

## Reading Passage

### HELPING OTHERS

by Mariko Asano

#### Introduction

*Habitat for Humanity International—or Habitat—is a nonprofit organization that helps people in need<sup>1</sup> build houses. Since 1976, volunteers for Habitat have built more than 100,000 houses worldwide. According to Habitat, however, there are still more than 1.5 billion people in the world without*

<sup>1</sup> **in need** who need help

*decent housing.<sup>2</sup> In the article below, Mariko Asano talks about her experience as a Habitat **volunteer**. She has traveled to the **Philippines** three times to help build houses for people who need them.*

1 I am 24 years old and I grew up in **Nishinomiya, Japan**. Several years ago, I went to **Negros Island** in the Philippines as a Habitat volunteer. This was the first of three trips I have taken to the Philippines as a volunteer. For me, the idea of building somebody's  
5 house abroad was very exciting. The next year I returned to Negros Island as a Habitat volunteer. This time I went as a student leader with 28 classmates from Kyoto University of Foreign Studies.

Both the staff<sup>3</sup> and the families on Negros Island became dear friends of the work team I led.<sup>4</sup> Meeting these people was wonderful  
10 for each of us. Their lifestyle reminded us of the meaning and value of life. The people also helped us appreciate the more valuable things in life, such as spending time with your family, friends and neighbors; developing close relationships; helping each other; and appreciating<sup>5</sup>  
15 what you do have. These things are sometimes forgotten in an affluent country<sup>6</sup> like Japan.

We thought we came to the Philippines to help the Filipino people, but they helped us to see something valuable. They generously offered their food, space, and hearts<sup>7</sup> in a way we were not accustomed to. (Would you give up your bed for a stranger and sleep  
20 on the cement floor at your own house?)

When I took my third trip to the Philippines as a Habitat volunteer, I was assigned to<sup>8</sup> a house with young people from around the world. In my group, there were Filipinos, Americans, Indians, Koreans, and Japanese. We worked together to complete a house for a family we met on the site.<sup>9</sup> On the last day, all of us stood inside a room we had built in just a week, feeling a sense of fulfillment.<sup>10</sup> Even now we keep

<sup>2</sup> **decent housing** housing of an acceptable standard; livable housing

<sup>3</sup> **staff** employees

<sup>4</sup> **the work team I led** group of workers I was responsible for

<sup>5</sup> **appreciating** being thankful for

<sup>6</sup> **an affluent country** a wealthy country

<sup>7</sup> **offered their food, space, and hearts** gave us food, a place to stay, and kindness

<sup>8</sup> **was assigned to** was sent to work in; was given a job in

<sup>9</sup> **on the site** at the place (where they built the house)

<sup>10</sup> **a sense of fulfillment** a feeling of accomplishment

in touch across the world. Some of us are actively involved in Habitat in different countries.

Habitat brings people together and helps us realize that people all over the world care about each other. Habitat sends the very important message that we can all be friends. Being involved with Habitat for Humanity has changed my life. I've learned that I can make a difference<sup>11</sup> in the world.

### Understanding the Text

**A. Multiple choice.** For each item below, circle the best answer.

1. The writer's purpose in writing the article was to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. convince people to travel
  - b. discourage people from giving money for housing
  - c. share a valuable experience about volunteering

Evidence / Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reading Skills | Main Idea**

2. Which statement is true?
- a. Habitat for Humanity is more than 25 years old.
  - b. The writer is an employee of Habitat for Humanity.
  - c. The writer has helped to build houses in more than one country.

**Evidence / Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In line 1, the words *grew up* mean \_\_\_\_.
- a. studied
  - b. became tall
  - c. spent my childhood
4. In lines 26–27, the words *keep in touch* mean \_\_\_\_.
- a. communicate
  - b. make money
  - c. walk

5. You can infer from paragraph #1 (lines 1–7) that Mariko Asano \_\_\_\_.
- a. is still a student at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
  - b. studied at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
  - c. was a teacher at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

<sup>11</sup> **make a difference** do something important for other people

**Evidence / Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. You can infer from paragraph #4 (lines 21–28) that Mariko Asano \_\_\_\_.
- a. knew the family before she went to the Philippines
  - b. didn't finish building the house
  - c. was happy with the house her team built

**Evidence / Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_