

Why charge for volunteers?

Nehemiah's Vision has recently been blessed with more than 10,000 volunteers who have made millions of dollars in repairs. Although each volunteer represents some \$89 in expenses to manage and maintain (insurance, coordination, t-shirts, etc.) , we have not charged for the mission trips. These expenses have caught up with us and threaten to not only hurt our current work, but to potentially make it impossible to mobilize for future disasters.

In 2010 we will ask for only \$89 for each person who comes for a typical five day mission trip. This pays for our hard costs and allows us to pay a percentage to the housing-churches as well. Ironically, we will need more volunteers than ever in 2010. Our prayer is that the volunteers understand why we have had to do this and continue with their plans to join us as we rebuild for those who have not been able to be in their homes for over a year.

If Hurricane Ike was more than a year ago, will there be enough work for us?

When a disaster strikes, like a hurricane, there are many great organizations that do perform immediate relief. After the press leaves the major work begins. Hurricane Ike left behind much greater damage than most wind related hurricanes. Its onslaught of flood water left behind debris that seemed to cover every inch of land. If a home still was standing ,its interior was layered with many feet of mud. Nehemiah's Vision's volunteers did a wonderful job of clearing debris and helping with mud outs. Then, the houses were examined to see if they could be repaired or if they had to be destroyed. On the Bolivar Peninsula, where we have been the only non-profit repair ministry since Ike hit, the hurricane was especially destructive. 79% (4,700) of the peninsulas' homes were destroyed or significantly damaged. Less than 20% of these homes have been restored.

Whose homes do you work on and why doesn't insurance cover it?

Our first goal is to repair the churches and their pastors' homes. We then work on the homes of those most in need with the least amount of resources. On the Bolivar Peninsula this group is especially large. This is no Palm Beach. With 50% unemployed or retired and 12% living on less than \$8,000 per year we have been inundated with requests for help.

Most people did pay the large additional cost of hurricane insurance, but with Hurricane Ike it brought little relief. Hurricane insurance did cover windblown incidents, but it doesn't cover flood damage. Most residents either couldn't afford its additional cost, or didn't understand the small print of their insurance policy. Many thought they should have no problems with flooding because their house was built 25 feet up or they lived far inland. Hurricane Ike had a water surge of 29 feet and flooding impacted homes some 15 miles inland –the area had never witnessed anything like it before.

Those with hurricane insurance argue that the hurricane caused the flood so it should be covered; the insurance companies have compromised and offered 11.3% of the cost to repair. The largest flood insurance company in the area declared bankruptcy the day after Hurricane Ike hit.

What makes your ministry unique?

There are very few repair and rebuild non-profit organizations. And almost none are ongoing and are licensed to do major repairs and total rebuilds. One is Habitat for Humanity and another is Nehemiah's Vision. Habitat for Humanity has done some great work (not disaster related), but has chosen a different ministry approach. We purposely aim those we minister to, their communities and our volunteers to Christ. Its Nehemiah's Vision's goal to shout Christ's love as it continues its work whenever a disaster strikes.

How is your ministry funded?

Nehemiah's Vision is a 501 (c)(3) faith-based non-profit ministry. We are not funded by any denomination or other similar organization. We rely on donor gifts, grants and partnerships to continue its mission. We are independently audited by Gayle Botley and Associates, Port Arthur, Texas.

Do my volunteers need to be experienced?

Although we greatly appreciate the magnitude of work that can be accomplished by an experienced volunteer group, we are in need of volunteers of all skill levels. The more volunteers, the more homes restored and the more ministry provided. Some of our most effective workers have been students who have never done this type of work before, especially the females.

We at Nehemiah's Vision also understand that often a first time volunteer is the one who receives the greatest blessing and spiritual impact.

Home Depot and some other similar businesses offer trainings that some groups have participated in before their mission trip. The earlier you confirm a date, the better a chance we'll be able to specify what work will be done on the trip (sheet rock versus painting, for instance).

My group can't afford the fee?

The words, "I can't afford it" can destroy ideas and dreams. We've set the cost of our volunteer program so low few can honestly say it's the money that's stopping them. Call us and we'll share some fund raising ideas. We have a special "Adopt a Hero" program that members of your organization may want to donate to so you can have maximum participation. We need your group and no group is ever turned away, but the small fee goes a long way towards guaranteeing our ongoing mission. In many ways Nehemiah's Vision could have said "We can't afford to do this ministry" many years ago. But, in-faith, we have continued to serve and at least 10,000 volunteers and 700 homeowners are glad we did.

Do we have to use your schedule, can we come mid-week?

In order to maximize our effectiveness, it's crucial that we have a specific schedule for our rebuild efforts. While there may be some necessary deviations, the goal is to restore as many homes as fast and inexpensive as possible. We are also better able to manage our limited housing with the schedule we list. If this poses as a problem, please call.