

“Individually, we are one drop.  
Together, we are an ocean.” - Ryunosuke Satoro



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***FLAGSTONE RE Without Borders* VOLUNTEERS ABROAD WITH UNITED PLANET**

**Boston, MA, September 2, 2008** –Thirteen Flagstone Re employees just returned from “an experience of a life-time” after volunteering for two weeks in Costa Rica. The group, headed up by Ian McKillop, Flagstone risk analyst, spent 12 days working on various projects in the Costa Rican village of Quebradas.

According to McKillop, he came up with the idea of volunteering abroad instead of taking his typical vacation after reading a story in Canada’s *Globe and Mail* newspaper about volunteer vacations.

“I thought it was an interesting idea to use my time off to help others and at the same time, see a part of the world and experience the local people and culture first-hand,” said McKillop. “I told some of the people I work with in our Halifax office that I was going to volunteer abroad with United Planet (UP), one of the U.S.’s leading volunteer abroad NGOs. “Word began to spread and before I knew it, some of my fellow colleagues in my office and nine of our other international offices wanted to join me on my UP Quest,” explained McKillop.

He also shared his volunteer plans with David Brown, Flagstone’s CEO. “I told David that I thought that this endeavor would be a great opportunity for team building – a chance for people from our different offices around the globe to get to know another, put a name to a face and at the same time, help a community in need. Before I knew it, David said he would pay for those who wanted to volunteer and plans were set in motion to travel to Costa Rica”.

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"We are big advocates of philanthropy. This is an invaluable way to put some of our monies, employees and time off to good use. In addition to helping United Planet continue their good work abroad, this trip was an ideal opportunity to have Flagstone staff members from around the world work together as a team for a common cause. I am very proud of them all," said Brown.

"We were thrilled when Flagstone Re came to us and wanted to send their employees to volunteer abroad. Here, at United Planet, we are beginning to work with a lot of corporations with Corporate Social Responsibility programs. More and more we are seeing companies encouraging their employees to take time off or dedicate their vacation to doing something good for others," said David Santulli, executive director of United Planet.

Rennika Trott, an administrative assistant in Flagstone's Bermuda office, was one the 13 employees who volunteered her time to help. "This trip was the best thing I have ever done in my life," said Trott. "It opened my eyes to a whole new world and made me appreciate my life a lot more."

According to Trott, she also found she had a lot in common with the people of Quebradas. "Like Bermudians, the people and families I met are very happy and close-knit. "There is a lot of love in that community and they welcomed us with their wonderful smiles, positive attitude – and amazing food," she said. "Besides the wonderful people, I absolutely fell in love with the food, especially their desserts. They make this incredible custard with fresh fruit and ice cream," she added.

Trott, who spent a good amount of her time working in the "sensorial" or butterfly garden weeding, priming the soil and making stone steps, also painted a community center along with the other members of her "*Flagstone Without Borders*" team.

"It was a great team effort and I really enjoyed getting to know my fellow Flagstone colleagues," explained Trott. "Prior to the trip, I couldn't put a name to a face. Now I can. I will never forget how we laughed on long bus rides to and from our host families and projects. It was a great team bonding experience. I would go again in a second," she added.

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Alison Thomson, from Flagstone’s Switzerland office, echoed her fellow colleague Rennika’s sentiments. “Costa Rica was a revelation to me. It was a huge cultural shock, but I felt very at home soon after I arrived. The country reminded me a lot of Switzerland – it was clean, friendly and the mountains reminded me of the Swiss terrain” said Thomson.

Thomson also found the Costa Rican people warm and incredibly generous. “We each stayed with a host family which really allowed us to get to immerse ourselves in our family’s work and home life. “It’s so rare that people open their homes to strangers, but these people they did – and I will never forget their kindness and the sense of solidarity that they shared with me,” she explained.

“I fell in love with their music and was really struck by how religious they were even though they didn’t have many material things. “They kept apologizing to me for not having more to offer me, but what they offered me was priceless,” Thomson.

“I left Costa Rica with a feeling like I’ve never experience before – it’s hard to put into words the impact it had on me. However, I can tell you before I left; I never could have done it on my own. Now, I feel like I can do it by myself – and I will.”

#### **About Flagstone Reinsurance Holdings Limited**

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**As an international non-profit organization, United Planet (UP) strives to create a world in which all people understand, respect, and support one another. United Planet's global network of leaders and volunteers fosters cross-cultural understanding and addresses shared challenges to unite a community beyond borders.**

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