



Global Builder Trip to Yerevan, Armenia

Dates: August 14 to 28, 2010

About Armenia

A land of rugged mountains, extinct volcanoes and fast-running rivers, Armenia is the smallest of the former Soviet republics. The Republic of Armenia gained independence in 1991 but has since been a nation occupied with social and economic reform. Despite ongoing economic hardship, in recent years the Armenian government has had some success cutting inflation and fostering the privatization of many enterprises. But income levels and unemployment remain critical issues, as nearly 50% of Armenians live in poverty. As a result, many Armenians cannot afford satisfactory housing and remain heavily dependent on remittances from relatives abroad to meet their basic needs.

Yerevan, with a population of 1.2 million, is the largest city and capital of Armenia. As the center of Armenian culture, Yerevan is the site of Yerevan State University, the Armenian Academy of Sciences, a historical museum, an opera house, a music conservatory and several technical institutes. Yerevan has several large public libraries, a number of museums and theaters, botanical gardens and zoos. It is a growing, bustling city to be enjoyed on foot. Restaurants, clubs, and shopping areas are popping up throughout the city.

The Fuller Center for Housing Armenia



FCHA was founded in May, 2008 in Yerevan. The families in FCHA's focus live in deteriorated housing with cramped quarters and limited water and heat. Many families live in unfinished houses because they had to abandon construction due to the severe economic crisis. Other families live in "domiks," metal shipping containers without insulation (left), brought to Armenia as temporary shelter

following the devastating 1988 earthquake.

FCHA is using several approaches to helping families solve their housing problems and help complete construction on unfinished homes. In an effort to keep building costs at a minimum, a readily available indigenous stone known as "tufa" is used in house construction. Depending on the stage of construction, our team will work on a variety of tasks. No construction experience is required for Global Build participants. (A finished home is at right.)



Itinerary

Team participants are encouraged to travel with the team departing from the Newark Liberty Airport on Saturday, August 14 and departing Yerevan on Saturday, August 28. If you are travelling before or after the team dates, you should plan to be in Yerevan no later than Monday, August 16 and depart no sooner than Saturday August 28.

The itinerary is not final yet, but may look like this:

- Saturday-Sunday, August 14-15: Fly from NJ airport to European city airport (probably Paris) and then on to Yerevan.
- Monday, August 16: Rest, short city tour, orientation dinner with FCHA staff
- Tuesday-Thursday, August 17-19 : work
- Friday-Sunday, August 20-22: tour
- Monday-Wednesday, August 23-25: work
- Thursday-Friday, August 26-27: tour & free day
- Saturday, August 28: depart Yerevan early morning, connect through Europe, arrive NJ airport late afternoon/evening



Accommodations/Meals

Accommodations in Yerevan are single, double, or triple occupancy rooms with private baths in a hotel. Breakfast is served in the hotel. Hot lunches will be served the building site, and dinners will be enjoyed at local city restaurants. Bottled drinking water is provided at the work site and for off times as well. Food is abundant, fresh, and delicious! Alcohol is not allowed at the work site and not included with any meals. If anyone wants alcohol at meals or in the evenings, they are free to purchase it separately.



Cost

The trip costs approximately \$2,000. This price includes lodging, food, in-country transportation, tours, orientation materials, traveler's medical insurance, and a donation to FCHA. Participants will need to arrange and pay for transportation from their point of departure to Armenia (approximately \$1500 roundtrip from NJ to Yerevan), passports, visas (about \$10).

Team Leader

Barbara Hovsepien is a member of St. Leon Armenian Church in northern NJ. She participated in her first volunteer trip to Armenia in 2002 and has been back 6 times since then to build, usually as a team leader. For more information about this trip, Barbara can be contacted at 973-839-1417 or on email at: bhovsepien@optonline.net.

