

## Habitat for Humanity Ireland's Gift Giving Policy

### Example Gift Giving Policy Guidelines for International Volunteer Teams

This document includes guidelines for creating policy around gift giving, donation, and sponsorship questions that may come up with volunteers on Global Village or other international volunteer teams.

### Basic Policy

HFHI discourages GV teams, team leaders, and individual team members from giving personal gifts while engaged in or as a result of being engaged in a volunteer opportunity with habitat for Humanity or one of its partners. The team members' presence working in the community is a gift itself. Because they travel all over the world, GV teams encounter many cultures, each viewing the giving of gifts in distinctly different ways. Not many cultures, to receive a gift means that a gift must be given in return, this can result in disappointment and unhappiness among the very people the team members hope to honor by giving a gift.

Because it may set an unwelcome precedent and be construed as a handout rather than simply a gesture from the heart, gift giving can have a negative impact on the host affiliate/host program, HFH in general, future volunteers who build with the affiliate/host program and future volunteer teams. To avoid potential misunderstandings, embarrassment, injured feelings, or jealousy, we ask that the team or individual members do not exchange gifts with:

- Select individual children
- On-site masons/volunteers
- On-site construction supervisor
- Partner family
- Host GV Coordinator
- Host program staff
- HFHI or sending program staff
- GV team leader or host community members

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A list of members of our Board of Directors can be found on our website.

In short, any gifts should benefit the community, rather than any one individual.

### **Children at the Work Site**

Giving of gifts to individual children is discouraged.

When a team of volunteers arrives at a work site, a crowd of inquisitive children is often not far behind. Team members may bring small items to the work site to share – soccer ball, Frisbee, bubbles, cards, crayons, paper, pencils, coloring books, etc. – as long as every child present can participate and team members take the items home to their lodging every evening.

Team members should keep in mind that once word spreads, the work site may be inundated with children. Team members should use restraint and common sense to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. If something is shared with one, it will be expected that it will be shared with all.

Because such gifts could benefit the entire community (church, school, affiliate/host program), any items brought to play with at the work site that a team member would like to donate should be given to the host GV coordinator who, after the team departs, will see that they are appropriately distributed in the community. This is recommended over any individual giving.

### **Donating Tools and Clothing**

Any tools and clothing team members bring and plan to donate should be given to the host GV coordinator on the final day of building.

GV teams often ask if they should bring tools to use and then donate to the affiliate/host program upon departure. The host GV coordinator can advise the team leader on the appropriate tools needed by the affiliate/host program. Donated tools are retained by the affiliate/host program and used on future builds.

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Some team members ask if they may donate their work clothes. Clothing should be clean or team members should include a small donation to pay for the laundering of any donated clothing. Donated clothing should be given to the local affiliate/host program, who will see that it is distributed appropriately in the community, through local charities and churches, to those most in need.

### **Affiliate/Host Program Wish List**

Some team members are interested in providing additional in-kind donations. Many HFH national offices and affiliates/host programs have developed wish lists which include in-kind donations that would be most useful to HFH in the host country. These items may include office supplies, printers, computer, construction tools, etc. The team leader may request this list from the host GV coordinator and distribute it to team members.

### **Sponsoring**

Team members should not agree to any type of sponsorship while a member of an international volunteer or GV team.

Team members are sometimes approached about the possibility of “sponsoring” children in the host country. They might be the partner family children, children of a host affiliate/host program staff member, of an extended family, or simply a local resident befriended by a team member. It is against HFH policy for any staff member to solicit personal donation from volunteers, donors, etc.

### **Suggested Mementos for Partner Family**

GV suggests that a team develop a few photographs of the team and mount them on cardstock. Have each team member sign around the photo and leave these as mementos for the partner family by which to remember the team. Contact your sending program coordinator for other memento ideas.

Questions about gift giving, donations, and sponsorships should be directed to your sending program coordinator, hosting programme coordinator, or Area Office.

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