

Helping Hands FOR HAITI

Spring 2009

Blessed by God - Motivated to Serve

www.helpinghandsforhaiti.com

THE WAY THINGS ARE by *Dave Hansen*

Twenty years ago Jerilyn and I made our first trip to Haiti. In the ensuing years since then we have had the privilege of making that trip with 89 different people. Getting to know 89 people who have a special place in their heart to be in service to God is awesome. Even more astounding is the fact that each of the 89 who have been to Haiti have family and friends that also are motivated to provide help for Haiti and make our circle of support larger and more effective each year. 2009 also marks the first year that Helping Hands for Haiti will take two teams to Jumelle.

Eighteen people made the trip in February, 2009. Because we have had so many requests to be a part of a mission team, Dave & Tammy Oswald will be taking a second team in May, 2009. Each trip to Haiti creates a better understanding of what we might do to work in partnership with our Haitian brothers and sisters to make life a little easier for them. If you see a mission trip to Haiti in your future, please contact us!

“I was blessed in many ways on this trip, the greatest blessing of course is serving God.” -Henry Wipf



THE MIRACLE OF A WHEELCHAIR

We were saddened when Dave Oswald's father, Elwin, passed away in late February. The new wheelchair that Elwin had been confined to would no longer be needed by the family. But Dave knew exactly where the wheelchair was needed. On his latest trip to Haiti, Dave met a lady who had one foot amputated and had problems with the other foot such that she was now nearly immobile. A friend of a friend was traveling to Haiti and 12 days after Elwin passed away in Yankton, SD, his wheelchair was being utilized by its new owner in Haiti! God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good!!

FIRST RESPONDERS - THANKS to all the First Responders who “responded” to our March call. We received enough money to support Szette and her grandchildren for the next 12months!

MAY TRIP TO HAITI by *Dave Oswald*

This year for the first time we will be taking a second team to Haiti. Fifteen team members leave on May 21st to travel to Jumelle. The team consists of college students to engineers, first timers to those who have been there multiple times. Projects include bible school, bible study, income generating projects for the village, and construction of a community composting latrine.



“I felt so sad when I had to say goodbye to my new friend.” -Garner Brandt

“The best thing about going to Haiti was the relationships we built there. Not only with our team members, but the people of Haiti. It’s amazing how close you can grow to someone who doesn’t even speak the same language as yourself. Universal signs like hugs and smiles are what brought us so close to the people there. I’m still amazed at how attached I grew to the children of Jumelle during the few short days we were there. I still think about them everyday.” -Mariah Hofer

BIBLE SCHOOL IN JUMELLE

by *Maggie Schmidt*

Visiting the village every year, you realize the kids are growing up fast, just like the kids in the US. And this year we noticed how their “manners” have changed. They are more attentive and maybe more comfortable in our presence. If it is your first trip to Jumelle, you are captured by their smiles and sparkling eyes and their love of attention. In February we had the largest class ever for our first day of Bible School, 130 kids! These were divided into two groups, pre-school and school-age.

The children sing with vigor and wonderful rhythm. Gina taught them how to sing “Awesome God” in sign language. (There is a little girl in the village who uses sign.) This year’s message from Genesis focused on how the earth was created and our responsibility to care for the earth and keep it beautiful. Their favorite song is the “Butterfly Song”, which has a lot of body and arm motions. The kids had butterflies to color and butterfly stickers too. They made hanging butterflies from coffee filters, glitter glue and a clothespin. With songs and puppet shows (about being nice to one another), coloring, stickers, lots of love and fun- they love every

minute. What could be more wonderful? Some of the children in Bible School cannot afford school, so this experience is very special. This year they sang “Jesus Loves Me” in English! That’s a WOW!

The kids put their names on cutout leaves to decorate a vine across the front of the church, showing Jesus as the vine and we are part of the vine in His Love. Our lessons taught that God loves all creatures big (people) and small (frogs), and we colored and decorated rainforest creature pictures. The only quiet time at Bible School is when the children are concentrating so hard on coloring or using the glitter glue and being very creative. We see some beautiful creations from the children.

Each year on the last day of Bible School the kids receive a gift bag filled with love by the people traveling to the village. This year they received toothpaste and toothbrush, colors, paper, rulers, pencils and erasers, soap, flower seeds and a bouncy ball. We hope you feel the excitement of the children as you read this news. Please keep them in your prayers. We saw some tears this year when it was time to leave so “hurry back”.

THE DOCTOR IS IN by *Daniel Johnson, MD Orthopedic surgeon*

No one knew why his hip was destroyed but on the X-ray, instead of a smoothly rotating ball and socket joint, Joseph had one of the most arthritic hips I had ever seen. He was only twenty-six and every step was painful. His prospects for school, work or a wife were doubtful at best.

Here in the U.S. we would be able to do a total hip replacement to give him near normal function. This was not possible in Haiti. Another operation came to mind that had been done for this type of hip problem before total hip replacement was available in the U.S. A hip fusion would eliminate his pain, give him a remarkably good gait and would last his entire life. Unfortunately, we did not have the necessary implants to accomplish this unusual operation. All we could do was tell him to return next year and we would see what God would provide for us to try to help him in 2009.



Joseph's X-ray after the hip fusion

Before returning to Hospital Albert Schweitzer in February this year, a local orthopedic vendor for Synthes USA, Josh Brummels, donated the special plate needed to connect the thigh bone to the pelvis and hold it firmly while the bones of the hip joint fuse together.

Joseph eagerly appeared the first day of orthopedic clinic having waited twelve months for our return. We were happy to tell him that we would be able to perform the fusion operation. He was admitted and underwent a three hour procedure the next day. The surgery went well. On post-operative day one Joseph was able to smile even though the pharmacy had run out of morphine. Before we left, he was already walking, his smile bigger each day.

This year the orthopedic team consisted of myself, Jim Frerk, PA, and Matt Dvorak, PT. Jim and Matt were invaluable in surgery and clinic. Tom Gilmore, MD once again volunteered his time and talents to the OB/GYN service at Hospital Albert Schweitzer.



Maggie Schmidt with the water filtration units at the school in Jumelle.

ALTERNATIVE GIFTS

Thanks to the many people who donated money for the alternative gift program last Christmas. We received donations for bibles, livestock, seeds, education, school lunch, and water filtration systems. The February team was pleased to distribute Creole language bibles. They reported one happy recipient who grasped her new bible and dropped to her knees thanking God that she now had a bible.

Water filtration units were introduced to the school, and the May team will check the water quality and expand the project. Donations were received for many goats and we are consulting with Heifer Project and Mission Haiti to best implement that program. Not every family needs a male goat for their female so we are working with a confinement project that would group the animals and thus stretch the project money. The May team will also follow up on the goat project.

“It’s a life changing experience that I can’t explain with words.” -Gavin Brandt

Peace Lutheran Church
5509 W 41st St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit #618
Sioux Falls, SD

**Helping Hands for
Haiti Newsletter**

Visit www.helpinghandsforhaiti.com to view pictures, read about our history, mission and ongoing projects, contact us, make a donation or read journal entries from our trips.



Heidi making a friend in Jumelle.

Thoughts from the team

“Not a day goes by where I don’t think about Haiti. The thing I miss the most about Haiti is spending time with the children. I also loved hearing the bible school children sing the butterfly song. They are not afraid of singing LOUD! Since I have been back home, I no longer take for granted warm showers, food, and clothing. Haiti has forever changed my life. (The day we got home, I started talking my Mom into letting me go again for my Senior year ... and I think it is working!) -Heidi Olson

“I cannot count the ways I look at everyday things, people, and issues in a different light. The days in Haiti have changed me in many ways. The biggest impact is the people we met and interacted with. How different we all are, but really, how much we are the same.” -Matt Dvorak

“The village was different than I thought it was going to be. Everyone came to greet us and people there have a great sense of hospitality. While the language was an issue sometimes, our translators made things a lot easier. I learned that laughter and smiles are universal. The hardest part about Haiti was leaving all the people behind. After making friends and getting used to the slower paced lifestyle I was reluctant to return home to a chaotic life. The most important lesson I learned while there is that no matter how bad we think our circumstances are here in the states, it is nothing compared to Haiti and the poverty there.” -Ashley Fast