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Sarah Arnold, construction director and Greg Martin, construction assistant, two of the four-person volunteer Habitat Mission Team going to Thailand. Courtesy of Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County Florida, Inc.

Tampa volunteers will build homes in Thailand

Habitat for Humanity doing fundraising for trip

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Andrea Lypka / MyFoxTampaBay.com

TAMPA - Some Habitat for Humanity volunteers are getting ready build homes a world away from where they usually volunteer.

The Habitat Hillsborough Mission team members are preparing and raising funds to build affordable homes in Thailand.

They are holding a garage sale Sunday to raise \$5,000 to cover plane tickets and other expenses to travel to Thailand. The team will join thousands of volunteers from all over the world to build 100 homes for the needy in just one week.

The 2009 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project, launched by Habitat for Humanity International, will be in Chiang Mai, Thailand on November 15-20. Each year, the organization picks a different country – three years ago,

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they went to India. It was an experience one volunteer from Tampa says she will never forget.

"I see the effect we have on communities in the U.S. too, but the effect I had in India is just incredible," said Sarah Arnold, the construction director and team leader

Arnold says that participating in work project provides the team a networking opportunity.

"Our mission is to serve and build communities. We hope other people will do the same," she said.

The new homeowners get a good deal on the mortgage, but Habitat for Humanity is not a charity, she said.

"Habitat is a hand up and not a hand out," she said. "The new homeowners will have to pay the zero interest and zero profit mortgages on the homes."

Arnold says that the Habitat Hillsborough Mission team is organizing fundraisers, aluminum can drives, and garage sales to raise the funds for the upcoming trip to Thailand.

This Sunday, the team is holding a garage sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The volunteers plan to sell a little bit of everything: clothing, electronics, furniture, toys, items for babies, and more.

All the fundraising is worth it, because Arnold says working with Habitat has been a life-changing experience, and hopes it is for others, too.

"I left India with a whole new look on poverty. I hope I will be able to offer the same experience to other volunteers, too," she said.

The garage sale will be located in a parking lot at 3736 E. Hillsborough Avenue in Tampa. For more information about Habitat for Humanity in Hillsborough County, go to <http://www.habitathillsborough.com/>

For more information about volunteering abroad, contact [Habitat for Humanity International](#).

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