

OPPORTUNITY NEWS

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They built new houses out of old

LETTER ON HOUSING IN TEXAS
WRITTEN BY VISTA MAX LUPTON
TO RURAL OPPORTUNITIES
(Contributed by VISTAs Bob and
Juanita Watt)

I am answering your request in
Rural Opportunities. My wife and I
are VISTA Volunteers, and the com-
munity solved their building prob-
lem in this way.

This community is Mexican mi-
grants, 18 miles from San Antonio,
Texas—50 acres, 85 families, popu-
lation over 1200.

The people met under the trees
and formed their Community Coun-
cil. Father Wagner was our sponsor,
Colonel Deyo was hired to be the
director. The Self-Help Housing Pro-
ject was funded through Action for
Community Development.

Most of the material is salvaged
buildings—some are old bar-
racks from Lackland Air Base.

The owner of the new house gets
a loan, FHA; not over \$1000, with
small monthly payments for 20
years. This includes the lot and
some additional material.

This center has 30 men working,
being trained to become plumbers,
electricians, carpenters, cement
workers, painters, and rock and
brick masons. We get the commit-
ment for loans six at a time. We
have some houses completed, and
families moved into them. Their
old shacks of tar paper and tin are
then torn down, and any usable
wood is salvaged. The families are
allowed a house big enough for
their family—some are four bed-
rooms. About all the new material
used is the sheetrock, foundation,
and septic tanks.

I teach the men inside finishing,
painting, and sheet rock erection.
In our center we are turning out on
the average of two men per week
that are able to go into town and
work for contractors in the building
trade. This enables them to be tax-
payers and this is what we want—
to give them a trade.

The main thing is to get a good
project director, and he will be able
to get old buildings . . . Our first
building, a large rock store, cost \$1
and they were glad to get it re-
moved. The barracks cost about \$30
each. The building director must
know building to be able to see
that the buildings are taken down
properly and the material used to
best advantage.

This letter . . . might give other
communities an answer to their
problems.

Max R. Lupton
1631 Calagham Road
Box 4, San Antonio, Texas

CARTA POR MAX LUPTON EN LAS
VIVIENDAS EN TEXAS
(Contribuido por los VISTA Bob y
Juanita Watt)

Contesto acerca de oportunidades
rurales. My esposa y yo somos vol-
untarios de VISTA, y la comunidad
resolvió su problema de viviendas
así.

Esta comunidad es de migrantes
a unas 18 millas de San Antonio,
Texas—50 acres, 85 familias con
una población de más de 1200.

La gente se reunió bajo de unos
árboles y se formó un Concilio de
la Comunidad.

El Padre Wagner era nuestro con-
sejero y el Coronel Deyo se empleó
como nuestro director. El Proyecto
de Self-Help Housing se financió
por la Acción para el Desarrollo de
la Comunidad.

La mayor parte del material se
salvó de edificios viejos—unos de
los cuarteles viejos de la Base Aérea
de Lackland.

El dueño de una casa nueva con-
sigue un préstamo, F.H.A.; no más
de mil dólares, con plazos mensua-
les reducidos por 20 años. Esto
incluye el terreno y unos materiales
más.

Este centro emplea a 30 obreros,
unos que se entrenan como plom-
eros, electricistas, carpenteros,
bañiles y pintores. Conseguimos los
préstamos seis a la vez. Hemos
terminado unas casas y las familias
ya se han mudado en ellas. Las
barracas de cartones y estaño se han
desmantelado y se ha guardado la
madera útil. Las familias pueden
conseguir una casa según sus necesi-
dades—unas tienen cuatro recám-
eras. El nuevo material es lo que
se usa en la fundación y los de-
pósitos sépticos.

Enseña a los hombres utilizar el
'sheet-rock' y la carpentería neces-
aria para terminar y pintar la casa.
En nuestro centro entrenamos a
unos dos hombres por semana que
pueden ir al centro para conseguir
empleo de construcción por unos
contratistas. Esto les hace posible
pagar impuestos y esto es lo que
queremos—darles un oficio.

Lo principal es conseguir a un
buen director de proyectos y él
podrá aprovecharse de los edificios
viejos. Nuestro primer edificio, una
tienda grande de piedra, no costó
un dólar y se alegraron al poder
disponerse de ello. Los cuarteles
costaron unos 30 dólares cada uno.
El director de construcción tiene que
conocer el edificio y saber desman-
telarlo para aprovecharse de todos
los materiales disponibles.

Esta carta pueda que dé a otras
comunidades una solución a sus
problemas de viviendas.

Max Lupton
1631 Calagham Road
Box 4, San Antonio, Texas

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Mark Twain said, "You can't de-
pend on your eyes when your
imagination is out of focus."

—O—

Mark Twain dijo: "No puedes
depender de los ojos cuando tu
imaginación está fuera de foco."

—O—

Theodore M. Berry, Director,
Community Action Program: "Ac-
tion, and not talk, is needed to
make cooperatives work for low-in-
come people . . . Government help
must be available to poor people's
cooperatives . . . What is needed is
down-to-earth planning, getting to
where the problems are — and
plenty of missionary zeal."

—O—

Rev. Albert J. McKnight, Direc-
tor, Southern Consumers Cooper-
ative, Lafayette, Louisiana: "Co-
operatives are a beautiful ideal, but
beautiful ideals are not enough to
make a success out of a business
. . . Underdeveloped people need
a working conception of them-
selves to take advantage of what
society has to offer them. They have
to develop their sense of worth and
dignity. Poor people tend to stand
alone. Cooperatives can overcome
this lack of cohesion, because,
working in a cooperative, people
can learn teamwork. And team-
work is a new form of education."

HELP!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN CAR-
ING FOR CHILDREN IN YOUR
HOME?

The Valley Migrant League is
seeking homes in which to place
children whose parents are tak-
ing Adult Education Courses.
VML will pay for the care —
usually not more than 6 hours a
day — 8 week periods.

If interested, please contact
your nearest VML Opportunity
Center (See directory above.)