



Clive Rainey joined Habitat for Humanity International on April 1, 1977, soon after the organization was formed, as its first volunteer. One of his early duties was serving as chair of the Family Selection Committee for the house-building program of Koinonia (Koin-o-KNEE-ah), a rural Christian community where the idea of building homes in partnership with the poor was conceived. It was Rainey who brought the concept of “*sweat equity*” to Koinonia—and ultimately Habitat—after learning that developers of middle-class housing sometimes used a family’s unskilled labor on their house in lieu of a down payment. In the summer of 1978 Rainey was sent to Immokalee, Fla., to assist Habitat’s fledgling second affiliate in setting up its family selection process. The first homeowners there volunteered to do 2,000 hours of sweat equity—a number they suggested and the equivalent of a whole year paid labor!

After sitting in on planning sessions for the launch of a Habitat project in Kinshasa, Zaire, Rainey felt called to be involved in that effort. In May 1979, he went to Kinshasa and began three years of work on Habitat’s third international project. During that time Idi Amin, the infamous dictator of Uganda, was overthrown and the opportunity arose to start Habitat work in northern Uganda. Inspired by two books - [A Distant Grief](#), by Ugandan pastor Kefa Sempangi (Kay-fah Sem-pahn-gee) about life under Amin, and a biography of David McKay (Mc-EYE), the first Protestant missionary to Uganda - Rainey felt compelled to take the lessons he had learned in Zaire and apply them to the effort to rebuild Uganda. The first permanent structure built in Uganda in a decade was a little two-room house built by Habitat for Humanity with a widow and her two children as the occupants.

From September 1983 until September of 1989 Rainey served as Habitat’s first Africa area director. Under his direction Habitat’s work in Africa spread to 12 countries located throughout the continent. From 1989-1999 he served as a fundraiser helping to fund the Sumter County Initiative- Habitat International’s effort to eliminate substandard housing from its home community. Currently he serves as Director of Community Relations for HFHI. In this role, he travels to affiliates asking them what they are prepared to do in leading their communities in the elimination of substandard housing. He urges affiliates to plan for and work toward significant increases in their own housing production and to create collaborative partnerships with other housing providers, local governments, civic groups, churches, and other organizations and individuals in order to meet Habitat’s goal of eliminating substandard housing worldwide. As local communities take on this challenge Rainey works with Habitat field staff to strengthen affiliates for their role in the effort. This includes raising the affiliates’ profile in their communities and helping them to develop the resources needed to meet the challenge.

Rainey’s active speaking schedule as a promoter of Habitat and its 21st Century Housing Challenge also includes teaching Sunday school classes, preaching and speaking at fund-raising events, civic clubs and other venues. He holds a B.S. in history and an M. Ed. in reading from Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, GA. Prior to his association with Habitat, he served in the U.S. Army for three years and taught 7th and 8th grade reading and social studies for three years. He is an honorary chief of the Village of Assin Akropong (Ah-seen Ah-crow-pong) in Ghana, West Africa, an honorary Conch (kahnk) of the Florida Keys and an honorary citizen of several other U.S. communities. At home in Americus he is active in church and civic organizations, and has served on the boards of art, tourism, education and literacy groups as well as his local Rotary Club. He is a member of Calvary Episcopal Church in Americus and also worships with a Hispanic Baptist congregation on Sunday evenings.

He is a birder and pursues this hobby with the same passion that he has for Habitat. His other interests include learning Spanish and studying the natural and social history of Central America to which he hopes to retire in a few years. There he hopes to volunteer as a literacy teacher and with local Habitat groups. He also hopes to organize and lead budget birding trips for visitors to Central America.