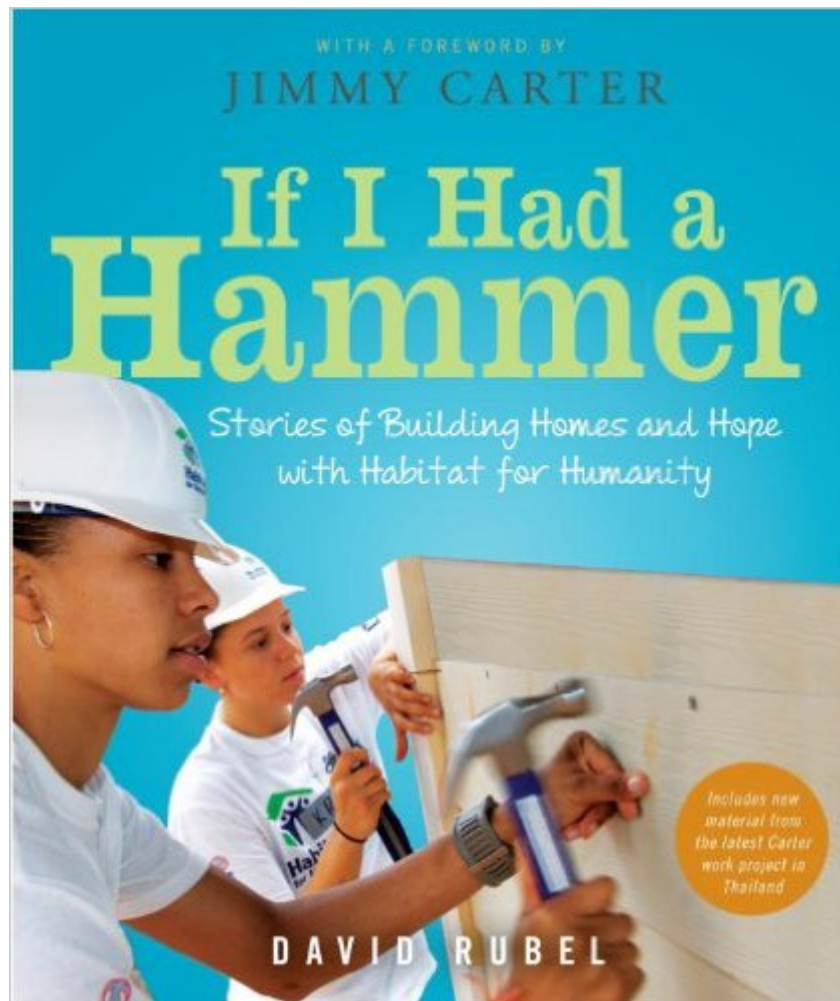


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# If I Had A Hammer: Stories Of Building Homes And Hope With Habitat For Humanity



## Synopsis

President Jimmy Carter's compelling anecdotes inspire a personal look at Habitat for Humanity that is sure to fire up a younger generation. For a quarter-century in more than ninety countries, Habitat for Humanity has built homes in partnership with the people who need them, aided by more than a million multigenerational volunteers. Two of the most devoted are former president Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn. Now this captivating account, abundantly illustrated with photos, relays personal stories from volunteers and new homeowners with special resonance for young readers. Exploring everything from creative home design to the emotional rewards of helping to build a house from the ground up, this is an essential resource for inspiring future youth volunteers. Included in the paperback edition is a riveting account of building a neighborhood in Thailand for the 2009 Jimmy and Rosalynn Work Project

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1150L (What's this?)

Paperback: 176 pages

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Product Dimensions: 7.6 x 0.5 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #921,137 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > House & Home #212 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Social Activists #217 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

What a nice book to inspire our young mission workers who headed off to Tennessee this summer to work on some homes for Habitat for Humanity! Easy to read vignettes and colorful photos plus Jimmy Carter's inspirational words make it a wonderful accompaniment to service projects of all types.

This book is a compelling, affectionate, and easy-to-read introduction to Habitat for Humanity, the US-grown international organization that should be an inspiration to everyone -- and should be known about by every child and teen. The first chapter tells the interesting story of the creation of Habitat, from the early efforts of Millard and Linda Fuller and Clarence Jordan to the momentous involvement of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. Then chapters 2 through 6 describe the practical working of Habitat mainly through anecdotes featuring children and teens: why some families need houses and how they are selected by Habitat (chapter 2); why Habitat houses are designed the way they are (for community integration) (chapter 3); why Habitat attracts the volunteers it does (chapter 4); how Habitat houses are built (chapter 5); the benefits of Habitat service for volunteers (chapter 6); how Habitat addresses even such basic needs as those for water and sanitation (chapter 7); and how the Habitat ethos of service might even help to heal social conflict within communities (chapter 8). Please give this stirring book -- to children, libraries, and schools -- to help create the next generation of Habitat volunteers.

As a devoted supporter of Habitat for Humanity and the writer David Rubel, I was very much looking forward to *If I Had A Hammer*--and neither disappointed. What an enjoyable and insightful read! Rubel not only artfully weaves the history of this magnificent organization together in an easy-to-follow way, but he also captures the spirit and joy of the program. It is an inspiring story, and one that children and adults will appreciate. In these challenging economic times, *If I Had a Hammer* will remind you of all the potential out there if we share our talents.

I'm a great believer in the work of Habitat for Humanity, have actually worked as a volunteer on one of their projects in Honduras, so bought this book for my 10-year-old granddaughter upon the recommendation of the Habitat folks themselves. It had been described as a book that would have interest for 9-12 year-olds, and would have "a story line that would be interesting to 10-year-olds." What I found, however, was mostly a rehashing of the kind of publicity writing that appears routinely in the literature that Habitat sends out every now and then, with a mostly adult-level vocabulary, and no noticeable story line, though I must admit I lost interest before reading the whole book. It's a great idea, but they will have to do better to keep the interest of any 10-year-old that I know.

It was a treat to read this compelling account of Habitat for Humanity's work - very heartening to gain an update of all Habitat has accomplished since its founding in 1976, all the homes built, lives

changed around the globe by the spirit of volunteerism - "the hand up," versus "hand out" approach that is Habitat for Humanity. The numerous stories and photographs paint the picture well. The enthusiasm of the repeat volunteers, including Jimmy Carter, who penned the Foreword, is infectious. The book is well written and succinctly organized. I particularly enjoyed reading about Habitat's history; its tie to the doctrine of Koinonia Farm, an experimental Christian Community started in 1942 in Americus, Georgia, "to test the social theories of its principal founder, Clarence Jordan" that "nothing mattered more than...loving all people and caring for the poor." President Carter's message that "the secret that so many other Habitat volunteers have learned: (is) that you get much more out of the work than you put in" is powerful indeed - and timely - and a wonderful gift to receive and to pass on to others!

Many people have heard of Habitat for Humanity and might have even worked on one of their projects, but may not be familiar with its history and what actually goes on behind the scenes. The basic mission of this organization is to "rid the world of substandard, or poverty housing" and improve the lives of individuals so "that they can not just survive but thrive in the world. In this book you will learn about people like Warren Fuller whose dream life turned into a nightmare because he was so obsessed with his business and making money that he didn't notice his marriage was falling apart. When Warren gave away all his money and began anew he started seeing the needs of other people, including the need for decent housing. You'll learn about him and another man named Clarence Jordan who claimed that building homes for others was a "dignified way to bring rich and poor together for the benefit of both." Complexes such as the Mascot Flats building along with individual homes have enriched the lives of many. You'll meet the recipients of these homes like Debbie Kinder as they share their stories, you'll learn how many hours of sweat equity are required of the home owners, you'll learn how the houses are designed, how designs change with individual or cultural needs, you'll meet the volunteers, you'll learn about "blitz" building, and much more! For those who know a lot about Habitat for Humanity, this book may not have much to offer them. For others this text is an excellent introduction to this organization. It is a leisurely, interesting read and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I have worked on the construction of one house, but never really knew a great deal about Habitat and was very pleased to be reintroduced to its principles. This book, designed with the young adult reader in mind, just might plant a few ideas in their minds. With "more than 1.1 billion people worldwide [living] in inadequate housing" there is a lot of work to be done!

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