

**MISSION TEAM HOUSE FUNDING PROPOSAL
HOUSE UPON THE ROCK MINISTRY
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

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**MERCEDES AND
LORENZO'S HOME**

AFTER



BEFORE

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Executive Summary

House Upon the Rock is a Christian ministry NGO in the mountains of Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic. It was founded by Paul and Sharyn Branson in 2000. House Upon the Rock (HUTR) ministry serves the poorer local population in Jarabacoa, many of whom are in great need. The ministry provides opportunities where short term mission teams can come and serve with HURT in community where the need is the greatest for one to two weeks. These opportunities include ministries in construction, medical service and evangelism. HUTR also provides school sponsorship programs, an education ministry and hosts a weekly church service. See Section 2 and Appendix 1 of the following Proposal for a comprehensive description of House Upon the Rock.

The short term construction ministry opportunities are in peril due to a severe shortage of affordable short term housing. The shortage of affordable accommodation was brought on by the unexpected spike in local tourism as a result of global travel restrictions in 2020. As the Dominican population discovered the natural beauty of Jarabacoa, the demand for short term rental accommodation increased. The limited supply coupled with the arrival of Airbnb has resulted in a 400% increase in the cost for short term rental accommodation. As a result, finding adequate affordable housing is making it very difficult to house the visiting mission teams. With twelve booked for 2024 and six teams booked for 2025 the ministry, at the time of writing this, has not yet been able to secure all of the necessary housing for all of the approximately 150 people planning to come and serve.

The long term plan all along has been to build a dormitory style house that has the ability to sleep thirty people complete with dorm style bedrooms, a few couples bedrooms, ensuites in every bedroom, kitchen, dining room, common area for hanging out, having team meetings, evening devotionals, etc. Because of the current housing crisis, the ministry is hoping to move forward immediately with their plans to build a mission house.

The neighbour has indicated that the parcel of land adjacent to the Branson's home is likely to come up for sale. Their prayer is that it's God's will for the ministry to purchase this property given its unique location. Having the opportunity to build a mission house beside their personal residence would be a blessing! The plan is to have funds in place for the ministry to purchase the land and begin construction of a mission house right away. They have a local lawyer that they have worked with in the past to help facilitate the purchase of land.

The total estimated cost to purchase the land, construct the mission building and equip it with everything needed to start housing teams is estimated to cost approximately \$750,000 USD / \$1,000,000 CDN .

We are reaching out to you for help. Any help that you are able to provide through prayers and financial donations will be immensely appreciated. The construction of a mission team house will enable HUTR to continue their short term construction ministry providing much needed housing for the poorer local population.

The Bransons have been full time missionaries in Jarabacoa since 1997 and have established roots in this community. They have no foreseeable plans for leaving this mission field.

For more detailed information, please continue to read the following pages of this proposal.

Information for sending your donations is located on the final page of the Proposal. All donations are tax deductible and 100% of your donation will go to this project with zero administration fees being taken..

1 Introduction

House Upon the Rock is a Christian ministry NGO in the mountains of Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic. Paul and Sharyn Branson have been in ministry since 1997 and founded House Upon the Rock (HUTR) ministries in 2000. House Upon the Rock (HUTR) serves the poorer local population through ministries in construction, medical services and evangelism. HUTR also provides school sponsorship programs, an education ministry and hosts a weekly church service. Their ministry relies in large part on a network of churches in North America and the support of their visiting mission teams who bring in supplies for the medical clinic and school sponsorship program and work on construction projects. The visiting teams model God's love by serving the poor and those in need, providing the Bransons with testimonials and opportunities for evangelism.

During the 2020 Covid pandemic, international travel was closed and the Dominican population was restricted to travelling in their own country. It was during this time that the Dominicans unexpectedly discovered the natural beauty of Jarabacoa. Up in the mountains, full of nature and cooler temperatures, it quickly became a weekend destination for tourism. As the demand for short term rental accommodation increased, the limited supply coupled with the arrival of Airbnb resulted in an average 400% increase in accommodation costs. Pre pandemic it was possible to rent a house for approximately \$125 - \$150 per night for a visiting mission team. Currently, the same houses rent for \$500 - \$700 per night. The ministry has ten teams booked and two tentatively booked for 2024. HUTR has not yet been able to secure the necessary housing for all of the approximately 150 people planning to come and serve. The ministry's current staffing is able to manage up to eleven to twelve teams per year providing they have affordable housing. Finding adequate affordable housing is becoming more and more difficult as costs skyrocket. As costs continue to skyrocket many mission team members will simply not be able to afford to serve in the Dominican. HUTR is looking to solve this problem. Since it is no longer affordable to rent a house for visiting mission teams, they are looking to purchase land and build their own Mission Team House.

House Upon the Rock has had a vision to build a Mission Team House for more than fifteen years. Recently it has come to Paul and Sharyn's attention that the property beside their personal home is likely to come up for sale. A large family owned parcel of land located on the same road as the Bransons has been inherited by nine siblings, six of whom live out of the country. The land is currently being subdivided and the siblings are motivated to sell the lots as soon as they are able. One of those lots coming up for sale is adjacent to the Bransons' property. The plan is to have funds in place for the ministry to purchase the land when it becomes available and begin construction of a mission house right away. Paul and Sharyn believe that if they do not get the land purchased as soon as it comes up for sale it will be sold and they will lose the opportunity to build a Mission Team House adjacent to their personal land. Securing this lot is important because it is the only parcel of land that is adjacent to their home. The other three sides of their property border ravines, creeks and trees.

This is your opportunity to partner with House Upon the Rock and make this vision of a Mission Team House come true, ensuring the continued success of the various ministries and opportunities for people from the United States and Canada to come and serve on short-term mission trips.

Paul and Sharyn have long been planning what the team house needs to include with regards to size, number of bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen, dining room, common areas, etc. To see the Team House built, they estimate that they will need \$750,000 USD / \$1,000,000 CDN. See Section 3 for further details.

They have a local couple who wants to live on site in order to be available 24/7 to manage the team house. This couple brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of managing, cooking, cleaning, horticultural, agricultural, and basic maintenance skills.

2 Ministry Model and History

The primary purpose of House Upon The Rock ministry is to evangelize and share the Word and Love of God which they do through practical means. The ministry hosts mission teams from the United States and Canada who serve mostly in the construction ministry. They build houses, do renovations and major repairs for people in need. The ministry operates a walk-in medical clinic staffed by Dominican professionals. They also provide a school sponsorship program with over 185 students actively sponsored between preschool and university. In February 2023, House Upon The Rock started a weekly church service as well as hosting marriage, parent and pastoral conferences throughout the year.

The visiting mission teams are an important aspect of HUTR's ministry. Visiting mission teams do what a cheque cannot. When a mission team of foreigners are working hard, sweating in the hot sun, mixing concrete, laying blocks, helping build a home for a local family in poverty, the local people stop, stare and talk. They want to know why these "rich foreigners" are doing what they are doing. This is a huge open door to evangelize. This allows them to have conversations, to share God's Word, to prayer with the people. The mission teams through their actions, hard work and sweat provide the Branson's with testimonials of God's love and opportunities for evangelism in ways that words or cheques could never do.

2.1 Construction Ministry

In 2000, the Branson's started to work in a small village in the mountains of the Dominican Republic, Pedregal, just outside of the town of Jarabacoa. They felt God calling them to open a medical clinic and to help with housing in the village. After spending some time walking around the village and getting to know the

area, the clinic opened. They soon discovered that they could prevent quite a few diseases by replacing the dirt floors in the local houses with concrete floors. Many parasites would enter the villager's bodies through the soles of their feet through the dirt floors. They started by educating the locals about the reasons for changing from dirt to concrete floors. Then the Branson's went out



and determined who in the village wanted a concrete floor. Partnering with a network of churches in North America, they raised funds and inquired who would be willing to come down to the Dominican to help them accomplish the task of providing the concrete floors. They soon saw a remarkable improvement in the villagers' health with less skin and intestinal diseases. The Branson's spent three years working on replacing dirt floors, and as they did, they constantly shared the love of Jesus with the families they were serving both through their actions and their words. They were able to plug the

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families who accepted Jesus into their hearts into the local churches to continue their Christian journey.

Today, the short term missions teams build small houses for the poor and those in need in the area. It takes, on average, a year to complete one house due to resources. Multiple mission teams will work on one house, picking up where the previous team left off. HUTR requires the families to pay back the cost of the building materials, giving large annual discounts to families who pay twelve consecutive



months. Payments are set by the homeowner and have been as low as 50 cents per month. The point is for the homeowners to have a sense of ownership and pride in their homes. The monies received from these payments gets rolled into the next construction project. As of this date, 60% of the families have paid for the

materials for their house.

Since starting with floors, HUTR has replaced approximately 30 dirt floors with concrete, built 33 houses, with two currently under construction, one church, one school addition and one multi purpose building.

The Bransons are particularly suited for this ministry. The Bransons both speak Spanish and together, they have been leading mission teams for over 25 years with team sizes varying from 2 to 225 people and up to as many as twelve teams per calendar year. Paul is the son of a contractor with decades of construction experience in the Dominican Republic. Sharyn has extensive administrative and managerial experience spanning over thirty years.

2.2 Medical Ministry

In February of 2003, the Branson's rented a house to use as a clinic for \$20/month. The house was less than 400 square feet. It had an open area they could use as a waiting area and 2 small bedrooms they could use for consultation rooms. They opened the clinic starting at 12 hours/week. One of the main focuses of the clinic was to teach, both about health related issues but also about God. With all their patients, they do ask about their faith and pray with them before they left. They charge a very small consultation fee in order that the patients do not expect handouts. They try their best to keep medications on hand to give out for free whatever the patient needs to help with what ails them. They

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have visiting specialists (internists, optometrists, dentists) come on a regular basis to treat patients and share God's love and His work with the patients.

In late 2004, the number of patients had increased and Paul and Sharyn knew they needed help. They prayed for someone to come to help run the clinic and for the funds to pay their salary. God sent Ana Maria. She did not have much administrative or medical experience, but she was a strong believer in Jesus and she wasn't shy about talking about Him. While patients were waiting in the waiting room, Ana Maria would preach to them and love on them. No one left without being prayed for. Hearts were changing and they found people returning to the clinic for spiritual counselling, for prayer or to just enjoy the positive atmosphere of the clinic.



By 2007, they knew they needed a full time doctor. Ana Maria and Sharyn began to pray for someone to fill the position. A week later, Ana Maria gave Sharyn Wendy's phone number. It turned out that



Wendy was a local general doctor who was unhappy with her current position and she had been praying for a change. She interviewed with Sharyn and accepted a full time position at the clinic. She is currently still in a full time position at the clinic and has 100% of her salary sponsored. Since Wendy has started, the patients that come into the clinic have grown significantly, to where the clinic sees about 4500 - 5000 patients each year. The clinic has made it a point to reach out to the Haitian community. There is a tremendous amount of racism in the DR – the darker your skin, the worse you are treated; the lighter your skin, the better you are treated. Needless to say, the Haitians living in the DR are treated very poorly everywhere

they go. The ability to find medical and spiritual care within the clinic continues to be a huge blessing to the Haitian community. Currently, 50% of the patients coming to the clinic are Haitians. They have

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discovered that some Haitian families will travel days, sometimes paying their way to come all the way from Haiti, to make their way to the clinic to get respectful care. The team at the clinic works very hard to ensure there is extra medicine on hand to provide them with enough so that they are able to treat their family's ailments when they return home. They also take the time to share the gospel and pray over them before they leave. The clinic has become a social gathering place for a lot of people within the community and beyond. The staff at the clinic treat the physical and the spiritual needs of everyone who comes to the clinic. Their philosophy is that it's God's clinic and that it's a blessing to be able to share the love of God with everyone who comes through their door.

House Upon The Rock also has a ministry providing wheelchairs to those in need. See Appendix 1 In 2011, House Upon The Rock purchased the land where the clinic is located. The Ministry Centre location includes the medical clinic, ministry offices, an open air salon used as a gathering place for church and school sponsorship events as well as storage shed for construction equipment, all located at this one site

2.3 School Sponsorship Program

In the Dominican Republic, the government provides free education to all students. All public and private schools have uniforms for the children to wear. The government provides a building for the public school and sometimes pays the teachers. Teachers are not supplied with teaching materials, tools or even chalk for the chalkboard. Because of underfunding, education in public schools is below standards. A number of years back, Paul, Sharyn and the staff at the clinic developed a relationship with a family who lived across from the clinic. The heads of the family were a grandfather who drank

and a grandmother who was super tired all the time for having to look after her grandchildren. The grandparents had seven grandchildren from two daughters who lived with them. The mother of the children had never lived in the same house as her children and all the children were from different fathers. The mother had left her children in the care of their grandmother. One of the children, Juana, started to spend a lot of time at the clinic. She was in grade 5 and like her siblings, was



looking for love, attention and parenting. The clinic staff decided to see if they could help her with her English knowing that if her English improved enough, she would be able to attend the English mission school in town and receive a better education. Her grandmother agreed and so they developed a plan. Juana would take a year off of school, she would work as an assistant to the two year old class at the English school in the mornings and have private English lessons in the afternoons. After 10 months of this, she was given an education test by the English school to see if she could enrol as a student. They were all surprised to learn that her math skills scored at a kindergarten level. Juana needed a better

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education. Juana's English was now at a grade 4 or 5 level. The school accepted Juana and in the following new school year, she began grade 5 at the English school.

Having gone through the experience with Juana, Paul and Sharyn became aware of the need for children to have improved access to better education in their community. The ministry could not afford to pay the tuition for Juana to attend the English school. God, having placed it on their hearts to start a ministry to help the children with their education, decided to reach out in the same way they had done for their construction ministry, to find sponsors to help pay for not only Juana's tuition, but others in similar situations.



And so the House Upon The Rock school sponsorship program ministry began. To date, the ministry has sponsored over 400 children with 186 students currently enrolled in the 2023-2024 school year program, all the way from kindergarten through to university. Over the past two years no students have dropped out of school, which is a big achievement given that the local culture places very little importance on education. Since the start of the sponsorship program, 28 students have graduated high school, 18 have graduated university and 2 have graduated from the special needs school.

Throughout the year, the ministry hosts various parent and student meetings. At these meetings, there is a devotion time and a teaching time. They have the grade 12 students to talk to the younger students about the importance of responsibility, having good studying habits and getting good grades as a sign of gratitude for their sponsor families. Sometimes if the topics are important enough to the community, they will open up talks for the whole community to attend. One such talk was about internet safety and children. Even though the internet has reached most remote villages, the education on internet safety has not.

2.4 Evangelism

The question is often asked of Paul and Sharyn how visiting mission teams can evangelize when they don't speak Spanish. In answer, when a mission team goes into communities where the Branson's are working, they are a walking testimony to what God calls us to do. Team members pay their own way,



give up vacation time, time with their families, leaving behind family members to take care of their family duties. They come to serve, to help, in any way they can and to be the light of God. The local people will often ask Paul and Sharyn what they are paying the mission teams who are working on their building sites. When Paul and

Sharyn explain that they pay nothing and team members pay for all their own expenses, the local people are shocked. It's because of their sacrificing so much to come down to work in the heat, to sweat as they are working to build a house for someone they don't even know, sharing the acts of God, the physical love of God in motion that Paul and Sharyn are able to talk to the locals about the Word of God. Without the teams, these opportunities would not be available in the same way for God to be shared with the local people.

2.5 Education



Paul and Sharyn regularly hold conferences to equip and train pastors and to teach the local people about God’s Kingdom. In the past ten years, HUTR has hosted numerous conferences with speakers coming from Canada, United States, Chile and locally. Numerous marriage conferences have been well attended with average attendance of 100 + people. Pastoral and Church leadership conferences have averaged 50 – 60 people in attendance. These conferences focus on equipping pastors and church leadership with more tools and knowledge to disciple and guide their congregations. HUTR will host one to two conferences each year.

3 Finance and Funding

3.1 Capital Costs

The figures below reflect the estimated costs for the completion of the Mission House, having it ready to receive the first mission team:

Capital Investment Costs

	<u>\$USD</u>	<u>\$CDN</u>
Purchase of land	\$250,000	\$332,000
Building supplies	\$180,000	\$238,000
Labour	\$50,000	\$66,100
Professional fees	\$10,000	\$13,200
Miscellaneous	\$10,000	\$13,200
Equipping the house	<u>\$250,000</u>	<u>\$332,000</u>
TOTAL COSTS:	<u>\$750,000</u>	<u>\$994,500</u>

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The careful and detailed financial forecasts show that the Team Mission House will be self-sufficient and cover all costs of maintenance. The building cost estimates are based on material and labour costs from the summer of 2023. An additional 15% margin has been included in order to cover any overages.

The goal is to purchase the land as soon as it becomes available for purchase. It's estimated the cost of the land will be approximately \$250,000 USD or \$332,000 CDN. Once the land is purchased, the plan is for the ministry to raise up mission teams to build the house together along with hired local workers. The parcel of land adjacent to the Bransons has a partially built house on it. The plan is to readjust the current floor plans so that it meets the needs of the ministry and continue the build. HUTR would like to break ground early 2024 with an estimate of about a year to complete the building. Estimated cost to adjust the floor plan and complete the build is approximately \$250,000 USD or \$332,000 CDN.

The Team House will need to be equipped with beds, furniture, chairs, tables, lines, window coverings, fans, etc. The kitchen will need to be equipped with all of the major appliances, smaller kitchen appliances, cooking supplies, dinnerware, utensils, etc. A washing machine and inverter is also needed. Estimated costs for outfitting the entire house is approximately \$250,000 USD or \$332,000 CDN.

3.2 Sources of Operating Funds

Even though House Upon The Rock is an NGO, the building maintenance and operating costs of the Mission House will still need to be covered. In order to cover maintenance and operating costs the ministry will require those staying at the Mission House to pay a nominal fee to cover those costs. The philosophy of HUTR has always to be a "hand up, not a hands out" ministry. Patients coming to the walk-in clinic pay a nominal consultation fee, homeowners pay back a portion of the materials used to build their house and families in the school sponsorship program are required to pay for transportation to school, uniforms, and books while the sponsors pay for the tuition. This philosophy would continue for the use of the Mission House, in that those using the building will also be asked to pay a nominal fee which would then be used to cover all the costs of maintenance of the physical

building, the property and everything inside the house from linen to major appliances. In today's dollars, 2023, the charge would likely be \$40 US per person per night with food and \$25 US per person per night without food.

Mission Teams would pay the ministry a flat fee for their team fees, which are sent through CMML in the United States or MSC in Canada. A portion of those team fees would go towards accommodation. With House Upon The Rock having their own Mission House, the ministry can keep costs at a reasonable amount so that teams from the United States and Canada can afford to continue to come on a regular basis.

Local rentals will pay the Ministry office directly.

3.3 Current Loans

There are currently no outstanding loans or other financial commitment that may influence the development of the Mission House

3.4 Financial Record Keeping

House Upon The Rock is not asking for donations lightly and the ministry intends to be very careful with any funds that they receive. As mentioned before, Sharyn has extensive experience in administration. With regards to estimates for building and equipping the Mission Team House, the ministry has done its best to carefully balance the desire to be frugal and conservative while still providing enough financial margins to meet their goals. In the past, they have run projects on minimum budgets not because they did not have access to funds but because they recognized that spending money, especially in an impoverished community, often has unintended and adverse consequences. With that in mind, knowing that they are now looking to raise and spend a great deal of money, we look forward to maintaining close contact with you, our donors, so that we can report how the money has been spent and what has been achieved.

House Upon The Rock has accounting practices in place. A staff member whose current job description includes accounting, utilizing a computer program, will keep track of expenses. Sharyn Branson will oversee this area. They also have a local accountant, Fernando Hernandez, who does the fiscal year end accounting, filing annual taxes with the Dominican government and does other accountant duties as required. HUTR has been using Fernando Hernandez as their accountant for over ten years.

4 Organizational Overview and External Environment

4.1 Cultural Background

Operating a ministry, as is true for many places around the world, is not as straightforward as it is in some Western countries. This is especially true when foreigners are involved. Communication, honesty, work ethic, employee/employer relationships and a host of other factors are not the same as those found in the West. While this regularly poses challenges, the Bransons after having spent the past twenty-seven years living in this community and culture, are well prepared for the task at hand.. Their experiences in the Dominican Republic during this time has helped them learn how to navigate and anticipate these cultural differences.

4.2 Vision

HUTR seeks to walk in faith, being a voice of hope and an example of love to individuals as exemplified by Jesus.

4.3 Mission

HUTR will accomplish the Vision by sharing the love of God through construction, medical, education and evangelism.

4.4 Mission Team House Goals

The goal is to establish a safe, comfortable, clean, restful housing for mission teams coming to serve their Lord, helping poor families struggling financially through HUTR construction ministry, evangelism, and supporting the medical ministry. The Team House will directly employ local residents as cooks, service staff, administrative staff and maintenance staff.

Additionally, the Mission Team House may be made available to other ministries to provide accommodation for their teams and to local churches for retreats. Rental fees collected from these groups would go towards maintaining the building and paying the staff. The Team House can also provide an opportunity to house missionary families who are in transition either moving in or out of

the country as well as an affordable retreat for missionaries from other parts of the country who need a few days break to recoup from their ministry.

4.5 Values that Guide House Upon the Rock Ministry

In order to advance the cause of Jesus Christ, House Upon The Rock seeks to be a unifying influence that facilitates, fosters, promotes and models the following values:

- A clear and compelling vision for House Upon the Rock Ministry.
- Visionary, faith-orientated and strategic leadership
- Strategic, empowering, and productive gatherings, work groups and study groups, councils, and conversations.
- Working against the cause of disunity with any organization.
- Bring an informed, respected, and unified voice representing the application of biblical principles.
- A deepening understanding of the role and relevance of the Christian faith in a diverse and international society.

4.6 Five Criteria For Missions

HUTR meets the following criteria:

- Sustainable through mission teams and renting out to other ministries and local churches.
- Will enhance that quality of lives of mission teams through comfortable, safe, affordable housing.
- Provide local employment throughout the construction as well as with a full-time manager and caretaker, workers for the kitchen, cleaning and yard work.
- Operate ethically.
- Have a spiritual impact on team members, staff, and neighbours.

4.7 Future Outlook

The lack of housing will force HUTR to turn away mission teams which is why they need their own housing for their 8 - 11 mission teams per year.

Having the team house adjacent to the Branson's home allows for a higher level of security and safety for the teams. Renting houses puts the team anywhere from 7 to 15 km away from the Branson's. Having a Mission Team House also allows HUTR to have an in-house caretaker who would be available to take care of and assist visiting teams.

It is not difficult to get building permits, local workers, or materials to build. There is a strong building industry in their area due to this large increase in the tourism industry.

The building would be constructed to be as earthquake and hurricane proof as possible. The plan would be for the building to have a concrete roof in order to reduce the likelihood of losing the roof in a hurricane, as may be the case if the roof is made of zinc.

Weather does not seem to deter teams from coming, regardless of the season. HUTR does get more teams in the fall, winter and spring than in the summer due to the heat. However, a number of churches do come with their youth groups in the summer when the teenagers are out of school.

The Dominican Republic is a fairly safe country to travel to. The violence and gangs that have overtaken Haiti have not crossed over the border into the Dominican and the government is working hard to keep it that way.

4.8 Personnel

Paul and Sharyn Branson have been missionaries in Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic (DR) since 1997. They bring decades of ministry and leadership experience to the ministry and staff. They are bilingual and are well versed in Dominican culture from having lived in the community for many years. Paul has been building houses and leading mission teams in the DR since 1997. Sharyn brings decades of leadership, organizational and administrative skills to the ministry.

Paul and Sharyn receive no salary from the ministry. The Branson's salary is 100%, faith based.

Dr. Wendy, has worked for HUTR for 16 years, since 2007, serving full time as the ministry's primary doctor. Her degree is in general medicine. Wendy's husband passed away in April 2020 from cancer and she has three sons ages 17 – 23. 100% of Wendy's salary is currently being sponsored.

Mercedes (nurse) is half time salary (8 am to 12 noon M-F) and 80% of her salary is sponsored. Mercedes was widowed when she was pregnant with her first son. She has remarried and now has three sons, one who is special needs. Mercedes has worked with HUTR for three years now, since 2021.

Maria (Nena) Soledad Delgado and Pastor Fausto Duran have been employees and associated with HUTR for over twelve years, since 2011. Maria is the team cook as well as the Assistant Director for the school sponsorship ministry. Maria is very organized and has managerial experience as well as having an understanding of English. Fausto has a background in agriculture. Fausto grew up on a farm and knows agriculture as well as bringing his skills as a pastor to the ministry to help the teams. Both have years of experience working with North American mission teams and missionaries. Together, they have shown an interest in living at the Mission Team House and being the full time caretakers and managers for the mission house.

Maria's salary is not currently sponsored and Pastor Duran volunteers to help out the ministry...

Anthony Marine (Construction, Evangelism, Mission teams) is full time and 0% of his salary is sponsored. He is a professional driver and shares all ministry driving responsibilities with Paul Branson. Anthony has experience in property maintenance and will oversee the major maintenance and repairs on the Mission House. Anthony is currently learning English so that he can communicate directly with the North American team members. He is 42 and has many life experiences and knowledge in many areas including mechanics, general maintenance and taking care of groups.

Mechy (Full time secretary) with 0% of her salary sponsored. Mechy has worked for HUTR for fourteen years, since 2009. She is single, never married.

4.9 Exit Strategy, Time Commitment and Future Management

The Bransons have established roots in this community and have no foreseeable plans for leaving this mission field.

Since founding HUTR Ministry, the Bransons goal has been to develop a ministry that has the ability to operate independently. Having local staff operate the ministry to continue to serve and minister the community, without the need for the Bransons. The Bransons have gone on furloughs for both short and longer terms, leaving the ministry in the hands of the local staff, who have proven to be very reliable and capable of continuing the ministry in their absence.

The Bransons will extend this philosophy to the Team House, training and equipping a live-in caretaker so that they can operate and maintain the building when the Bransons are out of country. The ministry cook is also responsible for organising the behind the scenes aspects for teams such as schedules, transportation, food buying, etc.

The ministry also has a staff member who works directly with the team on the ministry construction projects and is currently learning English so that he can communicate directly with English speaking mission team members.

4.10 Mission Team House Location

The proposed location for the Mission Team House is the lot directly adjacent to Paul and Sharyn's house. The property is located half a kilometre off the main road in the community of Hatillo in the Jarabacoa area, province of La Vega in the Dominican Republic. It is about a fifteen minute drive from Jarabacoa proper and about a twenty minute drive from the ministry's main property, the Ministry Centre. The Ministry Centre is located at Calle Jorge Zaiter #197, Sector Pedregal, Jarabacoa, La Vega, Dominican Republic.

Jarabacoa is located on the tallest mountain in West Andes, Pico Duarte. The peak of Pico Duarte is at 10,400 feet. Jarabacoa is located at about 2000 feet on the Pico Duarte mountain and is surrounded with palm trees and pine trees. Three rivers converge in Jarabacoa: Rio Bagueate and Rio Jimenoa converge into the Rio Yaque which then goes to the Atlantic Ocean. There are various hills to hike and is becoming well known for its natural beauty. The Jarabacoa area is also known for its agriculture, which includes fruits, vegetables, and flowers. See Appendix 5 for pictures of the proposed building location.

5 Conclusion

- House Upon the Rock is a well-established ministry with very strong ties to the local community providing a variety of important and meaningful ministries..
- There is a strong network of churches in North America who have sent and continue to faithfully send mission teams to the House Upon the Rock ministry.
- There is little to no risk in the execution of this building project given the decades of experience building homes and structures in the local area.
- The lack of affordable housing that House Upon The Rock is currently experiencing will have an immediate adverse effect on all of the ministries and activities that they are involved in.
- One hundred percent of all donated funds will go directly and immediately to the purchase of the land and the construction and equipping of the Mission Team House.
- This is a worthwhile project that will leave a lasting legacy. Your prayers and participation financially is critical to the ongoing success of this ministry.

6 How to Financially Partner with House Upon the Rock

One hundred percent of your donation goes towards the capital cost of the project. No part of your donation goes towards administration fees. All donations are tax deductible.

For our partners in America donations can be made out to:

CMML USA

PO Box 13
Spring Lake NJ 07762
Tel: (732) 449 8880

Online: <https://www.cmml.us/ministry/house-upon-rock-ministry>
Ways to Give: <https://www.cmml.us/waystogive>

In the note box of your donation please write:

[House Upon the Rock Ministry – Mission Team House Project](#)

otherwise the funds will not be directed correctly.

For our partners in Canada donations can be made out to:

MSC CANADA

101 Amber Street Ste 16
Markham ON L3R 3B2
Tel: (905) 947 0468

Online: <https://www.msccanada.org/projects/house-upon-rock/>
How to give online: <https://www.msccanada.org/how-to-give-online/>
ETransfer Instruction: <https://www.msccanada.org/give-by-etransfer>

In the note box of your donation please write:

[House Upon the Rock Ministry – Mission Team House Project](#)

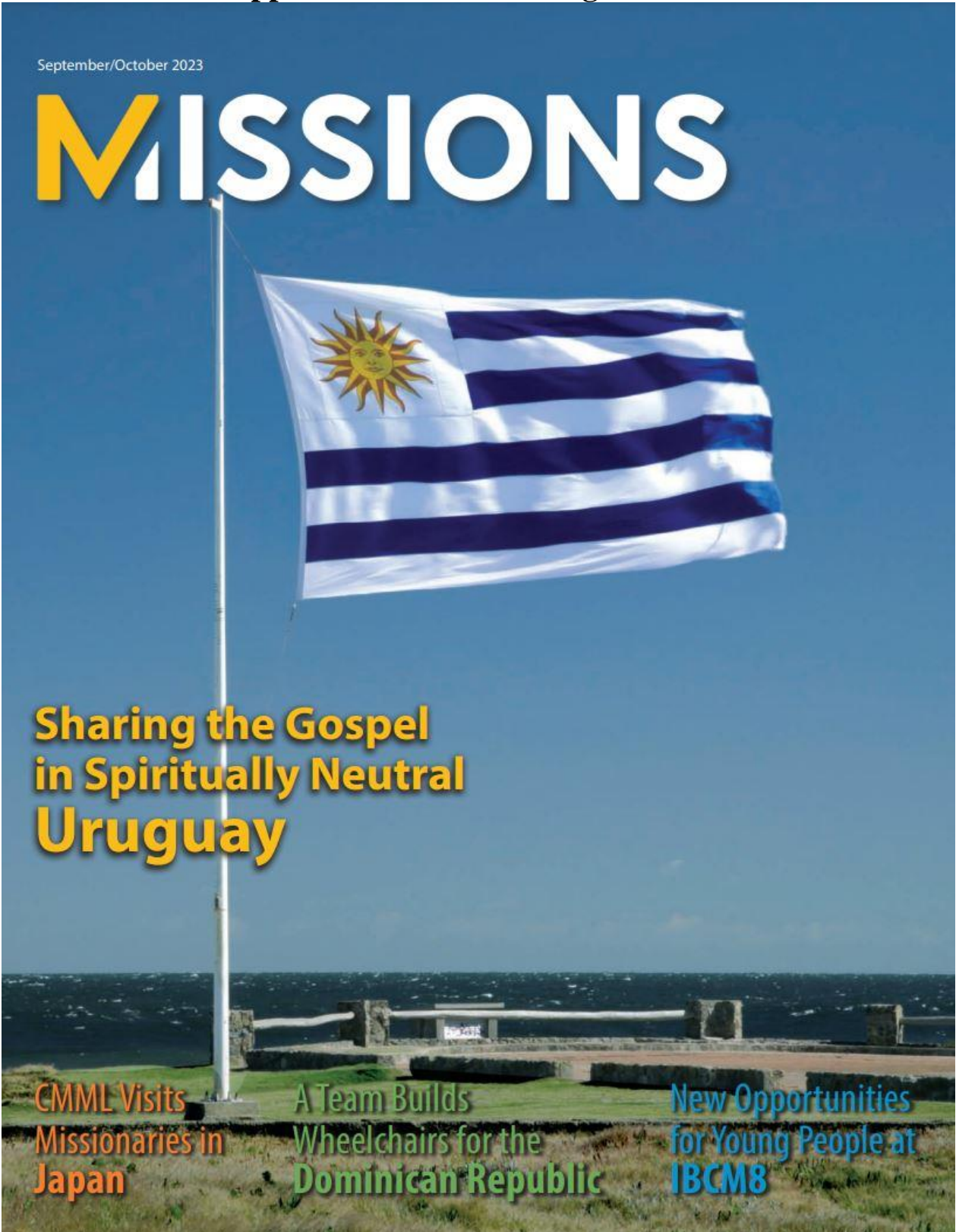
otherwise the funds will not be directed correctly.

If you have any questions please contact Michael Winkel at:

Phone: 1-250-652-6501

Email: dmwinkel@gmail.com

Appendix 1 – Mission Magazine Article



From CMML – used with permission

NEW MOBILITY, NEW FREEDOMS

A Team Builds
Wheelchairs
for the
Dominican
Republic

BY SHARYN BRANSON

In 2022, a longtime friend of mine, Jamie, shared that he and a few friends who work for a wheelchair manufacturing company had visited Haiti a couple of times and wanted to visit our ministry, House Upon the Rock (Casa Sobre la Roca), in the Dominican Republic next. These men use their skills and resources to provide wheelchairs for people in need. One of the men fabricates the wheelchairs, another delivers them and fits people into their new chairs, and another works in marketing.

When someone in the United States gets a new wheelchair, the person usually does not want to keep the old chair. These men—Jamie, James, and Marat—accept donated, used chairs and then rebuild them to fit the specific needs of another person.

As we prepared for the team's trip, we promoted and organized appointments for 15 people, during which the team would evaluate them to see if they could build them wheelchairs. Yet we did not know what the local people's response would be.

In January 2023, Jamie and the team came to House Upon the Rock for the first time. They were a team of seven, including the three men, two wives, a son, and a sister. One thing they made clear was that their schedule needed to build in time for witnessing to every person and family that would come for an evaluation. This was easy to fulfill as it is our main purpose in everything we do, every day.

Before they build and fit the wheelchairs, James and Jamie take time to get to know each person. They greet everyone as if they already know him or her. They sit and talk with each one. Both men have a way about them that makes it easy to talk to them.

We were not sure how everything would work. Our environment was different than what James and Jamie were accustomed to. However, God knew everything. He had everything planned and under control.

After completing the evaluations, the team returned home to collect more donated chairs and then started the process of custom building each new chair. Every person waiting for a wheelchair had a story: Two had suffered gunshot wounds. One had endured a motorbike accident that left one leg 12 inches shorter than the other. Some were born with cerebral palsy or other birth defects, such as spina bifida. Recently, Jamie, James, and Marat returned to distribute these custom chairs. Here are some stories of people who received one:



VANESA: a new view of the world

Vanesa, 22 years old, was born with cerebral palsy. She had been in her bed 24/7 for more than two years because she had grown too big for her mom to move and because her family does not have the means to buy a chair. They had actually given up on ever getting a chair because Vanesa’s body no longer bends—she can no longer assume even a partial sitting position. Her body only allows her to lie down. Her mom had decorated her room with bright colors and flowers, but still, Vanesa spent all day lying on her stomach in her bed, looking at the same walls, day in and day out.

Vanesa’s mom was reluctant to go through everything it would take to bring her daughter for evaluation: moving Vanesa out of her bed and into a car, where she had to remain lying down. Plus, Vanesa’s mom could not envision anything on wheels that her daughter could fit into.

James and Jamie evaluated Vanesa and believed there was something they could do for her. Once back in the States, they brainstormed how to build a chair that would give Vanesa mobility yet keep her lying down.



When the team returned, we were amazed by what James and Jamie had built. They had taken the backs from three other chairs and built a new chair that accommodates Vanesa’s needs. The chair is the perfect length for her body: neither her feet nor head hangs over the ends.

The team settled Vanesa into her chair, and for the first time in years, she was looking up at the outside world. It was an amazing thing to witness. Vanesa’s face lit up as she looked around. I turned to her mom to see what she thought, and she had a tear running down her cheek. She hugged me and said that she never thought her daughter would leave her bed and bedroom again. Now, she can move Vanesa outside, where they sit together on the porch, visiting with family and neighbors, looking at the flowers, and participating in the world around them.

PEDRO: renewed independence

Pedro, 62 years old, was shot in the back 32 years ago and has been paralyzed ever since. He modified his vehicle to have hand controls so he can drive. When Pedro came for his evaluation and the team asked why he wanted a new chair, he explained that his current wheelchair was very old and caused skin ulcers and constant pains. It was also too heavy (weighing more than 40 pounds) for him to lift into his car and too wide to maneuver inside his home.

Pedro values his independence. With his old chair, he could get himself into his car but then had to ask for help to get his chair in after him. In his own home, he needed assistance to go to the washroom just because his chair was too wide to fit through a normal doorway.

When the team returned, Pedro got a new 16-pound, 24-inch-wide chair. He asked many questions, learning how to pop the wheels off, fold the chair, and lift it himself. He

wheeled over to the bathroom to see if the chair would fit through the doorway, and it did.

When Pedro left after receiving his new chair, he got into his car, popped the wheels off the chair, put them on the passenger seat, folded the chair, and easily lifted it across his body and onto the passenger seat—no assistance needed. Pedro was audibly thanking God for the new level of independence his chair provides him.



Opposite page (from top, L-R): Custom-built wheelchairs await their new owners; James, Marat, and Jamie celebrate with Cristofer; Thanks to his new wheelchair, Cristofer can now leave his house, and he loves sitting outside with his dad; Jamie and James adjust Albert’s new wheelchair; A chair for five-year-old Isaias means comfort for him and peace of mind for his parents; James and Jamie evaluate a boy who will receive a wheelchair in November 2023. This page (from top): Vanesa can now enjoy the scenery around her; Her chair arrives from the airport—flown in from the US; Pedro’s new chair provides him with greater independence.

LUIS MIGUEL: newfound stability

Luis Miguel, 26 years old, was born with severe deformities in both legs, making it impossible for him to walk. Luis Miguel loves chickens and raises them for a living. He takes care of his chickens himself, feeding them, cleaning their area, treating them if they become sick, and collecting their eggs.

The wheelchair he had been using was unstable. Almost daily, the wheels would hit a tiny pebble, and the whole chair would flip over. This problem made it very hard for him to independently care for his chickens. When Luis Miguel was evaluated, his leading request was for a chair with better wheels so he can get in and around to feed and care for his chickens.

Luis Miguel's new chair is lighter and smaller, it fits his body perfectly, and it has heavy-duty wheels. The wheels plus extra tip guards prevent the chair from flipping over whenever it bumps into a pebble. Luis Miguel can now care for his chickens without assistance.



CRISTIAN: physical changes and spiritual growth

We have known Cristian his entire life. He was born prematurely at one-and-a-half pounds, and then, after three weeks, he developed a life-threatening infection. Doctors sent Cristian home, telling his mom, Liliana, that he would not survive more than a day or two.

On December 25, the day after Cristian went home, his Aunt Juli came to our door begging for help. We went and prayed with the family but did not know what else to do. Cristian was so small, so sick, and dying. With a miracle from God and then the help of a neonatal specialist, a friend of ours from the States, Cristian was nursed back to life.

Cristian is now 19 years old. He is nonverbal and has never been able to walk, but he does have mobility in his arms and hands. Cristian is good at remembering faces and people and loves to give hugs to all when they visit. He is taller and heavier than his

mom, who is about five feet tall and weighs 90 pounds, so he is far too big for Liliana to continue carrying him everywhere.

The team evaluated Cristian, spending time with Liliana and learning more about their family. A few years back, Liliana and her husband took in seven nieces and nephews. For a few years, they were raising 10 kids, including Cristian, on very little income. From the earthly viewpoint, they have little, but their hearts are huge.

This wheelchair is the first one Cristian has ever had. He quickly figured out how to move himself about and was off with a huge smile. The wheelchair has improved the quality of life for his entire family: Liliana and her husband no longer have to carry Cristian everywhere. Cristian can move himself about their house and neighborhood. And his siblings can easily take him with them when they go out and about.

Having been a part of Cristian's life since he was born, I am in awe of God's miracle—not only physically but through his entire family's growth in our Lord. Aunt Juli and her husband came forward at our church, and both trusted Jesus. The seeds continue to grow in the family.



More wheelchairs to come

This team plans to return every May and November until God closes the door. They will do evaluations on one trip and bring the wheelchairs and do more evaluations on the next trip. We are now getting calls from people in various parts of the country requesting evaluations for chairs. Please pray for the upcoming trip in November.

Many of those we help are unbelievers, but we know that through the gift of a wheelchair, plus our conversations and prayers, God has planted many seeds. We continue to pray for each family—that these seeds will grow in the heart of each person, drawing him or her closer to God. ■



Sharyn and Paul Branson are commended from Saanichton Bible Fellowship in Saanichton, British Columbia.

From top: Luis Miguel now cares for his chickens independently; Cristian operates his new chair; The team joins Paul and Sharyn (left) and their daughter, Samantha (right).

Appendix 2 – Business/Ministry Environment, Regulations and Permits

Religious Context

The Dominican Republic is open to ministries operating in the country. It is a free country in the regards to religion and there are no restrictions on public preaching, sharing the Word and doing service in the name of our Lord. Dominicans are welcoming of help from outside.

The Legal Context

There is a legal system operating in the Dominican Republic. House Upon the Rock have a local lawyer since 2007 who ensures that the ministry is always meeting all laws and requirements of the country. They are strict in abiding by all regulations and laws.

Licences, Regulations and Permits

In the Dominican Republic, building permits are required. They will hire an architect whose responsibility is also to get all engineers required and will obtain all the legal permission required by the municipality and government.

The Cultural and Religious Context

The Dominican Republic's official religion is Catholic. There are also Christian, Jehovah Witness, Mormon, Voodoo and other religions in the country. Everyone is free to practice and preach any religion in the country. There is no law against freedom of speech for religions and is a free country regarding profession of faith and sharing of faith.

The Economic Context

The Dominican Republic's economy has seen growth and tourism is a huge part of this growth. Other large aspects of the economy are the exportation of coffee and sugar. The wealth of the country is not evenly distributed and remains mostly in the capital city, Santo Domingo. In their area, there is a lot percentage of impoverished families and wages are below the standard of living. Dominicans tend to live hand to mouth; what you earn today is your food to for tonight and tomorrow morning.

The Ethical Context

Corruption is present everywhere, but the government is working to reduce corruption. House Upon the Rock, nor their lawyer, have never participated in paying bribes. The result of not paying bribes does mean that often, everything takes longer to acquire. Doing everything legally means taking much longer to accomplish their goals.

Appendix 3 – Ownership Structure and Governance

Ownership

House Upon the Rock Ministry, which is called Casa Sobre la Roca Ministerio in the DR, will own the property and Mission House. It will not be personally owned by the Bransons. As the president of Casa Sobre la Roca Ministerio, Paul Branson is the current legal signature for the ministry. However, in order to purchase any property, the Board must approve it, the minutes from that Board meeting has to be legally certified and signed by every Board member. The Board will be responsible to make decisions regarding the expansion, closure, sale, or any decision which would alter the proposed ownership of the property. Furthermore, the Board will be responsible to decide how profits should be dealt with. No shares have been issued. We encourage donors to remain involved long term.

If it is necessary to dissolve or sell the business or its assets, the board would be responsible to find a similar organization or work in the DR that would be able to receive the funds to continue a similar work.

Board of Directors

HUTR has two Boards of Directors. The International Board of Directors consists of people from Canada and the United States. This Board is responsible for the entire ministry. The second Board of Directors is a Dominican Board consisting of Paul and Sharyn Branson and five local Christian Dominicans. The local Board is under the International Board and are responsible for making local decisions like which project to do next and maintain that the ministry is meeting all legal requirements of the Dominican government.

International Board of Directors:

- Paul Branson
- Sharyn Branson
- Regi King
- Byron Knight
- Michael Robertson
- Michael Winkel
- Darcy Winkel

Dominican Board of Directors:

- Paul Branson (President)
- Sharyn Branson (Secretary)
- Maria Soledad Delgado
- Ana Maria Quiroz (Treasurer)
- Acardio Roble (Vice President)
- Miguel Moronta

Governance

The governance structure is both resilient and flexible. Much of the resilience will come from the presence of a Board of Directors of highly qualified members who have relevant experience. The board will lend long term stability to this dynamic environment. Local staff wisely managed by an experienced mature local manager will allow the Team House to provide a level and nature of service that will both attract and retain teams. In the middle of the organization, the Bransons will bring a unique perspective of both Dominican and Western culture having lived and worked alongside Dominicans in the Dominican Republic since 1997. Their local experience will allow them to guide the operations of the Team House in a way that will be locally beneficial and appealing for foreign teams, other ministries, and local churches.

Appendix 4 – Risk Analysis

Weather

The Dominican Republic is in the hurricane zone. Hurricane season is June 1 through November 30th. The last major hurricane to cause major damage to the Jarabacoa area was Hurricane George, September 1998. The Bransons lived through Hurricane George and learned a lot about living with hurricanes as a fact of life, being prepared and also building structures that are as hurricane proof as possible.

The Dominican Republic also experiences regular earthquakes and some tornados. All that can be done to prepare for an earthquake is to build a strong building. It is difficult to build structures that are both hurricane and earthquake proof as the way that buildings move in hurricanes and earthquakes are very different.

With the Bransons extensive experience living in the Dominican Republic and building houses they have gained knowledge in being as prepared as possible for these types of natural disasters.

Key Person Risk

There are several key players in this project that could have significant implications if they needed to be replaced. If the Bransons were required to leave the country for an extended period, Maria Delgado and Fausto Duran can take over for the Bransons. One or two new workers would need to be hired to assist in doing the duties that Maria and Fausto would have previously been doing.

Choosing and hiring of staff would be the responsibilities of the Bransons in consultation with the Board of Directors. In the absence of the Bransons being able to fulfil this role, Maria Delgado and Fausto Duran would do the hiring, in consultation with the Board of Directors.

General Economy

The real concern is if the world wide economy affects and decreases the arrival of Mission Teams. However, they believe that mission teams going out from their home countries to serve God is part of God's plan for the ministry and have faith that God will provide ways for the teams to continue to come, even in economical difficult times. They have witnessed this over their thirty years in ministry - God always provides when it is His will and His timing.

Competitors

As they will be using the Mission House for their teams and then making available to a select audience of people (other ministries and churches), there is no competition.

Corruption

The level of corruption in the Dominican Republic is present but not as high as in other countries. In their experience with different government departments, permission are typically rendered without bribes. As mentioned in Appendix 2, their ministry is committed to operating within the law and will not pay bribes to subvert or circumvent the law.

Safety and Security Risk

HUTR does not think that the operation of this Mission House will increase the potential risk of physical harm for either us or any of their staff.

Building the Mission Team House adjacent to the Bransons property dramatically increases the safety and security for foreigners who will stay in the Mission House. The Bransons know the neighbours and the neighbours know them. If there is an emergency, the Bransons are right there and not miles away.

Appendix 4 – SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The Bransons have lived and served in the Dominican Republic for more than 27 years. They both speak Spanish. Together, they have been leading mission teams for over 25 years with team sizes varying from 2 to 225 people at one time and up to as many as twelve teams per calendar year. Paul is the son of a contractor with decades of construction experience in the Dominican Republic. Sharyn has extensive administrative and managerial experience spanning over thirty years. Together, they founded the ministry in 2000 and with God at the helm, it has grown into the ministry that it is today.

The Mission House will be under the HUTR Ministry which is a well-founded ministry established in 2000 in the Jarabacoa area. The Mission House will be located adjacent to the Branson home for easy access and care.

There is a need by other ministries and churches to rent this type of housing which will help with the finding and upkeep of the Mission House.

They have a team that includes an experienced and skilled lawyer, accountant, and architect to successfully build this mission house.

Having one location keeps the mission teams together. A mission team cannot function if they are split up and housed in different locations.

They will be able to maintain better security, safety and cleanliness with their own Mission House than being at the mercy of other homeowners who rent by the night.

If the need arises in the future, the land is large enough to build a second team house

There is enough land to plant various fruit and vegetable trees and plants. Producing their own food will help offset the costs of feeding teams as well as provide food that we can share with impoverished families.

Weaknesses

None noted.

Opportunities

HUTR is grateful for advice that they have already received and plan to continue collaborating with others who are able to wisely advise them.

HUTR have approached the land owners and Paul Branson will be meeting with them as soon as possible to discuss their willingness to sell this land to HUTR. It is the only land adjacent to their land. Building adjacent to their land increases the safety and security to housing Mission Teams.

Threats

The land in question may be sold soon.

Appendix 5 – Proposed Building Location



The Branson's house is the blue roof at the bottom of the picture

