

About the Trip Leader

Team leader name: Bob & Leslie Bell
Currently lives in: Homer, Alaska
Occupation: retired teachers
Best email: lesliebell47@yahoo.com

About the Trip

Location: New Ireland, Papua New Guinea
Dates: October 9-20, 2017
Cost: \$1980
Trip Number: 60000
Expected group size: 20-24

About the Team Leaders:

As of May 2017, we have led 48 teams around the world for Habitat for Humanity International's Global Village Department and Fuller Center for Housing's Global Builders (Cambodia, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, South Africa, Siberia, Thailand, Peru, Nepal.....) and hope to add many more to that international list.



Bob & Leslie in tuk tuk in Cambodia, April 2008

In October 2017 we will lead a Fuller Center team to Papua New Guinea (the first team for that community), and a Habitat team to Malawi in November will mark our 50th. Our 10+ domestic teams have been to Florida for hurricane recovery building, as well as to Kauai and Alaska. One of the Sri Lanka teams was a part of the Disaster Response effort after the 2004 tsunami. The housing mission of both Habitat and Fuller is one that we have committed our lives to for the past 20 years.

As Alaskans for over 50 years, we have a deep passion for it and its people.. It's where we built our homes, raised three sons, and taught school. We now use it as a "home base"...."Central Command Post", if you will, to plan all of our excursions around the world with Habitat for Humanity and the Fuller Center, so wherever we happen to be at the time is "home".

Our family defines who we are, and the intense relationship that we have with one another. One adult son, Anders, is a manager at a nonprofit, Access Alaska, and his wife, Leslie, teaches at a local high school. Our compassionate and caring eight year old granddaughter, Iris Peace, enjoys all there is to do and learn in Alaska, and is a helpful big sister to 18 month old Sonja June.

Lars, our eldest son, volunteers as an EMT and firefighter and works as a computer technician. He and his wife, Heather, are "temporarily" (only 3 years) in Indiana while she finishes up her doctorate. We are waiting patiently for their return to Alaska. Our beloved, beautiful son, Matt, died December 3 of last year, but continues to live in our hearts. We are grateful that we get to look out over the ocean everyday, as it was what he loved the most.

After leaving teaching positions 22 years ago, we were full-time volunteers at HFHI headquarters in the Global Village department for two and half years, and then we were assigned to the Asia/Pacific region for another two and half years as what use to be called "International Partners" (Habitat's version of the Peace Corps). While there, we worked in 14 countries helping the national offices establish their own Global Village program to host and/or send Global Village teams. Having assisted some of these countries host other international teams has given us a unique insight into the "other side of the story" from the perspective of a host when we are leading a GV team. The PNG team in 2017 is returning to a country which we love, but even better, the host coordinator, Martin Petrus, is one that we trained 18 years ago when he worked for Habitat. We led a team to a different village where he worked in 2009 and it will be a joy to work with this committed and passionate young man again.



Leslie at girls'
Orphanage - Mozambique

Leading Global Village teams, and now Global Builders Teams, has been an excellent device for sharing our fascinating world with others, while working to eliminate poverty housing.... a vacation with a purpose.

Papua New Guinea 2017:

In recruiting, we look for servant learners who have a great deal of flexibility and patience. We also attempt to have a very diversified team in age, occupations, backgrounds, lifestyles, and faiths. When in our host community, we attempt to arrange visits with schools, medical clinics, orphanages, etc. to gain a more holistic perspective of the community.

During free time, we encourage team members to explore the community as well as the natural environment and tend towards more physical activities such as hiking or kayaking, or observing animals and birds.

PNG is one of the most fascinating countries we have ever been too. If you journal, bring lots of empty pages; if you are a photographer, bring lots of memory cards and batteries; you will see or learn something new every hour of every day. You can also expect lots of laughter, as they are a happy people, and lots of music. Even in the dark of night we have heard people continuing to sing.

Although the host, Martin Petrus, is familiar with building homes and hosting teams for Habitat, he has become affiliated with Fuller Center to build in his home community. He has hosted other volunteer teams to build schools and involves the entire community in these projects. This will be the first Fuller team to build houses here. While we expect Martin and his crew to be as prepared as possible, we all must remember that PNG's motto is "Expect the Unexpected". Flexibility and patience is, therefore, the mantra of all of our servant learners on the team.

Schedule:

It will take two days (Sat-Sun) from a US departure to actually arrive at the host site. It is anticipated that team members will lay over one night at a mid point, such as in Australia or Singapore, and then travel the next day to Port Moresby, PNG, and transfer to a local flight to New Ireland.

We will work for five days (Mon-Fri); Sat & Sun will be for rest, exploring the community and church. We will then work 5 more days (Mon-Fri), ending with a celebration that you will never, ever forget. During our work days, we will also take breaks to meet the people, learn about their daily lives and activities, visit the schools, and learn more about how Martin has developed his community in so many aspects of health, education, and housing. We anticipate that this will be one of the most wholistic projects that you will have worked with while on a volunteer building team. We then depart New Ireland on Sat, anticipating two days to return to the US. If possible, we always encourage team members to use this travel opportunity to extend their time in PNG, or visit other places along the way, either before or after our time in New Ireland. Fuller Center offers an extension of their insurance if you extend your time in PNG.