

For Immediate Release

Square and Circle Club awards \$5,100 grant to Build Change for Sichuan, China earthquake reconstruction

(San Francisco, CA) July 24, 2009. The Square and Circle Club, a service organization established in 1924 initially to aid survivors of famine and flood in China, has awarded a \$5,100 grant to Build Change to assist homeowners to rebuild safe houses in earthquake-ravaged Sichuan, China.

The Square and Circle Club, whose name is derived from a Chinese proverb, “to be square in deeds and all round in knowledge,” was founded by seven teenagers. In 1924, they held a dance and raised \$250. This money was sent to the Red Cross. The club is celebrating its 85th anniversary this year.

Build Change is a San Francisco-based non-profit social enterprise that designs earthquake-resistant houses in Asia and trains builders, homeowners, engineers and government officials to build them. Build Change is working in partnership with homeowners and the Chinese government to rebuild earthquake-resistant houses.

This grant will enable Build Change to reach at least 40 more families with intensive hands-on technical assistance to build a better house. This assistance typically begins with trainings about quality construction practices and proper design of brick-and-mortar confined masonry houses.

Build Change’s team of Chinese construction professionals meet one-on-one with homeowners, to learn their preferences for their rebuilt houses. Using the information homeowners provide, Build Change staffers draft individually-tailored layouts for homeowners that incorporate their stated preferences, along with earthquake-resistant design features.

Once villagers break ground on their new homes, Build Change performs daily inspections of the construction, using a checklist to ensure that the rebuilt houses meet Build Change’s safety standards. This checklist was developed in partnership with the Chinese government. Build Change hopes to expand its use throughout other rural areas in China.

Presentation of the grant check took place on July 24 in San Francisco, with the Square and Circle Club’s Service Committee, and Build Change’s Founder, Dr. Elizabeth Hausler.



About Square and Circle Club. The Square and Circle Club was founded in 1924 when seven teenage girls in San Francisco Chinatown raised funds to help flood and famine victims in China. It is the first and oldest Chinese American women's service organization in the United States. The Club's philanthropic mission has continued for eighty-five years. Examples of their service projects include supporting immigrant children at the Chinese Education Center as well as special programs for at-risk youth through the Chinatown Youth Center, improving facilities for battered women at the Asian Women's Shelter, contributing to a home for Alzheimer patients through Self Help for the Elderly, sponsoring Reading Rooms at both the Main and Chinatown branches of the San Francisco Public Library, and funding scholarships for students at City College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and Mills College. For more information about the Square and Circle Club, please visit www.squareandcircle.org.

About Build Change. Build Change was founded in 2004 to provide technical assistance to homeowners in developing countries who are rebuilding after earthquakes. Since its founding, Build Change has improved the design of over 5,400 homes in Banda Aceh and West Sumatra, Indonesia, and in Sichuan, China. It has trained over 600 people in the fundamentals of earthquake-resistant construction for single-family homes, including builders, technical high school students and teachers in Indonesia and China. In recognition of its accomplishments, Build Change was named a Tech Award Laureate and awarded the Katherine M. Swanson Equality Award in 2008. On the one year anniversary of the May 12, 2008 earthquake in China, Build Change was featured on All Things Considered on National Public Radio, BBC website, and the Christian Science Monitor. For more information about Build Change, please visit www.buildchange.org.

Contact:

Square and Circle Club
P.O. Box number 640137
San Francisco, CA 94164-0137
Voice Mail: (415) 522-9612
Website: www.squareandcircle.org

Dr. Elizabeth Hausler
1233 California St. #310
San Francisco, CA 94109
Mobile: +1-415-235-9930
elizabeth@buildchange.org

No. 4 Unit 4 Building 1, No. 8 Huaxing Road
Chengdu, Sichuan 610017 P.R. China
Office: +86-28-8691-8210
Mobile: +86-13880149925