of effort to receive their home but they always seem to be unbelievably grateful for Habitat for Humanity.

"Building House Allows N. M. Students Put New Skills to Test." *Community College Week* 14  
July 2008: 14.

In Community College Week, there is an article which discusses the work that Central New Mexico Community College did to build a Habitat for Humanity home as an assignment for one of their classes. A student in the class, Frank Nieto, describes the experience and the work that they had to do. None of the individuals in the class had ever built a home before; however, the students and their instructors did basically all of the work in building the home. The students had to do all of the building, carpentry work, electrical work, plumbing, landscaping, and heating and air conditioning in the house. The students had to do a good job on the house because they were being graded on their work. These students were able to get graded on a project while getting work experience all for a good cause. Community College Week also discusses the gratitude that the Bustillos family showed toward the college students for putting in about 1,500 hours over the school year to build their home.

I found this article useful because once again it was able to capture the emotions of both sides of the individuals who go through the Habitat experience. I also thought that this article was useful because it can relate to the University of Illinois college students are members of Habitat for Humanity here. This article shows how much Habitat for Humanity is spreading worldwide, and how it is becoming popular with individuals of all age groups, even college students who would not be the most likely individuals to put in so much time and effort in something they do not have to do.

Extensive Notes on "Habitat for Humanity" by Kelly Starling

Beginnings of Habitat :

In 1969, Joseph Johnson, a black man from Georgia, had obtained enough money to buy some land for himself but did not have any money left to build himself a home. Millard Fuller, a white entrepreneur from Alabama, decided to get with his friend Clarence Jordan and help Johnson get a no-interest loan so he could afford a home. When the Johnson family was able to move into a home, Fuller began to think. In 1976, Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity International.

Millard Fuller:

Fuller was an entrepreneur by the age of 6. Every since he was little all he ever tried to do was make money in any way he could. By the time he was 28 he was already a millionaire. He began to completely focus on making more and more money and spent less and less time with his family. When finally his wife threatened to leave him, Fuller realized that the money was not important. He and his wife decided to give up all of their money to charities. He then met with Clarence Jordan and habitat for Humanity began. Fuller hopes to set the way to remove all of the poverty housing in the world sooner or later.

Habitat for Humanity:

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit Christian group that is working to could rid of all poverty housing in the world. It is now a world renowned group. Habitat for Humanity offers mortgages without interest and takes small down payments, and all of their profits go to building more homes.

They have helped build over 60,000 homes in 54 different countries (as of 1997).

They build a house every 50 minutes = 1,000 homes each month

One of the top 20 homebuilders in the country

Helped more than 300,000 people

Religion in Habitat for Humanity:

Fuller believes that religion in Habitat for Humanity is very important. It is the basis of everything that he does and he believes it is why they have become so successful. It is important that they show more love to the group members and family members than to the actual materialistic items (the house). Religion VERY VERY VERY IMPORTANT to Fuller, who is the founder....so very important part of Habitat!

Wayne R. Walker and Habitat:

Walker is the chairman of the board of directors of Habitat for Humanity. Walker first entered

the Habitat scene because as a lawyer he knew that doing this community service would look very good. However, once Walker got onto the Habitat scene his views were completely changed. He wanted to get more involved with Habitat after seeing all of the individuals who were nowhere near poor yet wanted to help others and being in such a strong Christian environment. He was completely sold on Habitat for Humanity after completing the building of the first house. It was not only due to the look of the ecstatic family that was receiving a new home but also the look on the faces of all of those who had put the hard work into building their home.

I think this really shows a lot about Habitat for Humanity and its members. These individuals clearly are not doing this because they have to. If they had to, they would not be such a great feeling of accomplishment and joy in doing their work.

Choosing families to build for:

It's based on how much the family needs it, if they're willing to put in the hours of working on their house as well, and if they are able to pay the non-interest loan.

Rosie Simmons and Habitat for Humanity:

Rosie Simmons was a single mother of four children. When she was a child she had 15 siblings and lived in a four room shack with her entire family. Then when Rosie became a single mother, she moved to the projects in an unsanitary home in a very dangerous neighborhood. Rosie never imagined that she would ever have her own home. However, thanks to Habitat for Humanity Rosie and her children were able to move into a decent home in a nice neighborhood. Since she has moved she has been able to get a good job at a local bank and remove her children from the gang scenes.

I think that seeing how the families react to receiving their new homes is a very important part of Habitat for Humanity. In every case the families are unbelievably grateful and excited. They are able to begin their new lives which is always a huge upgrade from their lives before. I think that this is one of the main factors that drive Habitat for Humanity members to do what they do.

Meagan Reitz

9/30/08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

*Annotated Bibliography: Web-based research*

"Statement of Purpose." *Inter Action: American Council for Voluntary International Action*. Inter Action. 2002-2008. 28 Sept. 2008 < <http://www.interaction.org/members/detail.php?id=3120>>.

This website is very short and doesn't contain that much information, but it describes the mission statement of Habitat for Humanity perfectly. It describes how Habitat for Humanity works with all groups of people attempting to build better homes, lives, and communities. Their main goal is to get rid of bad housing in the entire world and to make the idea of people living in poverty housing something that is completely wrong and unheard of. By building decent homes for families, Habitat for Humanity is not just temporarily finding places for families to live but permanently helping families find homes and putting an end to poverty housing. The website also explains how all of what Habitat for Humanity does is with God. I found this website useful because I really think that it describes Habitat for Humanity's mission statement very well.

"Faces and Places: Volunteer Stories." *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for Humanity. 2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <[http://www.habitat.org/faces\\_places/vol/list.aspx](http://www.habitat.org/faces_places/vol/list.aspx)>.

This page is from Habitat for Humanity's actual webpage, and it contains a list of over 40 different stories from individuals who have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. There is a wide variety of different experiences that the volunteers have gone through. Each story describes how they came about joining Habitat for Humanity, their experience with them, and how it has changed their life. For every volunteer, Habitat for Humanity has been a life changing experience and they all think very highly of the organization. I found this site useful because it gives so many different experiences that volunteers went through with Habitat for Humanity. This website is really able to show how the Habitat experience affects the people who choose to be a part of it.

"Faces and Places: Homeowner Stories." *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for Humanity. 2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <[http://www.habitat.org/faces\\_places/hom/list.aspx](http://www.habitat.org/faces_places/hom/list.aspx)>.

This page is also from Habitat for Humanity's actual webpage, and it contains a list of different stories from the individuals who have received homes from Habitat for Humanity.

Each homeowner's story describes the family and why they needed a Habitat home by describing their old style of life. Then each story describes how the Habitat home has changed the family's life. In each story Habitat for Humanity has had a huge impact on the family and changed their life in a very positive way. I thought this site was useful for the same reason as the previous site was. It really shows the different experiences that people go through with Habitat for Humanity, and it shows how Habitat impacts peoples' lives.

"Why Habitat for Humanity is Needed." *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for Humanity. 2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <<http://www.habitat.org/how/why.aspx>>.

This site is also a link from Habitat for Humanity's actual webpage. This site goes over the reasons why Habitat for Humanity is necessary in the world right now. The website discusses how there is a serious housing problem in the world right now. There are a very large number of people living in below average housing and a large number of homeless individuals as well. The large number of individuals with housing problems is only going to continue to grow if nothing is done to put an end to it. Habitat believes that decent housing is very important and the fight to put an end to below standard living and homelessness is essential. I think that this website is useful because it shows that there are serious problems in the world right now, and

this is what Habitat for Humanity is working to solve.

“What are Habitat Houses like?” *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for Humanity. 2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <<http://www.habitat.org/how/whatlike.aspx>>.

This website comes from Habitat for Humanity’s webpage, and it discusses the houses that Habitat for Humanity builds. The three main characteristics about Habitat homes are that they are simple, decent, and affordable. The website describes the typical house that is built in North America as well as the features that go along with the house. The website also describes the typical houses in areas other than North America, and how they differ from the houses built here. I found this website useful because obviously the houses are a very important part of Habitat for Humanity and it is important to know what the Habitat for Humanity volunteers are working to create.

“Habitat for Humanity International.” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. 17 Sept. 2008. Wikimedia Foundation Inc. 28 Sept. 2008 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat\\_for\\_Humanity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_for_Humanity)>.

The Wikipedia page for Habitat for Humanity goes over a lot of different topics. The website discusses briefly what Habitat for Humanity is and the history of the organization. The website then discusses the qualifications individuals have to have to receive a Habitat home, and how the money involved with paying for their homes works. It also goes over the process of building a Habitat home. The Wikipedia site talks briefly about many different programs that Habitat for Humanity has such as, Operation Home Delivery, Collegiate Challenge, Global Village Trips, Women Build, and Habitat Restore. I found this website helpful because it discussed various topics about Habitat for Humanity that are all important parts of the organization.

Baggett, Jerome P. *Habitat for Humanity: Building Private Homes, Building Public Religion*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001. 249 - 251. 28 Sept. 2008 <[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=NX-FXkrmNwC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=%22Habitat+for+Humanity%22&ots=yZsi-0L3af&sig=SjsEHBwcQVpgqfv1-FL\\_YgOHwYs#PPP1,M1](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=NX-FXkrmNwC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=%22Habitat+for+Humanity%22&ots=yZsi-0L3af&sig=SjsEHBwcQVpgqfv1-FL_YgOHwYs#PPP1,M1)>.

The portion of this book that I looked at goes over some of the basic principles of Habitat for Humanity. First it describes Habitat for Humanity’s, states their mission statement, and explains how their organization operates. Next it lists the 7 fundamental principles of the group. The first principle is teaching the ways of God to everyone even though they do accept all individuals into Habitat for Humanity regardless of their religion. The second and third principles are that Habitat is here to build families and communities and they build decent houses for individuals who are in need. The next two principles state that Habitat for Humanity picks their house owners on certain criteria without any bias opinions and that there is no profit or interest earned on their houses. The sixth principle is that the affiliates from Habitat for Humanity are expected to give ten percent of their earnings to Habitat for Humanity International, and the last principle is that Habitat for Humanity does not accept funds from the government to aid in the building of their houses. Even though I only used three pages from this book, I found these three pages useful because they were able to discuss

all the main aspects and goals of Habitat for Humanity, which showed what it is really about.

*University of Illinois: Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter*. 2008. Habitat for Humanity. 28 Sept. 2008 <<http://habitat.union.uiuc.edu/>>.

This is Habitat for Humanity's main page at the University of Illinois. The website has many different links which contain useful information about the group. There are links which discuss what Habitat is and the history of the group. The website shows the families which they have built homes for in the Champaign area in the past. It also gives you a list of individuals who are in charge of the group at the University of Illinois, and probably most important the website contains a list of events that volunteers can take part in. This website is very useful to me because it allows me to know when all of the meetings and activities are occurring. I was also able to find a student that I could contact to find out if it was possible for me to work with Habitat for the semester. I have also used the website to learn about things that Habitat for Humanity at the University has done in the past.

"The History of Habitat." *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for Humanity. 2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <<http://www.habitat.org/how/historytext.aspx>>.

This website is a link from Habitat for Humanity's actual webpage, and the site discusses the history of Habitat for Humanity. The website goes into depth on the two families who had the largest impact in putting together the organization, and then describes how the Carter family increased the popularity of the foundation. The website also states the success that Habitat for Humanity has had since it was founded. I found this site useful because I think you need to understand where an organization started to fully understand it. This site was the most helpful site I found on the History of Habitat for Humanity because it discussed the history of the entire organization not only Habitat for Humanity groups from certain cities or universities.

Erin McManus. "Homelessness in the United States." <  
[http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/deansbookcourse/s06\\_dr/McManus.pdf](http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/deansbookcourse/s06_dr/McManus.pdf)>.

This website discusses the history of homelessness and poverty. It first discusses what exactly it means to be homeless, and then discusses the difference in homeless men and women back in the 1800s when this first became a problem. The website explains how this problem has grown since then and different acts from the government which have tried to help put an end to the problem. The page describes different reasons for why the number of homeless individuals has been increasing. It also discusses the difference in the number of homeless individuals in rural compared to urban areas, in different ethnic groups, and it discusses how children have become a major victim of homelessness. The last thing the website discusses is groups like Habitat for Humanity which is attempting to put an end to our nation's problem with poverty and homelessness. This website is very useful because it shows that homelessness and poverty are big problems within our nation right now, and that something really needs to be done or the problem is only going to get worse. This shows that Habitat for Humanity is really working for a great cause and can give some insight into why the Habitat volunteers do what they do.

Extensive Notes on "Homelessness in the United States" by Erin McManus

- Homelessness has been a problem in our history since very early in our nation
  - o Close to 400 years
  - o First really noticed and identified as homeless in mid 1800s
  - Urbanization and Industrialization led to an increase
  - Charities became unable to handle the large number of homeless individuals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century
  - More homeless women than men at the time but it was not as big of a deal for a woman to be homeless as it was if a man were homeless
  - However, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of homeless men was larger
  - o Due to the help that women and their children received from the government and charities
  - Homeless is defined by the McKinney Act as those lacking regular, adequate nighttime residence, those who only have temporary living accommodations or primary nighttime residence in shelters, hotels or private or public places not intended for a human being's residency."
  - Examples of programs to help with homelessness include emergency relief shelters, health care provisions, treatment for the disabled or mentally ill, job training
  - Current homelessness is different from past homelessness
  - o It is now in much younger individuals, 75% under the age of 45
  - o Used to be mainly white men and now it is in all people
  - o Mainly young, single, non-white, and disabled individuals
  - o Mainly in urban areas but also in rural too
  - Reason for current homelessness
  - o Limited number of housing assistance programs
  - o Lack of affordable housing
  - o Increase in poverty
  - § Decline in wages
  - Homelessness and Children

- o 40% of people living in poverty are children
- Groups trying to help with homelessness and poverty
  - o Habitat for Humanity
  - o Amherst Survival Center
  - o Meal programs
- Homelessness is a serious issue in our nation right now and has not been given the right amount of attention that it needs

Meagan Reitz

10/14/08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

*Interview Transcript*

Q: In your own words can you describe what Habitat for Humanity is? Like what you guys do and what you are working for?

A: Sure, Habitat for Humanity's mission is to end substandard housing through partnership with the community or campus and in addition to that though we do a lot of fundraising to help us get towards accomplishing our mission and then we also focus on doing education and advocacy events that center around the issue of substandard housing.

Q: What kind of fundraising events do you guys do?

A: We have special events such as our volleyball tournament and 5k race and we can outside of Wal-Mart twice a year. We also partner with different groups in the community who come to us and want to like do a fundraiser to raise money for us so we work with some sororities and fraternities and then we recently had a fundraiser through custom cuts a hair cut place on campus. It was having their grand view opening so they wanted to partner with us and donate some of the profits of their grand view opening. Lots of things come up I guess throughout the year but our main fundraisers are the special events I mentioned.

Q: Before you joined the group what all did you know, like did you know all of this about them?

A: Um, I got involved with Habitat during High School so I knew stuff before I came to our campus chapter but before I got involved in High School I didn't. Like all I knew was they build houses.

Q: Do you think that is all the majority of people know?

A: Yeah I think so. I think there's a lot of misconceptions where people just don't realize how the whole process works like where the money comes from and how that is raised.

Q: What made you want to join Habitat for Humanity?

A: Um, Habitat appealed to me personally because I grew up in a substandard house so it's like an issue that I could really relate to. There are like a thousand good organizations on campus that you can be a part of but Habitat like really drew me in because of the very tangible results you can see, like at the end of the year well this year anyway we are going to have a house. Like it's just very satisfying and a very real result.

Q: Probably a lot of the individuals who have joined didn't group up in a substandard house so what do you think are reasons that they would have joined?

A: Um, I think most people are just looking for a way to give back and again people like it because it's hands on and they actually get to go out and be a part of something that's going to affect someone's life. I think that's one of the major things that attract people, the hands on aspect.

Q: When you are talking to people and telling them that you are a part of Habitat for Humanity, do you notice that people respond to you in a specific sort of way?

A: There's a pretty positive respond in general because most people have heard of our name so it's something that they're familiar with. I don't think I've ever gotten a negative response like ewww you're involved with habitat (laughing). Yeah usually it's just kind of a positive, interest type of response. Usually people ask what do you do on campus.

Q: Do you get any sort of responses specifically because you're the president of the group?

A: Like from other students?

Q: Yeah.

A: Maybe just like heightened, like more interest and more questions than general board members might get because people would expect and hopefully expect correctly that I would know stuff that is going on with the organization. I also actually going off that get responses from students who are involved in other things and when they hear that I'm the president they're like oh well I want my group to work with your group so more networking stuff.

Q: How long have you been a member?

A: I've been a member all four years here, and then I started sophomore year in High School.

Q: Did a lot of people do it in High School, was it as big there as here?

A: Not really. We didn't have a group at my high school, my church had a group that I went on a mission trip with.

Q: How did you come about being a member?

A: Well freshman year I was just an average, general member and I liked it; I wasn't highly involved though. I was involved but I didn't like go on the spring break trip or put in a huge number of hours but then at the end of the year I decided I'd apply to be on the board because it was something that I wanted to do more with. So I was a special events board member for two years and I guess through that I got to see the organization a little more in depth and how it is run. It felt like the president or executive board was the only place to go to do more for the organization.

Q: As the president or vice-president what extra roles do you have?

A: There's a lot more duties or responsibilities that we have to deal with that pertain to the international organization of Habitat so we have to make sure everything we're doing is in line with their standards, and we have to submit reports to them and pay dues and do our tiding to our sister chapter. So there's just a lot of bureaucracy stuff with international and then kind of along those lines too we interact more with the counter affiliate. I go to their monthly board meetings and keep in really close contact with their director because again she is the expert on how Habitat has to work and what we can and can't do. As president I have to maintain communication with all of the board members instead of when I was a board member I just kind of had my project and that was my main focus and now it's kind of a more well rounded experience I guess.

Q: I know at the meetings there are just huge groups of volunteers, did you say you just apply to get to a higher role?

A: Um yeah, in the spring we put out board of directors applications that people can submit and then from those applications we select the top ones and interview them.

Q: Is it based on their hours of volunteer work put in?

A: Um yes and now. It is more focused on their responses to questions because there are a lot of people on the board who didn't get involved that much before they applied but we could tell that they were interested and if people have experience with the same sort of thing too like organizations in the past or here on campus that can play a role. But most people get an interview; there aren't like thousands of applications .

Q: Obviously you guys do a lot, how much time would you say you put in?

A: Like per week?

Q: Yeah.

A: Um, it varies obviously but we do three office hours and there are just so many emails. I'd

say on average like ten hours a week. But yeah it really varies because at the start of the year there are a lot more because you're getting new members and all of that.

Q: Do you think all of the volunteer work is worth the outcome?

A: Oh definitely. Yeah it has probably been the best thing I have done on campus to get involved with this because it has been such like a complete process since I've done it all four years and like gone from volunteering to having a leadership role within the organization so it has definitely been worth it.

Q: Along with that, once you guys have completed the house what does the house mean to you? Like why is it that you put all of that effort in?

A: We have a dedication ceremony when the house is completed which is a very emotional time obviously for our volunteers because they've completed the project and then for the family because they have their home. And we try to not just finish the home and then end communication and cut them off so we do a fall rake day for Habitat families if they're interested and we go around and rake their yards and say hello. Um, I think with the house this year we'll continue our relationship partially because the homeowner is so young and it's so close to campus. It seems like there is a really strong tie this year.

Q: So would you say most of you guys get really close to the people you are building for?

A: Again it kind of varies. Sometimes the homeowner, like in the past year, didn't speak very good English which can be a barrier, it doesn't have to be, but it can eliminate some communication especially with the volunteers who only see them a couple of times on the site. But the goal is definitely to get to know them and to bring them to lots of events. We invite them to our fundraisers and special events and I think that is something that we're leaning to try and really make that tie closer.

Q: Do they usually go to the build days?

A: Yeah, they try to. With our family this year she is having trouble with her work schedule and not being able to get off but they have to complete 250 sweat equity hours so that is one way she can do it.

Q: Are other possible ways going to the fundraising events?

A: Yeah all of those events and then any meetings that she has to do to decide things about her house count. Or also volunteering.

Q: What would you say the most rewarding thing about Habitat is for you guys?

A: Um for me it is and this doesn't directly tie to habitat but getting people involved and helping them see what habitat is doing and how big it is and what an incredible organization it is and just seeing volunteers who maybe come to us at first and do a little bit and then get really highly involved. It's really inspiring I think.

Q: What role does religion play in Habitat for Humanity?

A: Well it is a Christian organization but it is also non-discriminatory on families it selects so there are families of all different religions that are recipients of houses. So there are no criteria to be of a certain religion or belief to be a part of Habitat. It is just kind of like Habitat supports and follows Christian principles of acceptance and giving a hand out to the poor. I would say religion is like a guideline for the organization and a philosophy or Christianity but not in any way is it exclusive to other groups.

Q: Would you say most of the members who join Habitat for Humanity Christians?

A: I would say it's completely like a representative example of the University. Maybe there would be a higher proportion of Christians just because Christians are probably the largest religious group on campus and kids who grew up going to church do tend to volunteer more but it's not something that really comes up that much so I'm not sure.

Q: Have you formed any special relationships with the other Habitat members like how close do you all get?

A: Well our board gets pretty close. We have meetings every other week after the general meetings and then we also have board retreats and we do like fun retreats. We're going to Curtis Orchard together coming up here. The social aspect is something that we want to improve on too because sometimes we feel like the general volunteers and board are kind of separate. So we're working on having more social events. We have a campfire this Thursday that is open to all general members and board so I mean for me personally yeah since I've been in the group for the whole time I feel like I've gotten to know a lot of people pretty well. Like that one (points to Paul Hopkins (VP) who is sitting in the room). It is kind of what you put into it though like it is very easy to come and just volunteer or do what you're in charge of instead of making the effort to go to more social events.

Q: Just wondering but for the build days, is there a guy in charge?

A: Yeah he is from the country affiliate. He is their construction manager. He doubles and does the same job for us and at the same time he works with our construction chair to train him or help him do apprentice work.

Meagan Reitz

10/16/08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

*Condensed Narrative*

[H]abitat for Humanity's mission is to end substandard housing through partnership with the community or campus; and, in addition to that we do a lot of fundraising to help us

get towards accomplishing our mission, and then we also focus on doing education and advocacy events that center around the issue of substandard housing. Habitat appealed to me personally because I grew up in a substandard house so it's an issue that I could really relate to. I've been a member all four years here, and then I started sophomore year in High School. [F]reshman year I was just an average, general member and I liked it; I wasn't highly involved though. [However,] I decided I'd apply to be on the board because it was something that I wanted to do more with. So I was a special events board member for two years and I guess through that I got to see the organization a little more in depth and how it is run. It felt like the president or executive board was the only place to go to do more for the organization.

[As president,] there's a lot more duties or responsibilities that we have to deal with that pertain to the international organization of Habitat. [W]e have to make sure everything we're doing is in line with their standards, and we have to submit reports to them and pay dues and do our tiding to our sister chapter. [W]e interact more with the counter affiliate [and] as president I have to maintain communication with all of the board members. [O]ur board gets pretty close [because] we have meetings every other week after the general meetings and then we also have board retreats and we do like fun retreats. [F]or me personally since I've been in the group for the whole time I feel like I've gotten to know a lot of people pretty well, [and] we invite [the homeowners] to our fundraisers and special events [and] our goal is definitely to get to know them [too]. [W]e try to not just finish the home and then end communication and cut them off. [I] think with the house this year we'll continue our relationship partially because the homeowner is so young and it's so close to campus. It seems like there is a really strong tie this year. We have a dedication ceremony when the house is completed which is a very emotional time obviously for our volunteers because they've completed the project and then for the family because they have their home. I think most people are just looking for a way to give back and people like it because it's hands on and they actually get to go out and be a part of something that's going to affect someone's life. There are like a thousand good organizations on campus that you can be a part of but Habitat really drew me in because of the very tangible results you can see. It has probably been the best thing I have done on campus to get involved with this because it has been such a complete process since I've done it all four years and like gone from volunteering to having a leadership role within the organization. [G]etting people involved and helping them see what habitat is doing and how big it is and what an incredible organization it is and just seeing volunteers who maybe come to us at first and do a little bit and then get really highly involved is really inspiring I think, so it has definitely been worth it.

Meagan Reitz

10-23-08

Rhetoric 105 M1

John Griswold

*Habitat for Humanity: Building Lives*

A very popular misconception about Habitat for Humanity is that they just build homes. However, the organization does a lot more than just building homes. There are

builders, contractors, and construction workers whose job it is to just build. Habitat for Humanity is working for far more than that. They are attempting to put an end to substandard housing and homelessness throughout the world by building homes for those in need. Habitat for Humanity builds homes for families who are currently living in substandard housing and have low incomes, which makes it hard for them to move into a better home on their own.

Habitat for Humanity then sells the homes that their volunteers have built to their chosen families at a no-interest mortgage, which allows the families to be able to afford the houses. However, what Habitat for Humanity is doing goes even beyond building homes for families in need and trying to put an end to substandard housing. Habitat for Humanity is working to help turn these families into independent, successful members of society so they will be able to live on their own and fit in with the expectations of our society today.

Habitat for Humanity is trying to help develop the families that they are building for so they will be able to live on their own without the help of others. Habitat for Humanity is helping families by removing them from the unsafe, bad neighborhoods and below average housing that they currently live in, and building simple, decent, and affordable homes for these families. Habitat for Humanity could simply build shelters for families to live in that were safe environments, however, they are not doing this. They are building nice, decent homes for these families to live in. By doing this Habitat for Humanity is not only building a home for these individuals but also working to build up their lives. They are beginning to create the basis for new lives for these families, beginning with helping them afford a home that is viewed as more acceptable in our society today. Habitat for Humanity also helps these individuals gain new experiences that will aid them in becoming an accepted member of society. For a family to be able to receive a Habitat home they must comply with doing two hundred and fifty sweat equity hours of work for their home. These two hundred and fifty hours can be obtained by the house recipients doing volunteer work with Habitat like going to build days or fundraising events or by going to meetings for the home count towards their hours of work as well. By having it be mandatory that the families do these sweat equity hours, it requires them to do some form of work to receive their home. Habitat for Humanity makes it so that they do not just give this home to the family; they are required to put in a lot of time and work to receive it. The house recipients need to learn that they need to work for what they want in life, and that organizations such as Habitat for Humanity will not be able to help them survive and obtain a comfortable living for the rest of their life. Habitat for Humanity is also setting the family up to make positive relationships with encouraging individuals by requiring them to obtain many Habitat meetings and events. The families are required to spend time with the Habitat members and volunteers that are taking the time to build their homes, and a goal of Habitat for Humanity is to create a close tie between the house recipients and their members. Habitat for Humanity is attempting to create new relationships

in these individuals' lives which will turn their lives in the right direction and give them the drive to become successful on their own. By building homes for individuals who are currently unable to live lives, which are considered comfortable and socially acceptable, on their own, Habitat for Humanity is attempting to create situations that will cause these families to want to become active members of a society where they can be accepted so they can give back to the community.

For survival all human beings really need are food, shelter, and clothing. However, in our society today having only these basic necessities has become unacceptable. It would be perfectly reasonable for Habitat for Humanity to build basic shelters for large numbers of individuals to rid the world of homelessness; however, this is not their goal. They are attempting to rid the world of substandard housing as well. Having it as a goal for all individuals around the world to live in better than substandard housing says something about the society we live in today. If the bare essentials and necessities are not good enough anymore, it shows that to fit in and feel like a useful member of society it is necessary to own above average material things. Habitat for Humanity removes families from substandard housing so that they will then be more accepted in society. With the help from Habitat for Humanity, they hope that after they have paved the way for families to be accepted within their communities. Once the families are more accepted and confident within their communities they will be more likely to want to have an active role within society and they will hopefully strive to be able to contribute by themselves. They hope that from the relationships they have formed and work they have done and seen through Habitat for Humanity that they will have some inspiration to work to obtain a better life for themselves and their family. This would include obtaining a better job or maybe returning to school and obtaining a better education for yourself while at the same time setting up your family for success by giving them the good education that they need to be successful in this very competitive world. Finally when a family has come to meet these high standards of our world right now, they will be socially accepted by society and will hopefully be able to give back to their community.

Society has changed a great deal over time, and what was once important is not what is important in today's times. It is far more important to fit in and have materialistic things today than it ever was in the past. It is necessary for groups like Habitat for Humanity to exist so they are able to aid individuals in being able to fit in and be accepted by the standards of our society now. The overall goal is for families who have received Habitat homes to be able to give back to the community after Habitat for Humanity has done and given so much to them. As Habitat for Humanity begins to build better than substandard homes for individuals to live, they are paving the way for families to be on their way to living in a way that is more

acceptable in today's times than the so called unacceptable manor in which they were living before. Habitat for Humanity is not just building the physical aspect of a home for a family but is building a home in which these families will be able to start completely new and improved lives for themselves.

Meagan Reitz

11-20-08

Rhetoric 105, M1

John Griswold

*Final Essay*

As I walked down Goodwin Street the normal hustle and bustle of our University's campus was gone; the campus was completely dead. It was eight o'clock in the morning on Saturday, September 13, and I was making my way to Habitat for Humanity's groundbreaking ceremony.

Habitat for Humanity is a worldwide Christian organization that works to rid the world of substandard housing and homelessness. One of Habitat for Humanity's main jobs is to rebuild or repair homes so that low income families living in poor quality homes can move into decent, affordable homes. They are also working to provide lifelong solutions to these problems so that in the future both substandard housing and homelessness will be seen as completely unacceptable ("Statement" 1). On September 13, presentations given by the president of Habitat for Humanity and the project coordinator of Habitat for Humanity marked the beginning of the groundbreaking ceremony. Board members, volunteers, the family receiving the home this spring and members from the community were there to watch as Habitat for Humanity broke ground at 708 North Goodwin Street. This marked the beginning of the ninth home that the Habitat for Humanity chapter at the University of Illinois is building.

After a long walk, I finally reached 708 Goodwin Street, just past University. As I approached the lot, I was reassured that our campus was not completely dead that morning. I walked up to the lot and there were many things going on in front of me. Before I could advance any further, I took a step back and took in everything that was happening on the lot before me. The lot was covered in complete mud; there was no grass to walk on whatsoever. However, a majority of the lot's ground was already unable to be walked on due to the large amounts of materials lying around. A port-a-potty, multiple stacks of different sized wood, a red truck

with supplies in the bed, as well as a small trailer home full of supplies all filled the small lot. There were also tool boxes and power tools lying around the lot; and, about twenty feet back from the sidewalk, behind all of the mess of supplies and power tools, lay the base of the home.

The homes that Habitat for Humanity builds come from money that each individual chapter of Habitat for Humanity raises. Each chapter can obtain their money in different ways. They can apply for grants, they can pair up with businesses and receive donations from them, and they can do fundraising events. Whatever way they choose to obtain their money to build their home, each chapter has to come up with seventy thousand dollars or they will not be able to build until they do. This money is then given to the county affiliate and put into what they call a build account, and the county affiliate is then responsible for paying the contractors and purchasing all of the necessary supplies to build the home (Bardell 6).

To raise money, our chapter at the University of Illinois does a lot of different fundraising events. Every other Tuesday our chapter hosts a general meeting where the board members discuss upcoming events and issues and get to know the volunteers. Their general meetings are open to anyone who wants to come and has interest in volunteering with them. There are usually about ten board members at the meetings. All of the board members usually sit in the first row of seats and you can pick them out from the regular volunteers because they wear light blue and dark blue Habitat for Humanity t-shirts. The vice president of Habitat for Humanity usually begins the meetings by discussing the upcoming events. The vice president is a senior; he is a little taller than the average guy, has bright red hair, speaks softly, and seems a little uncomfortable when he has to talk in front of everyone. Throughout their meetings, the vice president talked about many of their different fundraising events that they do to earn money towards their house. Through fundraising they aim to earn 25,000 dollars this year. Every year Habitat for Humanity has special events that they use participation in to earn money, such as the volleyball tournament and the 5k race. During the meeting, the vice president showed pictures of Habitat for Humanity board members and volunteers that participated in the volleyball tournament. He showed a lot of funny action shots and the board members made jokes about the pictures and how they never make it very far in the tournament. Other fundraising events that he talked about included canning and trick or treat for change. Two times a year volunteers sign up and stand outside of Wal-Mart to collect canned goods. Trick or treat for change is a new fundraising event that they did this year. Volunteers and board members dressed up in costumes and then went from door to door in the Champaign area asking for spare change. To persuade the volunteers even more, he made sure to inform us that there was a high possibility that we would receive candy for ourselves along with the spare change.

Besides informing us on any upcoming events, the general meetings also went over different relevant issues. Different board members have gone over topics, such as Habitat for Humanity's role in disaster relief, celebrity's help in Habitat for Humanity, and updates on the house. During one meeting, the secretary went over the progress of the house being built on Goodwin Street. The secretary is a graduate student who is on the short side, has short blonde hair, and is a lot louder and seems more comfortable talking in front of everyone than the vice president does. As he goes over what has been accomplished at the build site he shows pictures of volunteers and board members working on the house. There are a lot of funny and embarrassing pictures of the board members that they put in to get a good laugh from everyone. The board members also use the meetings to try and get to know the volunteers and potential board members better. Two girls who are a part of the education and advocacy board set up a game of Pictionary for everyone at one of the meetings. These girls set up the game so that you had to draw a challenge stick along with the word you were drawing a picture of. The challenges included drawing with your non-dominant hand, drawing blindfolded, and drawing with "super chalk", which was a very long stick with a piece of chalk attached to the end. Both the volunteers and board members got pretty into the game. There was a group who called themselves the purple people eaters, and there was one group that the other three groups picked on because they only ever had negative points. The board members are able to make general meetings not as dull as they could potentially be even though they have to cover some general information about building at their meetings.

It was the ground breaking ceremony, the first day of building, and the Habitat for Humanity members were already hard at work. There were about twenty people working at the ground breaking ceremony. About half of the people there were board members while the other half was volunteers. Everyone working was wearing jeans, tennis shoes or work boots, and a t-shirt. Also, they all had safety goggles on or had them with them. The build day began at 8 a.m. and I arrived around 8:45 a.m., and a lot of the workers were already sweating badly or covered in mud. By the time I arrived, the base of the home had already been made; there was a rectangular hole in the ground surrounded by a perimeter of bricks. There were about four layers of stacked bricks making up the entire base of the house. In front of the rectangular base, there was about a four by fifteen feet base of stacked bricks attached, which will be their porch. Behind the base of the home there was a huge pile of dirt, which was dug out to create the hole for the base of the home. The majority of the work was occurring inside the base of the home.

There were about five individual who were surrounding the inside of the base with Styrofoam for insulation. There was a

large pile of small rocks that they used to fill up buckets and pour into the base. One of the board members who is a girl was shoveling rocks into two different buckets. She is an extremely small, thin girl. Two boys were then carrying the buckets filled with rocks to the base of the home and pouring them in. After I was there for an hour, I could see a size difference in the large pile of rocks. Then there were around three volunteers with large rakes who were spreading the rocks around the bottom of the base. About five of the volunteers were working on placing a layer of gold shield around the top layer of the brick and then laying down a wood base on the top. There was an older man who was carrying around a rolled up sheet of paper. He is short with dark brown hair and was wearing a gray polo, and he was helping instruct these workers on getting the copper shield and wood surrounding the home; he is the construction manager. For the most part everyone seemed to know what they were doing. Everyone was assigned their own task that needed to be done and they were working on that. There was not a huge need for the construction manager to be walking around telling all of the volunteers what they needed to be doing at all times. They would all work on their job and when they were finished they would move on to another job that someone else needed help finishing. There was very little down time between each of their tasks. They were usually always at work. They planned on having the entire wood base floor in the bottom of the base by the end of the day.

Everyone was working very hard and very quickly. I spent an hour at the first build day and there had been a lot of progress made in the hour before I arrived and I could see even more progress made by the time I left. The atmosphere is very positive. No one complained about the wind and bad weather or about the long day ahead of them. They had a radio playing loud music, and while they were working they got excited when good songs came on and they sang along. There was a lot of excitement when REO Speed Wagon came on the radio station. Even though everyone is doing a lot of hard work, they are all still happy. They are all very encouraging and supportive as well. Two of the group members had to carry a very heavy object, and when they were finished moving it everyone else gave them a cheer. They also all work together very well. For each task that they are working on, there are at least two people working on it together. Each task was assigned to a number of different volunteers and they worked together to complete it. To fill the base of the home with rocks they have the smaller, weaker girl fill the buckets with rocks while the two males carry the heavy buckets back and forth. The members of Habitat for Humanity have created a very good environment to build a home at 708 Goodwin Street.

The homes that Habitat for Humanity builds are described as “simple, decent, and affordable” (“What” 1). Each home is made as simple as possible to maintain cheap prices, however, they are built large enough to fit the needs of the family that they are building the

home for. The homes can vary slightly to accommodate the needs of each individual family but they are generally very similar. There are trained individuals instructing the work done at build sites to ensure that decent homes are built correctly with good quality materials. Habitat for Humanity homes are made affordable because they are built by volunteers, they are kept simple, and the home recipients pay a no-profit loan on their home, which means that the family only has to pay what was spent on their home and do not have to worry about paying for interest. Habitat for Humanity makes it possible for families with low incomes to purchase these simple, decent, and affordable homes (“What” 1).

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 defines the homeless as “those lacking regular, adequate nighttime residence, those who only have temporary living accommodations or primary nighttime residence in shelters, hotels, or private or public places not intended for a human being’s residency” (McManus 2). Homelessness has been a problem in the American culture for the past four hundred years. In the 1820s, the problem of homelessness began to increase due to urbanization and industrialization. By the mid nineteenth century there was such a problem with homelessness that there was a need to take action to begin helping with the problem and by the end of the century homelessness became a serious problem within the American society. There has been a decrease in the amount of cheap homes and housing assistance programs, which have led to the increase in homelessness and Americans living in substandard homes (McManus 3). According to the United Nations, there are about 1.6 billion people living in substandard housing and 100 million homeless individuals in the world today; and, there are ninety-five million people living in the United States who have housing problems (“Why” 1). To put an end to substandard housing and homelessness, everyone must realize what a large problem this currently is, and then work to put an end to this problem (McManus 5).

The neighborhood that 708 Goodwin Street is a part of is a very pleasant neighborhood. It contains many other decent sized homes. A majority of them are ranch homes with probably two to three bedrooms. There are also smaller bi-leveled homes, which are probably no larger than 2,000 square feet. All of the homes in the neighborhood have front and backyards, which are not very large, but they are just big enough for a nice garden and children or dogs to run around. The lot that Habitat for Humanity is building on is about the same size as all of the lots in the area. When the home I finished it is going to be 1,200 square feet with three bedrooms (Bardell 6). The Habitat home is going to fit in perfectly with this neighborhood and will also have a fairly small front and backyard. Behind the base of the home they have a pretty backyard. They have multiple tall ash trees and it is very green. The neighbors across the street from the lot have three little children playing outside in the front yard with their dog and bicycles.

On October 4, Habitat for Humanity was at 708 Goodwin Street working on the house for the fourth Saturday in a row. The neighborhood was very peaceful and quite that morning. Besides the sound of pounding, drilling, and sawing, the only commotion in the neighborhood came from the occasional car or bus that drove by and occasionally the neighbors' dogs would bark probably because of the loud noises coming from the build site. The neighbor's little daughter was also outside playing with her bike again this morning. Besides a girl who was out running, she was the only person I saw out yet that morning.

This year our chapter of Habitat for Humanity is building a home for Sonya and Bryce Brownlee. Sonya is a twenty-five year old single mother and Bryce is her three year old son. Sonya is from the Urbana area; she attended Urbana High School and went to Parkland Community College. Although Sonya has a full time job, with the current problems in the housing industry she was not able to afford to move out of their old home on her own. Sonya heard about Habitat for Humanity from a Habitat home owner, who told Sonya about all of the fun she had working with the volunteers to build her home. Therefore, Sonya applied for a Habitat home so that she and Bryce could move out of their old neighborhood. Their neighborhood was a very bad place for anyone to be living and especially for someone to be trying to raise a child. There was a lot of "vandalism, reckless driving, drug abuse, and even violent deaths" ("About" 1). Sonya also did not like the fact that Bryce did not have a yard to play in. She has been worn out over the years trying to protect her son from the detrimental environment that he has been living in, and is ready to move on with her life. Sonya said "I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to become a homeowner! It has always been my desire to have my home built but it's even a greater feeling to soon be able to say that I helped build my own home" (1)!

Habitat for Humanity is helping families by removing them from the unsafe, bad neighborhoods and below average housing that they currently live in, and building simple, decent, and affordable homes for these families. However, what Habitat for Humanity is doing goes even beyond building homes for families in need and trying to put an end to substandard housing. For survival all human beings really need are food, shelter, and clothing. However, in our society today having only these basic necessities has become unacceptable. It would be perfectly reasonable for Habitat for Humanity to build basic shelters for large numbers of individuals to rid the world of homelessness; however, this is not their goal. They are attempting to rid the world of substandard housing as well. Habitat for Humanity removes families from substandard housing so that they will then be more accepted in society. With the help from Habitat for Humanity, they hope that after they have paved the way for families to be accepted within their communities. Habitat for Humanity is working to help turn these families into independent, successful members of society so they will be able

to live on their own and fit in with the expectations of our society today. By doing this Habitat for Humanity is not only building a home for these individuals but also working to build up their lives. They are beginning to create the basis for new lives for these families, beginning with helping them afford a home that is viewed as more acceptable in our society today.

By building homes for individuals who are living lives, which are not considered comfortable and socially acceptable, Habitat for Humanity is attempting to create situations that will cause these families to want to become active members of a society where they can be accepted so they can give back to the community. Habitat for Humanity helps these individuals gain new experiences that will aid them in becoming an accepted member of society. For a family to be able to receive a Habitat home they must comply with doing two hundred and fifty sweat equity hours of work for their home. These two hundred and fifty hours can be obtained by the house recipients doing volunteer work with Habitat, such as going to build days or fundraising events or by going to meetings for the home count towards their hours of work as well. By having it be mandatory that the families do these sweat equity hours, it requires them to do some form of work to receive their home. Habitat for Humanity makes it so that they do not just give this home to the family; they are required to put in a lot of time and work to receive it.

Habitat for Humanity is also setting the family up to make positive relationships with encouraging individuals by requiring them to obtain many Habitat meetings and events. The families are required to spend time with the Habitat members and volunteers that are taking the time to build their homes, and a goal of Habitat for Humanity is to create a close tie between the house recipients and their members. The president of Habitat for Humanity, Marli Bardell, believes that they are going to get very close with the Brownlees this year because they are all so close in age and their home is very close to campus. They are really trying to make that tie between the volunteers and home owners closer. In the fall they do a rake day where they go around and rake the yards of the Habitat home owners and see how they are doing (Bardell 4). Habitat for Humanity is attempting to create new relationships in these individuals' lives which will turn their lives in the right direction and give them the drive to become successful on their own. Once the families are more accepted and confident within their communities they will be more likely to want to have an active role within society and they will hopefully strive to be able to contribute by themselves. They hope that from the relationships they have formed and work they have done and seen through Habitat for Humanity that they will have some inspiration to work to obtain a better life for themselves and their family.

The lot was not as messy as it was on the first day of building. The ground was covered in little rocks and dirt surrounded the perimeter of the base as opposed to complete mud everywhere. Habitat for Humanity made a lot of progress on the home since the first build day. The house had all the walls up, the floor was in, the blue boarding was put up on the walls, the porch had its cement top filled, about half of the doors and windows were installed, and they were working on finishing the roof.

There were four people working on finishing the roof. Together they were all trying to set the base pieces of wood on top of the wood framing of the roof. The construction manager climbed up a ladder and questioned the four guys working together on the roof to make sure they did their jobs correctly. After the construction manager spoke to them, I could hear one of the guys up on the roof say “it’s okay Eric, just do your best!” There were also guys working on cutting pieces of wood for the roof. The smaller girl board member would stand on the piece of wood while one of the guys cut the other end with a saw. There were also four other guys working on installing two windows in the front of the home.

Everyone who was working wore a hard hat. A lot of the guys wore hot pink hard hats, and everyone who worked with the wood cutting machine had on some sort of protective eye wear. The lot was very loud that morning from all of the use of power tools and hammering nails into the roof. As I walked to the back of the lot I could hear a volunteer yelling: “are you all having as much fun as I am!?” When I got to the back of the lot, I learned that this is where all of the mess had gone. There was a large pile of spare scraps from cut wood and the blue boarding. It appeared like they had started to work on the landscaping because there were mounds of dirt, pulled weeds, and cut down branches lying everywhere. Habitat for Humanity plans to be done with all of the building for the semester by October 25. After they are done, the subcontractors come and do heating, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical, insulation, and dry walling during the winter. Next spring Habitat for Humanity will begin working on the house again. They will have to do painting, installing the flooring and cabinets, and landscaping. They will then be done building the home and the Brownlees will receive their home at the dedication ceremony.

Marli Bardell has been a member of Habitat for Humanity at the University of Illinois for the past four years and she said that “it has probably been the best thing I have done on campus” (Bardell 3). She joined Habitat for Humanity because she found it very satisfying that there were tangible results that you can see at the end of year after getting involved with Habitat (1). She believes “most people are just looking for a way to give back and again people like it because it’s hands on and they actually get to go out and be a part of something that’s going to affect someone’s life” (2).

Habitat for Humanity's goal of working to better other people's lives really pulls in individuals who are looking to give a lending hand, and according to Marli the dedication ceremony at the end of the year makes the entire process worthwhile. Once Habitat for Humanity has completed building the home, they have a dedication ceremony where the family receives their home. After all of the hard work put into the house, this is a very emotional time for the volunteers as well as the family who is receiving their new home. The relationships created through the building process and the results of getting closer and closer to Habitat for Humanity's overall goal after building each home is definitely worth the work for Habitat for Humanity members (4).

#### Works Cited

"About the Brownlees." *Champaign County Habitat for Humanity and Restore*. Habitat for Humanity. 2008. 16 Nov 2008.

<<http://www.cuhabitat.org/homebuilds/IllinoisCampus2009.htm>>.

Bardell, Marli. Personal Interview. 7 Oct. 2008.

McManus, Erin. "Homelessness in the United States."

<[http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/deansbookcourse/s06\\_dr/McManus.pdf](http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/deansbookcourse/s06_dr/McManus.pdf)>.

"Statement of Purpose." *Inter Action: American Council for Voluntary International Action*.

Inter Action. 2002-2008. 28 Sept.

2008

<<http://www.interaction.org/members/detail.php?id=3120>>.

"What are Habitat Houses like?" *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for Humanity.

2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <<http://www.habitat.org/how/whatlike.aspx>>.

"Why Habitat for Humanity is Needed." *Habitat for Humanity International*. Habitat for

Humanity. 2008. 28 Sept. 2008 <<http://www.habitat.org/how/why.aspx>>.

Meagan Reitz

Rhetoric 105

12-2-08

John Griswold

*Self-reflective Essay*

If I had to choose one word to describe the way I felt about my semester as an ethnographer, I would use the word uncertain. From the beginning of the project up until this very moment, I have been very unsure if I have been doing all of my assignments and work correctly. The problem for me was never taking the time to work on the project and assignments, but it was trying to complete the tasks as they were intended to be completed.

At the beginning of the semester, I got started on the project right away. Once I decided I wanted to work with Habitat for Humanity, I instantly went to our University's Habitat for Humanity website and started looking around. From the website I found the email address of Habitat for Humanity's president and I emailed her right away and set up my next field working day. I spent my second day of field work with Habitat for Humanity at their first day of building, their ground breaking ceremony. This is when I began to question whether I was doing what I was supposed to or not. I felt very out of place at the build site. All of the volunteers and board members were hard at work and I was just off to the side walking around taking note of everything I saw around me. At one point a board member walked up to me and offered me a shovel so I could help with some of the work. I was completely unsure of what I was supposed to do. From class I got the impression that I was only supposed to be taking notes and not actually helping to build the home, but I felt so awkward when everyone else was working and even more awkward when this man who has no idea why I was there was trying to offer me a shovel so I could work on the house.

By my fourth time at my field site I really began to worry about whether I was doing my job at my field site correctly. I had previously spent time with Habitat for Humanity at two of their general meetings and also their ground breaking ceremony. The fourth time I was with them was at their fourth build day and I did exactly what I did at their first one. I walked around the lot and took note of everything they did and everything I saw. However, once again I felt very awkward and in the notes I took I wrote: "I don't feel like I'm doing my work right because I'm not able to really get to know anyone because whenever I'm with my group it's either with a huge group of volunteers at their meetings or I'm at their build site and they're all at work...hopefully me viewing them is good enough." I was beginning to feel very nervous because it was the fourth time I had spent with my group and I still did not feel as if I was getting to know anything about them. I was doing what was required of us and going to my field site every week for at least an hour, however, I was still so unsure and I did not feel like I was doing what was actually required of us.

I also spent my weekly field work time with Habitat for Humanity by going to their

general meetings every other Tuesday. Unfortunately, I felt even less engaged with my subculture at these meetings than I did at the build days. It was a different feeling though. As opposed to feeling awkward and out of place I usually just felt completely bored and uninterested in the meeting's topics. They began every meeting by giving a presentation on their events and then usually had another board member give a presentation on something related to Habitat for Humanity. However, I continued going to their meetings and writing down the things they talked about in their presentations, what the volunteers around me were doing, and anything else that happened at their meetings, but I just could not become interested in what was going on around me and I still felt as if I was getting nothing out of this. Within most of the notes I took at their general meetings they ended in comments such as, "Yes!" or "We're finally done!" On top of all of that I still did not feel like I was getting a better understanding of the culture of my group by going to these meetings either. I did not know what else to do. I was writing everything that happened around me but I could not understand how I was supposed to learn about this group's culture by just listening to them giving PowerPoint presentations.

After two more general meetings and an interview, it was time for the analysis paper and for us to discuss the so what of all of the work we had done so far in the semester. No matter how unsure I was about what I was doing, the analysis paper had to be done. I began working on the paper and trying to dig deeper and see things from all of the notes I had taken while I was with Habitat for Humanity, but I just could not see it. After sitting in front of my computer for hours, I was able to get out three pages which discussed the realities to the misconceptions about Habitat for Humanity. I brought this to office hours to try and see what else I could add to it and found that I was working in completely the wrong direction. I talked for about an hour with John about what I had seen and done this semester and tried to dig and see what lied underneath everything that I was seeing. I struggled for that hour. Even after talking with him I could still not see it, it did not come to me. After I left I had a better understanding of what I could write because he was able to see things that I could not. I was so frustrated and upset that I had been spending so much time with this group of people but still did not see or feel anything.

As I tried to begin writing the analysis paper it was extremely difficult for me to represent these people's lives. I still had yet to find anything that I thought represented the culture of this group. Through my interview I got to sit down and talk with the president of Habitat for Humanity, however, this was the only real sit down talk that I had with anyone from Habitat for Humanity. It was really hard for me to try and discuss and represent these people's lives when I still felt that I did not know them. I had seen them interacting at work at the build days and I had seen them interact and give presentations at their general meetings,

but I did not feel like I could accurately represent them without personally getting to know each and every one of them. I had gotten to know the president better through talking with her at my interview but I did not think it was right for me to assume things about the entire group after only learning more in depth about her as a person. It was a hard and frustrating process for me to try and analyze this group of people from only having looked at and observed them.

Overall, this semester has been very frustrating for me. After being so uncertain of what I am doing at my field site, it makes it very difficult to be certain of what I am doing when it comes time for the writing assignments. I spent a lot of time staring at a blank screen on my computer wondering what it was I was supposed to be writing before I could even begin writing anything. Once I finally was completed with our writing assignments, I generally felt pretty content with them. However, this was probably because I spent such a large amount of time working on them trying to get them remotely close to what was expected of us. I believe if I was more certain that I was completing my tasks at my field site correctly and actually doing what I was supposed to be doing, then I would have felt more confident about my writing process because I would have known that I was actually working with good material and information. If I could do the whole process over again, I would somehow find a way to dig deeper into their subculture. I could possibly go to a larger variety of their events, but I would just try and do anything so that I could feel as if I really go to know this group. Unfortunately, from this semester I did not feel as if I was really able to learn and represent the culture of Habitat for Humanity. I have spent this semester as a very uncertain, frustrated ethnographer.

#### Portfolio

##### General Meeting #3 - 9/23

It's 7:01 and the meeting has yet to begin. There are about 50 people here so far, less people than last time. It's 7:03 and they're about to begin. Today "we're learning how to build a house." The VP with red hair is talking and him and another boy Charles are planning on talking through their powerpoint tonight. They earned \$1000 for the volleyball tournament.

The subflooring, exterior and interior walls, and sheeting of the exterior walls were all completed on their first build day. The VP talking made a joke while talking...everyone in the room chuckled. They're canning this Saturday and Sunday. Next general meeting is Oct. 7th at 7 pm in 23 in psych bld. For the slideshow they have a lot of not set up facts...they keep having to stop and discuss their indecisive dates, times, topics, rooms, etc. Charles is not beginning to talk about the main presentation...he is much louder, better public speaker. Both of the guys are talking about the groundbreaking day. Everyone has their dark blue habitat shirts on again. Build day 1 was foundation and there was intense labor. This room is quite bigger than the one we used last time...they've dimmed the lights for the slideshow. Charles is now describing how they built the foundation. There are pics from the 1st build day that Charles is

using as guidance to show the steps of building the foundation. There's a good number of Habitat members here...probably ten...I wonder the difference between the actual habitat members in the shirts who always come and to just the volunteers...how did they get the bigger roles? They are still describing how they have built the house so far, going over all of the little details and steps...I'm wondering if anyone here really cares. They do seem like they know what they're talking about with the building though. Now plans for build day 2. Frame interior and exterior walls, sheet exterior walls. They have pics of the 2nd build day too. Going over their steps in building on the 2nd day...once again I'm really wondering if people really care about each little step that they went through to build the house...it's getting quite boring. Everyone around me seems to be staring at the slideshow pics...not too enthusiastically. Build day 3. Blue boarding exterior, build trusses, raise trusses, sheet the roof, and install windows and doors. I'm really getting the vibe that not too many people care about every single detailed step on how the house is built. VP says that there's always stuff to do at the build site...everyone always has a job. Asks if anyone has any questions..nope. Now going over build day 4 tasks...they said there was 7 build days and I'm really hoping they aren't going to go in depth with every task for each day. Lay down shingles...i'm getting pretty sleepy with the dimmed lights and this presentation. Scaffolding and Siding. This is where they plan to get before the winter. During the winter the subcontractors come and do H/vac, plumbing, electrical, insulation, and dry wall. After winter - painting, flooring, cabinets, landscaping, ramp, and porch. It's been 45 min and still talking about the details of building the house...this is not getting me excited to want and go sign up for a build day right away. Last : Dedication ceremony - many people come and the community thanks them for building the house. Finally done with the steps of building!! Showing a 2 min you tube video on Habitat for Humanity. The vid is poorly put together its describing everything that is in a habitat home (rooms, bathrooms, closets, cabinets, etc.) The video voice is monotone...making me want to sleep yet again. Now showing a 4 min bonjovi music video about Habitat for Humanity...maybe the only semi-entertaining part of this meeting. It's a little before 8 and it's over!

#### Habitat for Humanity Build Day #4 – 10/4

It's only the second build day I've been able to make it to and they've made a lot of progress since the first time I was here. It's 8:22 AM and everyone is already hard at work...their day started at 8 AM. It's nice outside... a pretty fall day. The sky is clear and it's pretty chilly. I walked here in sweatpants and a sweatshirt and was getting a little warm by the end of my 25 minute walk but my ears, hands, and face were cold. There are about 20 people here right now. They're all wearing jeans/sweats, hoodies/zip ups, tennis/work boots, and they all have on hard hats. Last time I saw the house it was a hole in the ground surrounded by bricks with gravel thrown in the bottom and insulation surrounding the walls. Now it has all of the walls up, floors in, blue boarding is put up on the walls, the porch has its cement top filled in, about half of the windows are installed, and they're putting up the roof right now. They've put up about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it up with the pieces of wood and they're working on putting the ply wood pieces over the part of the roof that juts out over the porch. The site isn't as messy as it was last time...the ground is now covered in little rocks and dirt surrounding the perimeter of the house as opposed to complete mud everywhere. There is still the port-a-potty, two little trailers with the materials, and the red truck with its bed filled. They have a table set up now with the Gatorade jugs and water cups. There is only one girl here (besides me) and the rest are all guys. There is definitely a guy here who is in charge and must have some profession in

building...as everyone was working he was yelling out a few instructions. There is music playing again but it's not turned up as loud or maybe it's just muffled now because it's in the back and the house is in the way. There are four people working on the roof, getting the base pieces set on top of all the sideways pieces set up to hold it. Two other guys are also working on another part of the roof. Four guys are working on two different holes in the house...is looks like they're getting ready to install the two windows on the right side of the house...the one on the front of the left is already in. The guy in charge is climbing up to the roof... questioning what some of the other workers are doing. Charles: "it's okay Eric, just do your best." They're very encouraging/positive. All the workers seem to be awake even though it's pretty early. They were discussing how there are now 2 shifts for each build day...it just started this year. After the lunch break a new group of volunteers comes in and the ones from this morning leave because there are too many volunteers. The one guy who brought it up didn't seem too happy about it but the others did. A guy is cutting a pieces of wood and having another guy stand on it to hold it straight...Snehah had done this twice before right when i arrived...they work well together. The neighborhood is very quiet right now... the only commotion is when a car/bus drives by every now and then...I wonder how all of the neighbors feel about the pounding, drilling, sawing, etc. every Saturday from 8 Am to 4 PM.

The left side of the house has two windows as well as a door installed. The back has two windows put in. There are actually two other girls working back here. The mess of the site has now moved to the back. There is a large pile of spare scraps from cut wood and blue boarding. There are mounds of dirt and it seems like they were working with the landscaping a bit back here. There are parts of tree branches cut down and lying everywhere back here. There are a lot of weeds as well. The music is definitely muffled because of the house...It's a lot louder back here. The neighbors have a dog that is now barking loudly probably because of the large amount of people over here and all of the pounding. One set of the two guys working on the windows have now got the window installed. The sun is rising behind the house and it's gotten really hard to look up at it because the sun is right above the house now. I don't feel like I'm doing my work right because I'm not able to really get to know anyone...whenever I'm with my group it's either with a large group of volunteers at their general meetings or at the build site when they are all hard at work...hopefully my viewing them is good enough. The second group of guys working on the windows has them installed now. The guys cutting the wood all have some sort of glasses on...probably a good idea...it's really loud. Two guys just walked up to me asking if this was Habitat for Humanity ...I told them it was and to talk to the VP... but I really know as little as they do about actually working at the site. I hear a guy in the back "Are you all having as much fun as I am?!" They really must all be morning people to be able to do this much work this early and be in a good mood while doing it. Some of the guys have on hot pink hard hats...its quite humorous. It's very loud on the site today...everyone seems like they're hammering something. The neighbors little girl is outside biking again this morning...besides a girl who went by running it's the only person I've seen out this morning.

#### General Meeting #4 - 10/7

It's 702...I got here right at 7 but the meeting hasn't started yet...they're passing around a sign in sheet right now. There's probably the smallest amount of people at this meeting. It's now beginning...Paul Hopkins (VP red head) is now speaking. He's going over the meeting's agenda. They have already made \$12,240.57 and last general meeting it was only around \$2,000. He's going over the volleyball tournament and showing some pictures. Some of build

day 2, 3, and 4. It's miserable outside right now...that may be why there are less people. Campfire this thursday, Zmick playing for them at Canopy and all donations and the door go to Habitat, A day without a home is Thursday the 16th, Trick or treat for Change, and Assembly hall concessions. Main presentation: habitat and disaster relief given by Sandra Lu. Habitat has put a group together to help with reconstructing homes and communities after disasters. She's starting with a video..it's a very emotional clip about recent natural disasters...shows families who have lost their homes and family members and communities and lives are torn apart. Sandra says um multiple times within every sentence...she started off by saying she wasn't a good speaker so I give her props for actually getting up and speaking. She is now discussing what a disaster is. Only about 45 people here...then about 10 or more habitat for humanity board members. Habitat then assesses what they can do and then take action after disasters. Offer disaster recovery, disaster corps program, and disaster mitigation and preparedness. There's an older man sitting in the front row with the board members...I wonder what he's doing here. Presentation is awfully boring again...I'd do anything to get let out early...go get a warm shower and some dinner! Watching another video...she's now reading from some paper. Video is on disaster help in Afghanistan. H for H went there in 2002 and decided to help with housing (helped 200 fams..but still many more in need) - video was pretty boring...just showed their clay homes. We're going to talk about projects in New Orleans for Hurrigan Katrina...four girls had been down there since then and they asked them to talk about how it is. Sandra is now giving facts about hurricane Katrina. A boy to my right is doing the head nod...always funny to watch but I know its not very interesting but why come to sleep. She showed a satellite pic of the city...80% of the city was under water...crazy! Showing before and after pics. Habitat working in New Orleans...wants to build 1500 homes in 5 years. Babtist Crossroads Project (program in New Orleans). Her slideshow is very nicely made..it probably took her a while to prepare it. A girl asked a random question about where they build homes now in New Orleans...Sandra had a good response for being put on the spot. Muscician's Village (another habitat program in new Orleans). It's 745 and we're skipping a video because "we're short on time"...probably not going to be getting out early. China Sichuan earthquake...went over facts and pics again like New Orleans but 10 times faster. Habitat working with them now...have many goals. Sandra is done...ended with websites for us to do more reasearch on disaster response programs. Paul is back up...and we're done! 10 minutes early...hope it isn't raining outside...

#### First Draft of Analysis Essay

Before I began my ethnographic studies with Habitat for Humanity, I did not believe that I would fit in with this organization. Before people take the time to get involved with the group, the only thing most people really know about the organization is that they are a volunteer group that builds homes for people. This is about all I really knew about Habitat for Humanity and it sounded nothing like the typical group that I was used to being a part of. I had never really done any serious volunteer work. When I was younger and throughout high school I spend the majority of my time as a member of sports teams as opposed to any of the other types of organizations that were offered in our town. Once I had heard a few common stereotypes about the group members of Habitat for Humanity it furthered my belief that this was not a group that I would usually join. I had heard that Habitat for Humanity is a very religiously based organization and that the majority of the members are very religious Christians and do-gooders. When I grew up my family never went to church and my parents

are not religious at all. Religion was never a part of my upbringing and I thought that because of the differences in me and the stereotypical member of Habitat for Humanity I was going to be very distant from the group. However, throughout my experience with Habitat for Humanity I have come to learn that the group is about a lot more than just building houses and that they are not selective in who they allow in the group; they are welcome to everyone and all different types of people volunteer and work with Habitat for Humanity.

After I began to spend time with Habitat for Humanity at my field site and learn more about them, I began to learn the realities to the stereotypes and misconceptions that people believe about their organization. Prior to spending time with them, one of the first things I had heard about them was they were a very religious oriented group. However, after I began spending time at the field site and I conducted an interview with the president of Habitat for Humanity I learned that this stereotype was not true at all. The only Christian aspect in Habitat for Humanity is that they use the Christian beliefs of doing good for others and to give a helping hand to the poor as the guidelines for their organization, which makes perfect sense because the purpose of their group is to build homes for those in need and to get rid of substandard housing. However, Habitat for HUmanity does not strictly build for Christians and only allow Christians in the group. They are welcome to anyone who is interested in volunteering with them and they will build a home for anyone who meets the certain criteria which has nothing to do with religion. From what I could see when I was at the field site, religion never played a direct role in their activities; and, when I interview Habitat for Humanity's president she believed that the religious beliefs of the group members were probably representative of the University in general, and she did not really believe that they were predominately Christian but was unsure because knowing something like that had never really come up before.

TRANS. With the large numbers of volunteers that they have, there is a very diverse group of people getting involved with the group, and it would not be possible to categorize them all as your typical Christian do-gooders because it would be very untrue for a large number of them. TRANS. I was also able to learn that there is a lot more that goes into Habitat for Humanity than just building homes, which is one of the biggest misconceptions about them. The group is working to end substandard housing throughout the world and for the group members this is very important to them and they are really working to help make a difference in the world. WORK ON.

By going to Habitat for Humanity's build days I was able to notice that they really care about what they are doing. They do not just do it because they have to or only because it will look good on a resume but because they genuinely care and believe in what they are doing. I have been able to determine this because during my time spent at their build sites the atmosphere they create is so positive. Even though it is early, there is a ton of work to be done, and a long day ahead of them they are always in good moods, positive, supportive, encouraging, and helpful.

**Initial Exercises:**

**Question:**

**Plan:**

Data:

### Notes

#### General Meeting #2 - 9/9

My first fieldworking day with habitat. We're in room 213 in Gregory Hall..it's a lecture hall. I'm five minutes early but people are still piling in after me. There are two guys in matching light blue shirts in the front and one girl in a dark blue habitat shirt. They all seem very happy. There is a good number of people here..probably about 75. I'm sitting towards the back of the room and everyone is just making small talk around me. The girl in the front is writing "Spikin' 4 Homes Sept 20th 10 AM - 2 PM" on the board. It's 7:01 and the meeting should be started..the number of people coming in has really slowed down..almost stopped. There's a slideshow on the projection screen..The first slide says "Habitat for Humanity: An Introduction to Our 2008-2009 Family!" It's 7:04 and we're getting started now. One of the guys is going through the slideshow talking very quietly..looks nervous. Slideshow: Ground breaking ceremony - their kick off to building which begins Saturday. Parking fundraiser/ Rain Garden Construction - raised \$725 last year. They're having a volleyball tournament...that's what spikin 4 homes is. Having Brunch at flat top on Sunday sept 21st at 1130. Next general meeting is tuesday september 23rd at 7 pm in 23 psych bld and they're talking about building a habitat home. Custom cuts is donating money to habitat. Canning - good way to A day w/o a home - build shanties and habitat graffiti. Trick or treat for change. End of slide show. Marli is not talking she is the president...introducing us to Sonya and Bryce Brownlee who are the people they're building the house for. Marli also has a dark blue habitat shirt. Sonya and her 3 year old son sed to live in a bad neighborhood (shootings, drugs, no yard) so she applied for habitat. The home they're building will be 3 bedroom and 2 bath in good neighborhood and campus architecture landscaping is working with them to make it look great. Some people around are me are doing Hw but majority is listening intently. Another girl in a light blue habitat shirt is speaking..she's helping design Sonya's . house. Sonya has a full time job and "is so excited about the whole process" and is only 25! There are 8 people up front now..all going to talk about Habitat spring break trips they took. 2 guys are in light blue shirts and 4 girls and 1 guy are in dark blue habitat shirts. Charles is talking right now..he is good with talking in front of people..loud and not nervous. Paul (VP) is now speaking..he is the quiet one. As they're talking a notebook is being passed around to write down your name and email. There's a boy sleeping a little in front of me..why come if you're going to sleep? Someone in the front row made a random comment..he responded with a funny,short comment. 2 people telling a story about a house they had to rehab (woman hid change in her walls..weird). Girl in front of me is doodling...again why come? Slide show is over and it's only 730...people are packing up to leave. It's 7:31 and it is over.

Build Day #1 - 9/13

It's my second day with Habitat. The building site is at 708 Goodwin just North of University street. It's a decent sized lot. I walked up to the lot and it is in a fairly decent neighborhood..there are a lot of smaller houses in this area with decent sized front and backyards. There are about 15 people working on the house right now. I walked up and there was a porta-potty, stacks of different sized wood, a read truck with supplies in the bed, as well as a trailer (cart home thing) with supplies. There are tool boxes as well as many power tools lying around the lot. It's muddy everywhere...There's no grass on their lot now only mud. About 20 ft back from the sidewalk they have the base of the home. They've built the base of the home already, the brick is in the ground and they have a decent sized rectangle going. Everyone here seems to be working rather hard and knows what they're doing. They have the radio playing loudly. They're surrounding the inside of the base with a styrafoam probably for insulation. Behind the house is a huge pile of dirt, which I'm assuming they shoveled out this morning to get the base of the house in. They're moving pretty fast. There is a large pile of small rocks that they're filling buckets and pouring it into the base. There's also a stack of wood with doughnuts, water jugs, and cups for breakfast and break. Behind the base of the home there's a pretty backyard. They have tall ash trees and it is very green. Their neighbors have little children who are playing outside with their bikes. All the workers have on jeans with tennis shoes or some type of working boots with a trash t-shirt. A lot of them are already sweating badly and covered in mud. They all have safety glasses on or they have them with them. Neighbors have even more kids out now..three little kids and a dog all playing outside. Everyone is working very hard, no one is complaining about the wind or the long day ahead of them. Inside the base, the majority of the people are standing in there. Three are raking the rocks in the bottom. There's about four feet high of bricks (4 layers of bricks) in the base of the house. As the music is playing people are getting excited for the good songs playing and singing along. There are people placing a layer of gold shield around the top layer of the brick and then laying down a wood base on the top. In front of the rectangular base, there's an about 4 by 15 ft base in front attached to the base of the house, which will probably be their porch. There's one man in gray who seems to be telling everyone else what to do. As I'm taking notes random people will come and try and start convos. They're all very helpful and all have offered for me to ask them any questions at all if I have any or need any help. The man in the gray has the blueprint for the house and is most likely in charge. The atmosphere is very positive. Even though everyone is doing a lot of hard work, they're still happy and positive. People are encouraging and supportive. When others do something hard and get it done people compliment them by saying good job or whatever. Everyone is working together. For each thing they're working on there are at least two people working on it, A guy had said they don't know what they're doing really

but you would never have been able to tell. They plan on having the entire wood floor in the house by the end of the day if the weather is nice.

#### General Meeting #3 - 9/23

It's 7:01 and the meeting has yet to begin. There are about 50 people here so far, less people than last time. It's 7:03 and they're about to begin.

Today "we're learning how to build a house." The VP with red hair is talking and him and another boy Charles are planning on talking through their powerpoint tonight. They earned \$1000 for the volleyball tournament. The subflooring, exterior and interior walls, and sheeting of the exterior walls were all completed on their first build day. The VP talking made a joke while talking...everyone in the room chuckled. They're canning this Saturday and Sunday. Next general meeting is Oct. 7th at 7 pm in 23 in psych bld. For the slideshow they have a lot of not set up facts...they keep having to stop and discuss their indecisive dates, times, topics, rooms, etc. Charles is not beginning to talk about the main presentation...he is much louder, better public speaker. Both of the guys are talking about the groundbreaking day. Everyone has their dark blue habitat shirts on again. Build day 1 was foundation and there was intense labor. This room is quite bigger than the one we used last time...they've dimmed the lights for the slideshow. Charles is now describing how they built the foundation. There are pics from the 1st build day that Charles is using as guidance to show the steps of building the foundation. There's a good number of Habitat members here...probably ten...I wonder the difference between the actual habitat members in the shirts who always come and to just the volunteers...how did they get the bigger roles? They are still describing how they have built the house so far, going over all of the little details and steps...I'm wondering if anyone here really cares. They do seem like they know what they're talking about with the building though. Now plans for build day 2. Frame interior and exterior walls, sheet exterior walls. They have pics of the 2nd build day too. Going over their steps in building on the 2nd day...once again I'm really wondering if people really care about each little step that they went through to build the house...it's getting quite boring. Everyone around me seems to be staring at the slideshow pics...not too enthusiastically. Build day 3. Blue boarding exterior, build trusses, raise trusses, sheet the roof, and install windows and doors. I'm really getting the vibe that not too many people care about every single detailed step on how the house is built. VP says that there's always stuff to do at the build site...everyone always has a job. Asks if anyone has any questions..nope. Now going over build day 4 tasks...they said there was 7 build days and I'm really hoping they aren't going to go in depth with every task for each day. Lay down shingles...i'm getting pretty sleepy with the dimmed lights and this presentation. Scaffolding and Siding. This is where they plan to get before the winter. During the winter the subcontractors come and do H/vac, plumbing, electrical, insulation, and dry wall. After winter - painting, flooring, cabinets, landscaping, ramp, and

porch. It's been 45 min and still talking about the details of building the house...this is not getting me excited to want and go sign up for a build day right away. Last : Dedication ceremony - many people come and the community thanks them for building the house. Finally done with the steps of building!! Showing a 2 min you tube video on Habitat for Humanity. The vid is poorly put together its describing everything that is in a habitat home (rooms, bathrooms, closets, cabinets, etc.) The video voice is monotone...making me want to sleep yet again. Now showing a 4 min bonjovi music video about Habitat for Humanity...maybe the only semi-entertaining part of this meeting. It's a little before 8 and it's over!

#### Habitat for Humanity Build Day #4 – 10/4

It's only the second build day I've been able to make it to and they've made a lot of progress since the first time I was here. It's 8:22 AM and everyone is already hard at work...their day started at 8 AM. It's nice outside... a pretty fall day. The sky is clear and it's pretty chilly. I walked here in sweatpants and a sweatshirt and was getting a little warm by the end of my 25 minute walk but my ears, hands, and face were cold. There are about 20 people here right now. They're all wearing jeans/sweats, hoodies/zip ups, tennis/work boots, and they all have on hard hats. Last time I saw the house it was a hole in the ground surrounded by bricks with gravel thrown in the bottom and insulation surrounding the walls. Now it has all of the walls up, floors in, blue boarding is put up on the walls, the porch has its cement top filled in, about half of the windows are installed, and they're putting up the roof right now. They've put up about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it up with the pieces of wood and they're working on putting the ply wood pieces over the part of the roof that juts out over the porch. The site isn't as messy as it was last time...the ground is now covered in little rocks and dirt surrounding the perimeter of the house as opposed to complete mud everywhere. There is still the port-a-potty, two little trailers with the materials, and the red truck with its bed filled. They have a table set up now with the Gatorade jugs and water cups. There is only one girl here (besides me) and the rest are all guys. There is definitely a guy here who is in charge and must have some profession in building...as everyone was working he was yelling out a few instructions. There is music playing again but it's not turned up as loud or maybe it's just muffled now because it's in the back and the house is in the way. There are four people working on the roof, getting the base pieces set on top of all the sideways pieces set up to hold it. Two other guys are also working on another part of the roof. Four guys are working on two different holes in the house...is looks like they're getting ready to install the two windows on the right side of the house...the one on the front of the left is already in. The guy in charge is climbing up to the roof...questioning what some of the other workers are doing. Charles: "it's okay Eric, just do your best." They're very encouraging/positive. All the workers seem to be awake even though it's pretty early. They were discussing how there are now 2 shifts for each

build day...it just started this year. After the lunch break a new group of volunteers comes in and the ones from this morning leave because there are too many volunteers. The one guy who brought it up didn't seem too happy about it but the others did. A guy is cutting a pieces of wood and having another guy stand on it to hold it straight...Snehah had done this twice before right when i arrived...they work well together. The neighborhood is very quiet right now... the only commotion is when a car/bus drives by every now and then...I wonder how all of the neighbors feel about the pounding, drilling, sawing, etc. every Saturday from 8 Am to 4 PM. The left side of the house has two windows as well as a door installed. The back has two windows put in. There are actually two other girls working back here. The mess of the site has now moved to the back. There is a large pile of spare scraps from cut wood and blue boarding. There are mounds of dirt and it seems like they were working with the landscaping a bit back here. There are parts of tree branches cut down and lying everywhere back here. There are a lot of weeds as well. The music is definitely muffled because of the house...It's a lot louder back here. The neighbors have a dog that is now barking loudly probably because of the large amount of people over here and all of the pounding. One set of the two guys working on the windows have now got the window installed. The sun is rising behind the house and it's gotten really hard to look up at it because the sun is right above the house now. I don't feel like I'm doing my work right because I'm not able to really get to know anyone... whenever I'm with my group it's either with a large group of volunteers at their general meetings or at the build site when they are all hard at work... hopefully my viewing them is good enough. The second group of guys working on the windows has them installed now. The guys cutting the wood all have some sort of glasses on...probably a good idea...it's really loud. Two guys just walked up to me asking if this was Habitat for Humanity ...I told them it was and to talk to the VP...but I really know as little as they do about actually working at the site. I hear a guy in the back "Are you all having as much fun as I am?!" They really must all be morning people to be able to do this much work this early and be in a good mood while doing it. Some of the guys have on hot pink hard hats...its quite humorous. It's very loud on the site today...everyone seems like they're hammering something. The neighbors little girl is outside biking again this morning...besides a girl who went by running it's the only person I've seen out this morning.

#### General Meeting #4 - 10/7

It's 702...I got here right at 7 but the meeting hasn't started yet...they're passing around a sign in sheet right now. There's probably the smallest amount of people at this meeting. It's now beginning...Paul Hopkins (VP red head) is now speaking. He's going over the meeting's agenda. They have already made \$12,240.57 and last general meeting it was only around \$2,000. He's going over the volleyball tournament and showing

some pictures. Some of build day 2, 3, and 4. It's miserable outside right now...that may be why there are less people. Campfire this thursday, Zmick playing for them at Canopy and all donations and the door go to Habitat, A day without a home is Thursday the 16th, Trick or treat for Change, and Assembly hall concessions. Main presentation: habitat and disaster relief given by Sandra Lu. Habitat has put a group together to help with reconstructing homes and communities after disasters. She's starting with a video..it's a very emotional clip about recent natural disasters...shows families who have lost their homes and family members and communities and lives are torn apart. Sandra says um multiple times within every sentence...she started off by saying she wasn't a good speaker so I give her props for actually getting up and speaking. She is now discussing what a disaster is. Only about 45 people here...then about 10 or more habitat for humanity board members. Habitat then assesses what they can do and then take action after disasters. Offer disaster recovery, disaster corps program, and disaster mitigation and preparedness. There's an older man sitting in the front row with the board members...I wonder what he's doing here. Presentation is awfully boring again...I'd do anything to get let out early...go get a warm shower and some dinner! Watching another video...she's now reading from some paper. Video is on disaster help in Afghanistan. H for H went there in 2002 and decided to help with housing (helped 200 fams..but still many more in need) - video was pretty boring...just showed their clay homes. We're going to talk about projects in New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina...four girls had been down there since then and they asked them to talk about how it is. Sandra is now giving facts about hurricane Katrina. A boy to my right is doing the head nod...always funny to watch but I know its not very interesting but why come to sleep. She showed a satellite pic of the city...80% of the city was under water...crazy! Showing before and after pics. Habitat working in New Orleans...wants to build 1500 homes in 5 years. Baptist Crossroads Project (program in New Orleans). Her slideshow is very nicely made..it probably took her a while to prepare it. A girl asked a random question about where they build homes now in New Orleans...Sandra had a good response for being put on the spot. Muscician's Village (another habitat program in new Orleans). It's 7:45 and we're skipping a video because "we're short on time"...probably not going to be getting out early. China Sichuan earthquake...went over facts and pics again like New Orleans but 10 times faster. Habitat working with them now...have many goals. Sandra is done...ended with websites for us to do more research on disaster response programs. Paul is back up...and we're done! 10 minutes early...hope it isn't raining outside...

#### General Meeting #5 - 10/21

It's 6:55 and there are far less people here than usual but then again I'm a bit earlier than usual and people are still coming in. There are less board members here than usual though. It's 6:59 and they don't have the power

point up...they're having trouble getting it up. They have the pictures up now but the colors are very weird...they're going with it anyways though. There are probably 40-45 volunteers here now. It's 7:04 and we're getting started. Paul Hopkins is going over the events they've had since the last meeting. They've completed the roof and siding and soffetting is almost done. This Saturday is the last build day for this semester and is only starting at 1 pm...great i have soccer by that time. Now at about 13,000 dollars for fundraising! Trick or treat for change on October 31st: 530 - 8. Bergner's Community Day sale, assembly hall concessions, national hunger and homelessness week on November 17th - 21st. On the power point they misspelled gymnastics as gynastics and someone pointed it out...everyone though that was pretty funny. Today's main presentation is celebrity involvement. Becky is a board member and she's giving the presentation. Home Builder's Blitz...Celebrity's get publicity and donate...she's showing a video on Builder's Blitz now. Celebrity...Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (donated and raised), Ryan Braun, Anna Wilson and the Mississippi Choir, Switchfoot and Relient K. World Leader Build...Initiated by Jimmy Carter. Everyone seems really into the power point this week..very tuned in. We're now doing an activity of getting to know the Habitat board members. 2 habitat members came up to talk to me and 4 other volunteers sitting near the back. We all said our names, year, and majors. Then talked about Trick or Treat for Change coming up and the build days and some other small talk. Both of the two girls were really nice and easy to talk to. I looked around and there was about one Habitat Member with five or so volunteers. They were all smiling and maing nice small talk with the volunteers. A girl is now talking about National Hunger and Homelessness Week and all of the events she has been planning for that week. A girl who was in my group for our little meeting is now up front talking about Trick or Treat for Change in more depth. That's it ...Next Monday November 3rd 223 Gregory Hall. As I was leaving the Habitat member who was in my group said good luck with your projects with a huge smile...so nice! 😊

#### Field Work for the week of October 27-November 2

I was unable to make it out to my field site during this week so I did my field work by asking my Interviewee, Marli Barr, two follow up questions from my interview. I was curious about how the financial aspect of Habitat for Humanity worked...like how they obtained the money to build the home and how Habitat for Humanity International played in this so that was my first question.

Her response was: All of the money we raise is put into a "Build Account" that the county affiliate manages for us. They handle all of the payments to contractors and for materials. We have a debit card that the construction manager keeps on him to purchase things as they are needed on the build site.

Every chapter is responsible for raising the money to build a house, be that through applying for grants, asking businesses to partner with them and make substantial donations (like up to the 70k needed), or just holding a LOT of fundraisers.

International Habitat serves as a guiding umbrella for the organization and sets the by-laws and guidelines. They also facilitate national conferences and advocacy campaigns. Hmmm I think it might be better if you just visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org). They do so much it's difficult for me to summarize it well...

As far as our student chapter's interactions with International: we send in annual dues, a signed covenant, and an annual report. There are staff members who send out resources for campus chapters, and advisors who I keep in contact with.

And my second question was how many square feet is the house that they are currently building just because I was curious.

Her response was: The size of the house is ~1200 square feet.

I was just curious and found that the size of the average American home in 2005 was 2,434 square feet. I found this from

<http://prudential.starnewsonline.com/default.asp?item=666853> This website also went into some of the things I was planning on discussing in my paper. How society is changing and it has now become a necessity to have certain luxurious items even though they are not necessary at all.

This is why the sizes of the homes have increased so much.

#### General Meeting #6 - 11/3

It's 7:03 and the meeting has yet to begin. The meeting is in a different room in Gregory Hall than it usually is and they have had no place to plug in the projector...but they just figured it out and they're beginning. Trick or treat for change raised \$1,031.86. Assembly Hall and Bergner's fundraising events are coming up. We had to get a name tag when we walked in...I wonder what we're doing later. He's showing bull day pictures. They are done with the first house they began building until the Spring. However they started putting up two new homes right next to each other. They have made \$15,410.40 in fundraising and their goal is \$25,000. Hunger and homeless week is coming up (its the week of the 17th-21st). They're having a benefit concert and times center dinner. The two new homes are with Champaign county habitat and they're planning on having everything that needs to be done before winter done in a week. We're now playing Habitat pictionary...to get to know each other better. Our name tags had colored Xs on them and that split us into four different teams.

We got into our little teams...introduced ourselves to our team with our names, major, and year. We chose a team name...our Xs were purple so we're the purple people eaters. They're now explaining the rules of pictionary...they have fun little rules where you have to draw a stick before you draw and the stick will have a challenge that you have to do on

it such as, drawing with your non dominant hand, drawing blind folded, or drawing with a really long stick that has the chalk on it. We went for about five rounds and it was really fun. The game was actually pretty competitive but was still very fun...some of the words were Habitat related but a lot of them were just random words.

#### Field Work for the Week of November 3-9

I asked Marli a few more follow up questions for my final paper. I was wondering if you knew about how many total chapters of Habitat for Humanity there are and about how many people are typically in each chapter. And how many are in ours? And with the last questions I asked you, you said that 70k has to be made to build the house but what happens if a chapter isn't able to come up with this money? And what exactly is a no profit loan? And then I was wondering about the Brownlee family...like their story. I looked on the website but their biography isn't up yet..so I was just wondering if you could tell me some stuff about them. Like what neighborhood they used to live in, how they heard about Habitat and decided to apply, and what was wrong with their old home/neighborhood, etc.

She replied:

I don't know how many chapters of Habitat there are, but our chapter has around 882 people registered on the website and we have around 150 "active volunteers" (volunteers who actually do at least a few things per semester).

As far as I know If a chapter doesnt raise the ~70k for some reason, the house doesn't get built until they do. There are contracts that are signed though before any construction begins, so it's not like anyone can just say they will raise the money and not back up that statement. A no profit loan means that the family just has to pay back what was spent on their house- there is no interest that builds up on it, and no additional money beyond what was spent is added onto the bill.

Here is a link to all the information available on the Brownlees <http://www.cuhabitat.org/homebuilds/IllinoisCampus2009.htm>.

I think it should answer all your questions!

From the website I found out that Sonya Brownlee has lived in this area all of her life. She went to Urbana High School and attended Parkland Community College. Her and Bryce have been living Twith "vandalism, reckless driving, drug abuse, fighting, and even violent deaths." I also found out that Sonya learned about Habitat for Humanity from a woman who had received a Habitat home back in 1999.

General Meeting # 7 11/11

We got here about one minute late and they hadn't started the meeting yet. There are about thirty people here right now and about ten board members. It's 7:05 and we're beginning the meeting. They have now earned \$21,738.45. This is the last Habitat meeting for the semester. The VP is now speaking..he is clearly doing no shave November, he said he got thirty minutes of sleep last night and apologized for if he isn't very energetic. He is giving a build recap and showing pictures of the building.

They have already had subcontractors come and do the heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing, and insulation. They are then going to do drywalling and carpeting. Then the house comes back to them to finish. There;s a dinner tomorrow, an iceskating social. They're talking about the spring break trips. Paul saus he has been on three and Charles

has been on like "25" (everyone laughed) so talk to them if we're intersted. They're going over some of the upcoming spring events. One of the events was not until May and the VP was kind oif like what the heck why is this up here Charles who made it...it was pretty funny everyone laughed. 1,658 hours of volunteering this year. They are now giving out 5 Golden Hammer Awards to the 5 volunteers who did the most work, the top 5 did 49, 47, 50, 40, and 34 volunteer hours. Three different board members gave a small speech about each volunteer who Becky Shields is now giving a presentation about related volunteer options. They are working on getting up her slideshow so Becky told a joke in the mean time. She then asked us to dance like we were going to dance at Joe's tonight (they are having a concert there later) no one danced though. A pop up jumped up on her slide show that says critical message and all of the members were like "OH NO!". The center for women in transition.

She is going over places that help people to transition from relying on others to being able to live on their own. St Jude Catholic Workers House and Cunningham Children's Home. The board members aren't all wearking their Habitat shirts today...they usually always do. One of her slides says Even Stevens? Even More!...she sais she used to like that show. Becky is done and it's back to Paul (VP). Marli jumped in and is telling everyone that there is an openin in the board and applications should be turned in if you are interested. Paul is saying thanks to everyone and see ya next semester!