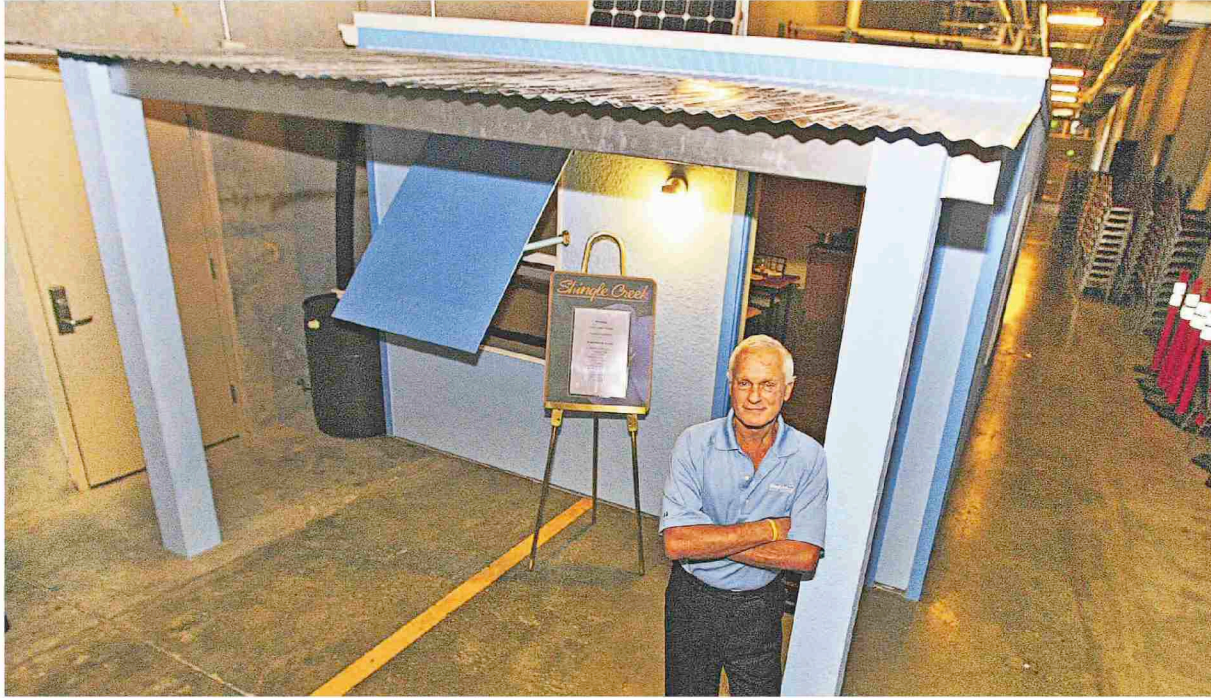


Haiti Earthquake

ROSEN'S TINY HOME: BIG DEAL TO VICTIMS



PHOTOS BY RED HUBER/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Orlando hotelier Harris Rosen's Little Haiti house is on display Wednesday in his Rosen Shingle Creek hotel in Orlando. He plans to send solar-and/or wind-powered modular homes to Haiti.

By Víctor Manuel Ramos and Rachael Jackson
ORLANDO SENTINEL

In a back hallway at the Rosen Shingle Creek hotel, a little periwinkle house with front porch, window shutters, living room and kitchen awaits a family in Haiti to call it home.

The house — built to resist hurricane-force winds and earthquakes — is a prototype of the “Little Haiti House Project,” brainchild of Orlando hotelier Harris Rosen in what he says is the second and more sustained phase of his relief effort for survivors of last month’s earthquake.

Rosen’s project is one of several ideas from Americans trying to help Haiti figure out how to dig out of the rubble and move forward. Others include fiberglass domes, plastic water containers made into bricks and shipping containers turned into houses.

On Wednesday, Rosen gave an *Orlando Sentinel* reporter a tour of



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the prototype of one of his Little Haiti homes.

Rosen, whose seven hotels and resorts employ dozens of workers of Haitian heritage, had already sponsored an initiative to buy and install water-filtration systems for Haiti in 2005. So he was one of the first in Central Florida to respond to the Haiti crisis, donating \$250,000 and, in addition, matching thousands more in corporate donations toward a \$1 million goal. He also partnered with Haitian community leaders and corporations to ship water, soap, blankets and other emergency supplies.

Now he says it's time to think about Haiti's future. His idea is to create modular houses in Central Florida and ship them to Haiti to be assembled into fishing and agricultural villages modeled after Israeli farming collectives.

The homes, at \$5,000 each, would be sold to Haitians at 1 percent interest with flexible financing options for mortgages to be paid over 25 to 75 or even 100 years. Interest proceeds would be for microloans to Haitian entrepreneurs. His team expects to build 25 homes to start and envisions villages of about 200 homes each.

"Wouldn't it be so beautiful? Could you imagine the pride of saying, 'This is my little house?'" Rosen said. "I mean, the pride that will come with this is just unbelievable, and we are hoping it affects generations of Haitians."

1.1M homeless

According to the International Organization for Migration, the earthquake left about 1.1 million people homeless. Settlements filled with shelters made of tarps and blankets have appeared across Port-au-Prince. Aid groups are distributing tarps, sheeting and tools.

"With hurricane season around the corner, finding a safe place for these people is a huge concern," said Laureen Martinez, spokeswoman for the Mid-Florida region of the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross will be sending recovery specialists to the country to start planning for transitional and more permanent housing.

'Elaborate' ideas

Pedro de Alba, a civil-engineering professor who specializes in earthquake engineering, cautioned that builders should be careful about importing expensive materials that aren't available locally and that involve construction methods beyond the population's expertise.

"Some people have come up with these really elaborate [ideas]," the University of New Hampshire professor said, adding that efforts might be better spent teaching people how to rebuild.

Among those with proposals for efficient, sturdy housing is Don Kubley, president of InterShelter in Alaska.

He says the solution for Haiti, and for future disasters, can be found in his high-tech fiberglass domes. The domes come in pieces stacked liked Pringles and can be assembled in hours. They have built-in solar panels and can be arranged into rooms, including kitchens and bathrooms. He said 40 of his domes can be packed into a 40-foot trailer.

Kubley, who has been working with a Longwood charity to create housing for the homeless, has already donated eight domes to Haiti relief efforts. So far, his domes there are being used for military and medical needs, but Kubley has been talking with several agencies about send-

ing thousands more down for housing at a cost of \$5,000 to \$7,500 each.

A team at Clemson University in South Carolina has presented another idea: repurposing shipping cargo containers into housing by cutting large openings into the sides and attaching canopies.

The strong material can stand up to both hurricanes and earthquakes, but Assistant Professor Martha Skinner said they're also very livable: "They can be quite beautiful and homey," she said, noting that reusing the containers makes them ecologically friendly.

Skinner's team is coordinating with government and nonprofit officials and hopes to help set up homes before hurricane season begins.

Wind or solar?

Rosen's Orlando team is still working on its concept, weighing the cost and efficiency of wind turbines and solar panels to decide which to use to offer intermittent electricity to the houses. The team also is talking to suppliers about discounts on parts and waiting on the Haiti government to offer a site near Port-au-Prince and maybe help with transportation costs.

Rosen's houses would have steel framing, rubberized membranes for roofs, zinc sheets over porches and heavy-duty drywalls capable of withstanding 120 mph winds and enduring a 6.2- to 6.5-magnitude earthquake, said Daniel Gutierrez, vice president of engineering and facilities management for Rosen Hotels and Resorts.

The project impressed Jean E. Wilson, an Orlando attorney from Haiti who has been raising funds for long-term-relief projects.

"I like the idea that he is

going to create a village so that people not only have houses, but also ways to sustain themselves as a community," Wilson said. "If all we do is fix things that the earthquake destroyed, then we are leaving the people no better off than before this happened."

Rosen wants to sell his dream to individuals and corporations willing to put their name, and money, behind a modular home or an entire village in Haiti.

"To me this is a begin-

ning and an opportunity to change the template and create something new," Rosen said, "and maybe out of this horrible, horrible disaster we can create something good."

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Other philanthropic projects from Rosen

■ Gave more than \$3.5 million for the Jack & Lee Rosen Southwest

Orlando Jewish Community Campus, which opened in 2009.

■ Donated land and funding for the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management, including a \$2.5 million scholarship endowment.

■ Has invested more than \$7 million in the Tangelo Park Program since it started in 1994, paying for preschool, pre-kindergarten and college programs for children in that neighborhood.



INTERSHELTER

Alaska-based InterShelter makes domes it says can be assembled quickly and withstand high wind. The company is offering the domes for \$5,000 to \$7,500 to house displaced Haitians.