

WHY HOMES of HOPE WORKS

By Sean Lambert





We build for families in need.

It sounds so obvious that it could easily be dismissed, but building for families in need is central to Homes of Hope. Jesus said, "Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me." Our full-time YWAM staff work hard to ensure every family who receives a home truly needs help. These people have saved and struggled to pay for their land. They are the working poor, and they spend up to half their total income on land payments. This leaves little for food, medicine, school, clothes, and yes, shelter. These fighters find used pieces of wood, tarps and other discarded building materials to create some kind of a shelter while they pay off their land, typically taking seven to ten years to do it.

The families have "skin in the game."

We all know the families are given our houses for free, funded by the visiting groups building them. This may seem like a handout, but it is a hand up. Each family goes through an extensive application process. We only build for families who are making payments on their own land. They are required to prepare the site for their new house. In most cases this means tearing down their old home. They must then work to clean, level and prepare the site. The preparation usually requires days of digging, cutting trees and putting in retaining walls. All of this work is completed prior to the group's arrival to build. We also ask the families to build alongside the group.

Homes of Hope makes an impact.

I love the story of Humberto Horcacas who received a Home of Hope in Ensenada; his marriage was falling apart, he was unemployed and rain had ruined all of his family's possessions. Then the Horcacas family received a Home of Hope. The home strengthened their resolve to stay married and renewed their determination to look for work. Years later we had another encounter with Humberto. He was serving as a city councilman in Ensenada, and was now helping us resolve a building permit issue on our property. He was a changed man, deeply grateful for the grace and love shown to him and his family through Homes of Hope.

Why Homes of Hope Works Continued...

Homes of Hope is a people-building movement.

Often people ask if I was a home-builder before I joined YWAM. The truth is, I am not a great builder. Even after participating in hundreds of home builds, I still cannot oversee the full building process on my own. I have never viewed Homes of Hope as simply a building initiative. We construct homes because it builds lives, strengthens marriages, keeps kids in school and helps families economically. Most importantly, it ministers God's grace and reflects His love to families in need. In a survey we made years ago of 400 Homes of Hope built in Ensenada, 93% of the people were still living in the home they received, up to ten years later.

Homes of Hope produces fruit that falls far from the tree.

Every so often I get the joy of hearing the story of a life changed through participating in Homes of Hope. This is what I call "fruit that falls far from the tree." I recall the story of my friend Dylan who, at the age of nine, built his first Home of Hope and had to tell everyone about his experience. He was so contagious and enthusiastic that his teacher allowed him to make a special presentation to his school class. His sharing resulted in more homes built for the poor. In a few months, Dylan, now a senior in high school, will be on his way to the university. He asked me to write a letter of reference for him about his leadership and involvement in Homes of Hope. I wonder how much Homes of Hope has shaped Dylan, what kind of a man he will become in future years having been affected and influenced by his direct interaction with the poor?

Dez was a young woman who came with a team from Vancouver; she was actually homeless herself when she came down to Mexico to build her first Home of Hope. While on the trip she was overwhelmed with the realization that she had something to give back to the world; her mindset had been shifted and recalibrated. When she returned home she began serving others in local soup kitchens. She frequently served her own mother, who was living on the streets at the time. The impact of Homes of Hope is powerful, not just for the family receiving the home, but for the teams that come to build as well.

We don't just send money; we send ourselves.

Occasionally someone will say to me, "Maybe it would have been better if I had just sent a check and not spent all that money on airfares, hotels and food." Money is just one kind of resource to God. In the New Testament the only financial giving Jesus highlights is a widow who gave two pennies, because she gave everything she had. God did not just "mail-in" a payment for our sins. He sent a person, his son Jesus. He is a relational God, and it matters to him that we don't simply send money. We also send ourselves, and we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those in need.

**Homes
of Hope
is not a
handout.
It's a
hand up.**





102,800

Volunteers



19

Nations Impacted



15,420

Windows Installed



128,500

Drywall Sheets
Installed



30

Cities Impacted



5,140

Houses



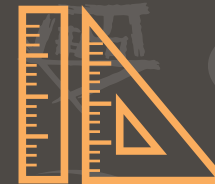
25,700

People who Received
Shelter



1,644,800

Volunteer Hours
Donated



1,850,400

Total Square Footage
Built



20,560

Lights Installed



25

Years



500,000

Tacos Consumed



113,080

Gallons of Paint Used



\$46,875,000

Total Value Given to the Poor,
Materials and Labor

