



Hope for Haiti: When You Care Enough, You Do Your Very Best

(Second of a three part series on major works in Haiti)

The recent earthquake in Haiti highlighted the great need the people of Haiti had for help, even before the devastation of the quake. It also brought to the forefront the important work done by Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta in ministries that have been serving that population for many years. Amid the poverty and sometimes hopelessness, there are beacons of hope, lights that shine with a stream of generosity. Some of that light comes from the work of

members of the Order of Malta. Members of the American Association are deeply involved in on-going aid to these beautiful people, many of whom have nowhere else to turn. Members of the American Association are giving of their time and their treasure to help and have been particularly generous following the January 2010 earthquake.

This is the second of a three part series on three major works supported by members of the Order of Malta that help to make a difference in Haiti.

When a group of eye witnesses are asked to describe what they have seen, every observer has a different story based on their perspective and on their background. When people see the poverty of the Haitian people, many see a chance to make a contribution to help in a desperate situation. Not many will see the same desperate situation as an opportunity. And almost no one will consider mortgaging their home and

using the proceeds to change the world for the children there.

That is how Hope for Haiti got its start. JoAnne Kuehner saw a desperate world and has tried to change it. And in doing so, she changed her own life forever and the lives of so many Haitians. Hope for Haiti has as its mission to improve the quality of life for the Haitian people, particularly children, through programs of education, nutrition and healthcare.

And this commitment is not something that has come and will go as a sudden whim. This is the 20th year that Hope for Haiti has been serving the poor and the sick of Haiti, supporting a variety of programs including 37 schools (four of which were built by Hope for Haiti), three nutrition programs which nurse extremely malnourished children back to health. They support 2 nursing homes, a clinic which employs 1 Haitian doctor, a nurse and a lab technician who see about 200 patients a week. And Hope for Haiti takes 8 to 10 medical mission groups a year to the areas in which Hope for Haiti works; these teams see an average of 200 patients a day, often in places where no other medical care is available.

This remarkable organization distributes medications to 60 different outlets and estimates that they are reaching more than 500,000 people a year, not including the Vitamin A and de-worming medication program that was recently started to administer to children under the age of five.

Recently, the Hope for Haiti team added another project to their broad set of programs, implementing an Emergency Disaster Relief program to supply survivors of catastrophes with essential fortified dry meals, water purification tablets, blankets, personal sanitation kits, candles, and matches. Thanks to their longstanding contacts with local community leaders, buckets filled with supplies will be easily accessible to a wide geographic area when the next storm arrives. The buckets became part of the first wave of support that the organization was able to deliver after the recent earthquake.



Hope for Haiti reaches out to take several donor groups each year who stay at the Hope for Haiti House in Les Cayes and have a hands on experience feeding babies, giving arm and leg massages to those in nursing homes, filling buckets for the emergency relief program or doing whatever needs to be done at the time of their visit.

One of the most critical needs in the impoverished rural areas of Haiti is access to clean water. The links between contaminated drinking water and illnesses finds its realization in the clinics and homes of the weakest, often the children who suffer most from its effects. Several years ago the staff at Hope for Haiti resolved to do something about the lack of clean drinking water. And when they resolve to tackle a problem, you can bet that something good will come out of that resolve.

After researching solar powered UV water purification systems that could be installed in rural or urban areas to provide 500 gallons of clean drinking water daily, Hope for Haiti launched its Clean Water Initiative in March of 2007. The first system was successfully installed in July 2007; they established a goal of installing 14 systems in partner program locations (orphanages, schools, and clinics) in order to provide 7,000 gallons of purified drinking water a day and over 2.5

million gallons a year to Haitian men, women, and children who otherwise would lack clean water to drink.

Earthquake Update: Hope for Haiti has been heavily involved in the rescue, relief and restoration work following the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti on Tuesday, January 12, 2010. It is estimated that approximately 300,000 people were killed in the earthquake and many more were injured. Because of the nature of the injuries and the lack of critical medical care, many more Haitians will

continue to be at risk in the aftermath of the quake. In addition, malnutrition and lack of clean water will continue to plague the population. The Haitian community will continue to fight disease, often without the proper medicines or medical supplies. Hope for Haiti will continue to be there, fighting the good fight for the people of Haiti.

For more information, you can visit the Hope for Haiti web site at www.hopeforhaiti.com or contact JoAnne Kuehner, DM, at JoAnne@hopeforhaiti.com.



JoAnne Kuehner, DM,
works with the children
of Haiti.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 28 – May 4

25th Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Members of the Order of Malta from around the world join together in pilgrimage.

May 12

Malta Human Services Foundation Board meets in New York City.

May 20

Board of Councillors meets in Cincinnati.

June 24

Feast of Saint John the Baptist. Members of the Order around the world will attend Masses to celebrate the feast of the Patron of the Order of Malta.

September 8

Feast of Our Lady of Philermo. Masses in honor of the Patroness of the Order will be celebrated around the world.

November 11

Board of Councillors meets and New Member Orientation is scheduled in New York City.

November 12

Solemn Mass of Investiture, Annual Meeting, Annual Dinner in New York City.

November 13

Mass and Hospitaller Presentation