

## Personal Statement: Wings for People

There is something romantic about going to another country to help survivors of natural disasters. In September of 1999, I joined Jan Wampler and the rest of the Turkey Workshop to help in the design of relief housing for the victims of the recent earthquake in Turkey, very close to the city of Adapazari. Filled with the desire to help and the illusion of putting our efforts to a worthwhile cause, we traveled to this distant country on our small crusade.

At least for myself, being part of this workshop meant that there are no limits to what we can do for other people if our desire and our willingness to help is strong enough. An aerospace engineer by training, I was academically the least indicated to form part of this group of architects and urban planners. However, critical situations like disaster relief have the effect of focusing one's thoughts, feelings, and efforts, and if we let that inner voice within ourselves to guide us, we find ourselves not only capable, but also successful in helping those in need.

As an engineer, I took responsibility for looking into soil stabilization, water and energy needs for the community. Even though my specific knowledge in these disciplines was minimal, my general engineering background allowed me to learn enough to contribute to the efforts of the entire group. With time and interactions with architects and planners, I could broaden my knowledge and learn their vocabulary.

My fundamental message is that no matter what we know, no matter who we are, we can always lend a hand to those in need if we follow our hearts. Visiting survivor camps in Turkey made me realize how much we can do for other people. Ultimately, this experience made me reflect deeply about my goals in life and I decided to change the course of my career from reaching for the stars to help others re-build their wings and dreams. It is romantic to go to far away places to build houses, but it is even more wonderful that we can achieve even greater feats in our neighborhoods if we trust our feelings and follow our desires to help.

- Bruno Miller