

Spinning Straw Into Homes: Necessity Housing to Build Ten 'Straw Panel' Residences in Sri Lanka

Non-Profit Receives Land and \$50,000 for Sustainable Housing Pilot Project

LOS ANGELES, CA /Send2Press Newswire/ – Necessity Housing, a nonprofit corporation dedicated to providing economically and environmentally sustainable housing in developing areas around the globe, recently received land and donations adding up to \$50,000 for construction of a ten home village in Sri Lanka. The homes will be built out of materials made from straw, an abundant, annually renewable material.



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*Photo Caption: This "straw" house, built in Los Angeles by Necessity Housing volunteers, took three days to construct.

"This is so exciting," said Barry Leneman, founding director of Necessity Housing. "The budget for this pilot project is \$150,000, so we're a third of the way there."

Unlike the straw houses in a popular children's tale, which are blown down by a huffing and puffing "Big Bad Wolf," Necessity Housing straw homes will be durable yet inexpensive. "The plan is to utilize a line of straw-based building materials that are manufactured in North America," says Mr. Leneman.

“These straw panels provide excellent moisture resistance, and are designed to meet or exceed rigorous industry standards for wood-based materials like particleboard, plywood, and even solid wood.”

Mr. Leneman should know. A builder for most of his professional life, he and a team of volunteers built a small 400-square-foot demonstration house on his land in the Los Angeles area four years ago, using straw panels. Construction took three days, and is documented in a time-lapse digital film on the nonprofit’s Website at <http://www.necessityhousing.com>. Subsequently, Necessity Housing built a 720-square-foot one-room schoolhouse in Mexico, as part of a school-based humanitarian project and they are now ready for the small village project in Sri Lanka.

“We know this approach to home building works. Our vision, ultimately, is to set up sustainable home building businesses in developing countries, where resources like straw are plentiful, but are usually wasted by being burned in the fields, causing pollution rather than benefiting people,” says Meryl Ginsberg, Necessity Housing Board member.

The project in Sri Lanka involves building ten homes on land that has been donated by a Sri Lankan businessman. Plans are to include food gardens and animal pens at appropriate locations within the new community. Two U.S. businessmen who wish to remain anonymous have donated \$25,000 each toward the project and Necessity Housing is currently soliciting the remaining funds necessary to complete the project. Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible donation-Necessity Housing is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization-can send the donation to: Necessity Housing, Box 273, Topanga, CA 90290.

“We hope these two initial grants stimulate others to step up to the plate,” Mr. Leneman said. “A hundred and fifty thousand dollars is so little, for ten homes that will house people who would never be able to afford them otherwise. This project will enable us to show it can be done. We’re also talking with people in the African nation of Eritrea. If all goes well, our next project might be located there.”

Necessity Housing Corporation [NHC] is dedicated to providing economically and environmentally sustainable housing in areas of the world where disaster has left people without adequate shelter, in developing countries with unsafe housing conditions, and in communities experiencing chronic homelessness.

For more information, visit www.necessityhousing.com or contact Barry Leneman of Necessity Housing Corporation [NHC], 310-795-7955, necessityhousing@usa.net.

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