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HAITI *Marycare*

Haiti Marycare News

Spring 2010

A Message from Tom Larkin, President

Dear Friends of Haiti Marycare,

Following the earthquake of January 12th we waited anxiously to hear if our partners in Haiti had survived and for news about their situation. When no one was able to make contact, we asked Jean Eric Massena (Papito) to travel from the Dominican Republic to go to Haiti, through the North to Cap Haitien, and then to Port-au-Prince and report to us what he could. With the first call we learned the North had suffered no damage. Jacquesyl, our team & friends were spared, but we still did not know about Abner Romelus and the other members of our team in Port-au-Prince.

We sponsor the education of 15-year-old Youdinx Joseph, a youth from Jacquesyl paralyzed by polio at age six. He was a resident student at St. Vincent's School for the Handicapped in Port-au-Prince. We had no news of Youdinx. When Papito finally arrived in PAP and saw how the school had been destroyed it was obvious no one could have survived except by miracle. He feared that Youdinx had died. He searched for him without success, looking where hospitals had once stood, now replaced by tents and make shift shelters. Finally, he went to the morgue to search for Youdinx among the dead bodies that were still lying there, unburied. When Papito was at his lowest point and could do no more, he received the message from Youdinx's mother, "He is alive. Youdinx is safe at home in Jacquesyl." He had survived the



Girl drinking water from the repaired well.

earthquake, because he was outside his room when the first tremor occurred. Teachers at the school were able to move 160 handicapped children away from the school before its final collapse with the first aftershock. Using a cell phone, Youdinx was able to reach his family in Jacquesyl, who traveled to Port au Prince by motorbike, and were then able to bring Youdinx home in an open truck.

Several days after the quake we received a call from Abner. He and his sister were thankfully ok, but had lost their home, and the school suffered damage. He reported the school could be repaired if funds could be provided. Sadly, four students and two of their parents were victims of the earthquake.

What Abner needed first

was money to fix the well that had been damaged in the earthquake.

People living nearby depended on the well at the school for their own water. Throngs of people were sleeping in open fields around the school. Within two days the well was flowing, providing hundreds of buckets per day. The food relief we heard about on CNN, was not reaching many communities, including the make-shift camp around the school. So far your donations have provided needed funds so Abner on several occasions was able to obtain rice and oil for this community.

Ten days after the earthquake Tom Larkin and Gene Bates starting from Danbury, CT partially loaded a van with medicines recently collected and purchased, drove to Manassas, VA where they met Jennifer Schmidt and friends at midnight, completed filling the van with additional medical supplies, then drove through the night to Florida to rendezvous with CARE (Corporate Aviators Responding to Emergencies) and Clean The World, two organizations that coordinated emergency flights from different points in Florida to Cap Haitien because it was impossible to go directly to Port au Prince. People we'd never met combined their time and resources to transport nearly 1,300 lbs. of medical supplies that were distributed in the North to Hospital Justinian & St. Anthony clinic in Cap Haitien, and to the clinic in Jacquesyl supported by Haiti



Dr. Maklin, a physician in a hospital at Cap Haitien receives donated medical supplies

“People we’d never met before connected to help transport about 1,300 lbs of medicines that were distributed to Hospital Justinian in Cap Haitien...”

A message from Tom Larkin, continued.

Marycare.

Our timing was perfect as people had begun to arrive in the North from Port-au-Prince, and their numbers were increasing daily. Imagine not having enough to feed your own family even one solid meal a day and then have another 6 or more family or friends arrive to stay indefinitely.

Our trip was short. Our mission to fortify the North with medical supplies accomplished, Gene & I returned home. Ten days later Mary Lou accompanied by Sherman Malone, Kris Beckman, Megan Cavanaugh, & Dr. Jim Morgan, flew to Santa Domingo to make their own whirl wind tour, first by bus to Port au Prince, camping in the parking lot of Wall’s Guest House, the modest facility where we used to stay was now a collapsed pile of rubble. Our team provided medical clinics during the day from Abner’s school in La Plaine. They were able to treat many serious health issues. Two more days of 10 hour bus rides got them back to the Dominican Republic and then to Cap Haitien and our beloved village of Jacquesyl. One of the connections

we’ve made during the last few years is with Cap Haitien Health Network, people like us doing health related work in the North around Cap Haitien. Over the next 8 days, our medical team worked to provide clinics in Cap Haitien at St. Anthony’s, Jacquesyl and Pilette. Members of Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) an optical team from Pennsylvania worked with us to provide eye exams, glasses, medications and surgical referrals.

Most of these efforts had been planned before the earthquake, but the disaster did move up our date and the logistics involved in pulling it off were daunting.

(A lot of the events were best recorded by members of this team on a blog on our website. www.haitimarycare.org click on BLOG for a chronological account of recorded thoughts and impressions.)

The Connecticut organization, Greenwich World Hunger, a longtime supporter of projects to promote local production of food in Haiti, provided funds to strengthen and repair Abner’s school which was quickly put

to use as a shelter for those needing refuge, then used as a clinic and trauma center. During the last 2 weeks in February, the school functioned as an arts and recreation area providing psychological aid for the children. March 1st the school re-opened providing an education for over 200 children.

The services and aid we continue to provide is made possible by our generous supporters. We are grateful to you for being part of this effort to respond with compassion and resources that are helping to save lives.

Haitians are a people who look out for and help each other as a way of life. Even before the earthquake people would greet each other with the phrase, “kembe fem”, or “Kembe pa lage”, this means to “stay strong”, “stay strong for the fight”. Even on a normal day, life in Haiti is fragile at best. Surviving every day is a battle; one they need to stay fit and mentally strong to compete in. It is not surprising that the world has been in awe of their resiliency and how they work to help one another. Their determination and hope are their gifts to us. Thank you for sharing to make their burden lighter.

-Tom Larkin



Kris Beckman, Dr. Jim Morgan, Megan Cavanaugh, Jean Eric Massena, Simone Santalise and Mary Lou Larkin at a Haiti Marycare clinic in Port-au-Prince. Sherman Malone and Abner Romelus were also present although not in the picture.

How your donations have helped so far this year

- Money for emergency supplies was sent direct to Dr. Maklin for Justinian Hospital in Cap Haitien. We also coordinated medical supplies, and flew them into Cap Haitien with CARE,
- A well was repaired in the Port Au Prince school providing water to hundreds of families per day.
- We have been able to provide emergency food to hundreds of children and parents gathered near the school we support in Port-au-Prince. We repaired the home of the school’s director, Abner Romelus., which provides shelter to his family and relief to women refugees from the street..
- We shipped two 40’ containers. The 1st on March 11, with 270,000 meals in cooperation with the Feed My Starving Children Organization. The 2nd container with medical supplies April 14, in collaboration with Medical Missionaries and other friends of Haiti Marycare in Virginia & Illinois.
- We provided guides from the US National Center for Child Trauma to teachers and parents to help them provide psychological first aid through trauma-informed arts and recreation programs.

Our Earthquake Response

On March 11th, a forty-foot container left Minnesota on its way to northern Haiti, full of food donated by Feed My Starving Children, a non-profit organization that hand packs specially formulated food for starving children and ships it around the world. While the food is free, shipping costs are paid by the organization requesting the food.

After the earthquake of January 12, 2010, many people left Port au Prince and traveled north to where they had their roots or their families still reside. While these northern towns and villages such as Jacquesyl did not suffer structural damage, they are ill prepared to help the many refugees arriving with not more than the clothes on their backs. Because most of the food in Haiti arrived in the now damaged port of Port au Prince food has become more and more scarce. The generous donations made to Haiti Marycare after the

earthquake and our previous connections with Feed My Starving Children made it possible to quickly apply for a food grant and to find a shipper (Sante Mannas) that will get the food to northern Haiti where it is desperately needed.

On April 14th, Tom and Mary Lou Larkin traveled to Mannasses, Virginia to meet Bob and Jana Larkin traveling from Naperville, IL. There they joined with Andy and Jennifer Schmidt to pack a forty foot sea container with medicines and medical supplies for Jacquesyl as well as a new clinic in Pilette.

This container is possible because of the generous outpouring of supplies and donations from many people all over the US after the earthquake. Many pieces of large medical equipment such as hospital beds and scales are being donated by Medical Missionaries of Mannasses, VA.

Many, many individual donors are responsible for dental chairs, kerosene refrigerators vital to store vaccines, power tools, solar panels, orthopedic equipment, operating room supplies, over the counter medicines, bandages, oral hygiene supplies, gloves, soap, etc. Monetary donations have paid for medications needed by the hospitals and clinics that have received many overflow patients from Port au Prince, but no medicines or supplies except for what you have helped us to send.

There are too many individuals to mention who have sacrificed and given of time, energy and money to help this effort be successful. God knows who you are, and the Haitian people will know about you when we travel there soon and tell them about you.

-Mary Lou Larkin



Food donated by the Feed My Starving Children Organization arrived in Haiti and was transported under armed escort to depots.



April 14, 2010, volunteers in Manassas, VA load a 40' container full of medical supplies and other necessities for Haiti

A Message on Education in Haiti

The earthquake that devastated Haiti put a spotlight on a country full of suffering and hope. We are faced with a tremendous opportunity to meet the needs of today as well as the future. Haiti Marycare supports two preschool/primary schools for impoverished children in Haiti. After the earthquake, both schools re-opened March 1st with teachers prepared to help the children address traumatic stress and renew their studies motivated by their desire to help their country recover and rebuild.

Education is a key element in achieving prosperity; schools and motivated teachers are the building blocks the next

generation of students will use to rebuild their country.

Haiti needs to develop the gifts and talents of all her people. Haiti is in dire need of teachers, nurses, architects, doctors, and contractors to assist with primary, vocational and professional education. In the northeast, the influx of refugees from Port au Prince has increased the number of students who want an education. Classrooms with proper tools and supplies promote the learning process. Teachers armed with the skills and passion for teaching will enhance the desire of each student to strive for continued learning while focusing on long-term

goals.

Donations to Haiti Marycare are crucially needed to provide each child the education they so deserve. An educational grant of \$100.00 per child per year will provide the uniform, shoes and supplies required for each child to attend preschool/primary school. Students in the secondary level will need \$250.00 per year for academic high school and more for vocational school. Ongoing training and seminars for the teachers are made possible through your donations.

- Peggy Winters



Students and their teacher in a classroom at Notre Dame de la Merci in Jacquesyl.

More ways to donate on-line!
www.haitimarycare.org



Dr. Jim Morgan and Sherman Malone treating a patient at the clinic in Port au Prince

WE'RE ON

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HAITI *Marycare*

Fundraising Event at Plain Jane's Restaurant Haitian paintings and metal work displayed and for sale 208 Greenwood Avenue, Bethel, Connecticut Date: April 24- end of June

Haiti is world famous for its exuberant art, richly influenced by nature, history and religion. Croix des Bouquet is known for its famous metal sculptors. The town resonates with the sounds of the banging of mallets and chisels in the process of transforming raw metal into stunning iron sculptures. Prior to the earthquake visitors came to Croix des Bouquet to watch the hand

cutting, chiseling, and polishing of the metal and purchased many fine pieces. Today there are few visitors and it is difficult to traverse the roads leading to Croix des Bouquets because of huge roadblocks due to fallen concrete and wire. However a friend of ours made the difficult trip to purchase artwork for Haiti Marycare, which will be on display. All of the paintings are from artists in Port au

Prince and Cap Haitien. We are happy to support these artists and to be able to offer their work to you. All proceeds will go to Haiti Marycare. Peggy Polizzi and Barbara Bowers, sisters and owners of Plain Jane's, have graciously allowed us to display this artwork so please come and enjoy a wonderful lunch or dinner, enjoy the art, and support our work in Haiti.

Excerpt from our blog

Dr. Jim Morgan: Feb 20

I was immersed in a culture that has so little, but is so kind and appreciative of everything people do for them. They work tirelessly without complaining just living from day to day. Many only get one meal per day, yet have a resilience that is

extraordinary. I'm convinced this is why so many survived the earthquake under horrendous conditions. I am grateful for my new Haitian friends – Papito, Father Dorcin, Dr. Maklin, Dr. Vaval, and the entire village of Jakzi. I look forward to returning to the

village that so embraced me. Hopefully my Creole will be a little better next trip. All prayers and God's blessings are now needed for those who suffered loss in the earthquake as well as the millions of other Haitians who strive everyday just to survive and hopefully have a better life.

Gifts Honoring those we Love

In Memory of Anne Sanderson from her sister Mary and Stan Regan.

In Memory of Anne Sanderson from her sister Louise Ryder

In Honor of Leena's birthday by Debra and Bruce Brown

In Honor of Leena's birthday by Peter and Antoneeta Ratnavel

In Honor of Lucy Garbus's Birthday by Cynthia and Patrick Mahoney

In Honor of Father Joseph Dorcin by Tom and Gloria Brophy

In Honor of Father Joseph Dorcin by Sharon Weaver

In Honor of Susan Dumont Benqston's birthday by Peggy Vail

In Honor of Jim Morgan by Anonymous

In Honor of Jim Morgan by Ghislane Palumbo

In Honor of Jim Morgan and the Haiti Marycare team by Tara Rizzo

In Honor of Tasha Mosely by Nicole Long

In Honor of Emily's Impending Birth by Martha Stone

In Honor of Dr. Robert Sperry by Susan Rea

In Honor of Granny Rea and Bobby by Susan Rea

In Memory of Albie McCracken by Fannie Lucas