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VHP Of America Announces Gujarat Earthquake Volunteer Program

Posted on Thursday, March 14 @ 22:32:54 PST by admin

April 9, 2001

SERVICE TO HUMANITY IS SERVICE TO GOD



Update on World Hindu Council (VHP-A) of America Relief efforts.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) of America announces a program whereby volunteers from outside Bharat(India) can go to help out with earthquake rehabilitation work in Gujarat. Part of a broader rehabilitation program called MISSION: HOPE IN GUJARAT, it seeks to provide both help to the local VHP and Seva Bharati workers involved in relief and rehabilitation, and a meaningful experience to those coming from abroad.

The program is open to anyone regardless of nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, caste, or sex. It is open to people from all professions and walks of life. There is no definite minimum age, but those under 18 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The volunteer must know either English, Hindi, or Gujarati, and must be able to give at least one week time.

Girish Gandhi, Vice-President Seva (Social Service) for VHPA explained some details, "The coordination of the program is being done by VHP workers in the US who have spent time in the relief work itself, who have worked in other VHP Seva (social service) or Seva Bharati projects across India, and VHP and Seva Bharati workers in Gujarat. Depending on the needs at the time they go, and their interests and skills, volunteers will be based mainly either in Ahmedabad,

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Bhuj, or Bhachau." We are ensuring that given the situation, volunteers from abroad will get clean water, food, and transportation to Bhuj from Ahmedabad. In Ahmedabad, accommodation will be in guesthouses, but in Bhuj, it will likely be in tents without air condition. Temperatures will reach 120 F (49 C) and the conditions are rugged. However the rewards are great."

Dr. Mihir Meghani, the Volunteer Coordinator for VHPA, commented why this program is important, "Volunteers will be providing much needed help to the people who have suffered the most. They will gain satisfaction from the assistance they provide, and will have the opportunity to learn a lot about relief work. The workers in India will also benefit from this interaction by acquiring new skills and perspectives."

Rehabilitation is a process by which the affected people can begin their normal life. It will include rebuilding permanent residences at the same place or complete relocation of a community or village, school, primary health center, community center, and temple. Currently, the focus is to build one-room structures for those whose buildings are beyond repair, prior to the summer monsoon.

Jobs that may be done by volunteers:

- 1) Preparing plans for reconstruction of villages
- 2) Liaising with different government departments for land allotment, laying of roads, water supply, power supply lines, etc.
- 3) Establishing communications
- 4) Procuring construction material and transportation of that to where it is needed
- 5) Supervising construction and ensuring quality
- 6) Office work - records, payments, maintaining accounts, disbursal of materials to different units, typing, donation receipt writing and mailing
- 7) Running of temporary schools in villages and towns; tutoring middle and high school students and preparing them for their examinations
- 8) Providing professional skills to the students who have lost everything
- 9) Running and organizing volunteer camps of workers
- 10) Hospital services management in the village of Bhachau (errands, administration, and maintenance)
- 11) Psychological counseling of those who have been affected to show them care, concern, and love
- 12) Responding to emails and maintaining websites
- 13) Delivering food and supplies
- 14) Giving medical care and first-aid

You can also find information about MISSION: HOPE IN GUJARAT, including a volunteer application, on the web at <http://www.hopegujarat.org>

VHPA's service and relief operations cater to all, regardless of race, religion and ethnicity.

World Hindu Council of America, founded in 1970 and incorporated in the state of New York in 1974, is a nonprofit, tax exempt volunteer-based charitable organization serving the needs of Hindu community(who believe in, practice, or respect the spiritual and religious principles having origins in Bharat(India) which includes Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs and people of various religious sects within the Hindu Ethos) in US with a grand vision of building a dynamic Hindu society inspired by the eternal values of Dharma and the lofty ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam meaning 'The entire creation is one family.'

**CALMITIES WAIT FOR NONE, HELP MUSTN'T WAIT
EITHER**

For immediate release

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