

“Our Own” John W. Scott Builds Homes for Earthquake Survivors in Haiti

Takes part in 28th annual Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project

By Marty Steinberg

John W. Scott, PhD, of Upper Montclair, may be retired, but he isn't slowing down. The former Habitat for Humanity Newark board president recently joined President and Mrs. Carter in Léogâne, Haiti to build homes for Habitat for Humanity's 28th annual Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project.

Scott served as a construction leader during the weeklong build as 500 volunteers from around the world helped to build 100 homes in partnership with earthquake-affected families in Léogâne, a city 18 miles west of Port-au-Prince and near the epicenter of the January 2010 earthquake.



John Scott (second from right in the yellow shirt) is pictured in front of one of two homes he helped construct in the earthquake ravaged parts of Haiti.

Scott worked with a construction team and two partner families to build two homes. “They were just like partner families the world over. They were just wonderful” said Scott, who has built homes with Habitat for Humanity in Guyana, Mexico, India, Thailand and the United States Gulf Coast, as well as here in Essex County. Scott said the construction team was one of the best he’s worked with.

The need for homes was clear. “Driving from the airport to our camp, it was just devastating,” Scott said. “We saw mile after mile of tents, and worse than that, where people were living.” The Carter work project is going back to Haiti to build homes again next year, which is unprecedented, Scott said.

The Carters are Habitat for Humanity’s most famous volunteers and give a week of their time each year to help Habitat build, renovate or repair homes, and raise awareness about the need for affordable and decent housing. “He is 87 now,” Scott said, referring to President Carter. “He can’t physically do as much as when I first met him but he is still out there building and setting an example for the rest of us.”

The partner families who worked with Scott and his construction team to build their new homes included a young couple with an infant and an older woman with four children. “It felt good to be there,” Scott said. “To make a little bit of a difference.”

Editors note: All of us associated with Habitat for Humanity Newark know in reality John Scott makes a lot more than a “little bit of a difference” not only to us but to Habitat for Humanity International and to the many countries he has gone to work and to countless families he has helped provide shelter for.