

# Christmas in Europe and Central Asia



Snow is slowly starting to fall on the roofs of the houses in Central Asia. Families heat up their stoves and sit together in front of the fire. Children read books before it gets too dark, as there is no electricity. Their mother is preparing a simple dinner and their father is cutting more wood outside to keep the house warm during the night.

The house of Shamsov Sharofidin is warm and filled with festive atmosphere. They have all they wished for and are thankful for being able to spend this special time of the year together - in their own home, renovated by Habitat and its supporters...

Habitat for Humanity Europe and Central Asia will be celebrating this year's Christmas together with partner families from the whole diverse region which spreads across 7 time zones and is currently counting 20 countries. They all have different cultures, habits and ways of lives, yet they once shared the same dream which Habitat made come true – to have a simple, decent house of their own.

Christmas is celebrated differently all around the world. Our families are of different religions – ranging from Christians, Orthodox Christians to Muslims. They all have special habits, prepare meals typical for their region and celebrate on different days but for all, the end of the year is a precious time which they try to spend together as a family and evaluate the year that has passed. We, at Habitat, also look back and at the same time think of more families we would like to help in the year to come.

## *Winter in a new and safer home*

Shamsov Sharofidin is a 58-year old head of the family who lives with his 3 daughters – Khirmangul (31), Bargigul (21), Zulaykho (15), and 3 sons Shahobidin (27), Hukmidin (25) and Husnidin (23) in the Rasht district in Tajikistan. His wife Bibiroziya (49) is a housewife.

Sharofidin's house was damaged by an earthquake in 2006 as most of the family houses in Rasht district because they were not reinforced and not ready to withstand an earthquake. When Habitat ran Disaster Response project in Rasht, Shamsovs family was selected as a partner family and provided with construction materials for reinforcing their house. By the help of Habitat and GV volunteers, Shamsovs family was able to reinforce two rooms in their house.

*“Now my house is reinforced and I am not in fear of earthquake as it was in the past. It has reinforcement frames made of wood and mulberry twigs and I am sure that it can protect my family from earthquakes in the future. I am very thankful for Habitat and the volunteers who came and worked with us shoulder by shoulder and helped me to build my house. We still keep in touch with them and communicate through phone as recently one of the GV team members called and congratulated my daughter with her 21st birthday. Thank you very much for your help and generosity, Habitat for Humanity.”*



We offer you a variety of projects to support – from traditional new builds through renovations to unique local solutions such as ecologically friendly toilets or water filters. Your contribution – no matter how big or small – will be accepted with deep gratitude on behalf of the families that need our help now, more than ever.

If you wish to help more families spend their Christmas in a new or renovated home, please consider supporting us.

### Armenia – From Survival to Revival

Almost none of the modern, multi-storey buildings survived the devastating earthquake that hit the city of Spitak in 1988, leaving 500 000 people homeless. The massive reconstruction effort fizzled out with the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union.

Habitat Armenia's "From Survival to Revival" project is aimed at:

- helping victims of the earthquake to move from metal domic containers to simple, decent and affordable core homes
- building these homes in such a way that allows future expansion
- serving 10 families in the pilot phase and 110 families in total in 3 years



*The "domics" the affected families currently live in are metal or wooden shacks that lack basic sanitation, electricity or heating. Winters in Armenia are dry and cold. Children living in such conditions only have one wish for this Christmas – to have a warmer home. Help more Armenian families and children have a real home!*

**Donate or tithe to 815100, Armenia!**



### Bulgaria – Energy efficiency

Large parts of the population of Bulgaria live in big blocks of flats which were built 50 or 40 years ago. The maintenance of these multi-apartment buildings has become a severe challenge for the homeowners in recent years and many buildings are rapidly deteriorating.

Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria is looking to establish partnerships with homeowner associations all over Bulgaria to renovate blocks of flats – privately owned or owned by municipalities. The aim is to:

- improve the quality of the housing stock and increase the life-span of the buildings
- support families of low income in their desire to live in decent buildings
- achieve lower energy consumption and improvement of the indoor conditions



*In Bulgaria, it is believed that the way Christmas Eve goes is the way life during the following year will go. For many families in Bulgaria, next year could mean a dramatic change to better. Let's believe that we can change someone's whole life by making this one evening special for them.*

**Support Bulgaria by donating or tithing to 811200, Bulgaria!**



## Kyrgyzstan – The Eco-San Toilets

In Kyrgyzstan, more than 2.5 million people lack adequate access to sanitation. In addition, poor sanitary conditions, latrines, the mismanagement of waste disposal and agricultural practices cause the ground and surface water to be polluted.

In response to this situation and in partnership with a German NGO, Habitat Kyrgyzstan developed an ecologically friendly toilet which:

- is low cost and therefore affordable to poor families
- is innovative, low-cost and doesn't require advanced technical skills to build
- requires no water to flush
- diverts waste into fertilizer or compost that can be used in agriculture or garden

In winter Kyrgyzstan, the towns and the countryside take on a totally fairy-tale like appearance. The cities are also wonderful places to be in during winter... if you have a warm place to stay. It gets as cold as -20°C (-4 F), the roads are slippery and often get blocked by avalanches so it is difficult to get food or wood for fire for people living in the remote areas. The Kyrgyz people are one of the most warm-hearted nations, they will never stop showing their thankfulness and appreciation and they are also dependent on our help more than others.



*Please, donate or tithe Kyrgyzstan by sending your donation online or your tithe check to 815500, Kyrgyzstan!*



## Macedonia – The New Build in Veles

Substandard, crowded and unhealthy housing remains the norm for many families in Macedonia which has some of the most severe housing needs in Europe. There is a complete lack of affordable housing for young families.

To help these families, Habitat Macedonia will:

- build 90 apartments in 11 separate buildings by the end of 2011 in the town of Veles
- create the first whole, fully sustainable community with their own, cheap source of renewable energy in ECA
- connect all homes to an affordable source of connectivity / internet

In Macedonia, the Christmas celebration begins on January 5th, the evening known as “koledje”. Children go from door to door singing Christmas carols and receive fruits, nuts and sweets. Later in the evening, the elderly gather around a fire outside, and engage in a conversation about the past year and about the year to come. We wish that for many more families in Macedonia, this would include moving to a new house.

*If you wish for the same, please designate your contributions to 813000, Macedonia.*

## Tajikistan – Bio Sand Water Filter

More than half of the Tajik population contracts one or more water-borne diseases annually. Only 58% of the 7 million population of Tajikistan have access to clean, safe water.

Habitat Tajikistan provides families with the BioSand Water Filter. The filter:

- is an affordable and sustainable solution that families requires no chemicals or electric power
- can be produced by local people using locally available materials
- eliminates over 90% of waterborne diseases and parasites and produces up to 60 liters of clean, safe water per hour which is sufficient for 18 people
- low cost maintenance
- can last for up to 20 years with regular maintenance and servicing which the families trained to do



Tajikistan is Central Asia's most impoverished nation, and it is proving to be incapable of coping with the merciless winter temperatures. Below zero temperatures are common. Rivers that supply water freeze. Instead of going to school, many children are staying at home. Hundreds of thousands of people across the country are not eating enough because they are spending everything they have on trying to keep warm. Children are the most vulnerable in Tajikistan. There have been cases of babies dying because of the cold weather, and power shortages.

*If you want to help Tajik families in need, please direct your support to 815600, Tajikistan!*  
**THANK YOU!**

## Merry Christmas

To support one of our countries, please donate through our web site: [www.habitateurope.org](http://www.habitateurope.org) and choose to **designate your donation** by picking a country from the provided list or send a check to **Habitat for Humanity International, 121 Habitat St., Americus, GA 31709** and include the name of the country you wish to support in the memo section of the check.

If you wish to establish a Tithe partnership and support our programs on regular basis, please send your checks to the finance department of **Habitat for Humanity International** and write „TITHE“ in the memo section of the check including the country name and code from the list below:

Armenia, 815100	Hungary, 812200	Macedonia, 813000	Romania, 813900
Bulgaria, 811200	Kyrgyzstan, 815500	Poland, 813700	Slovakia, 814300
Tajikistan, 815600			

And as the snow starts melting on the roofs of houses in Central Asia in spring, there will be more happy families planning to move to their new homes that will be built next year...thanks to you and your generous support this Christmas.

**THANK YOU!**



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