

Update #6: 25 March 2011

With our final workday complete and our boarding passes printed we leave to be reunited with the family we miss so much. Our last remaining moments in Haiti are spent taking stock of the trip. We shed tears for the heartbreak that is evident on the faces we see. Each of us carry images and people we will not soon forget. As we poured out our strength - love - compassion - sweat - and our very lives, we have gained so much. Along with some sweet bruises and cuts we gain a deeper understanding of Christ's love for the lost and the broken.

We rejoice over how we saw God move in, around and through us. Though it is impossible to put into words all that we have experienced here, ask us to share the stories of the people of Haiti who we deeply love.

In Christ,
Team Haiti

Update #5: 24 March 2011

Greetings again from Haiti!

We had another great day working here at the Methodist Guest House in Petionville. Today we returned to the task we began earlier this week, clearing brush and debris from an area in the compound near the Guest House, while some of us worked on building some storage shelves in the garage area. As we worked with our rakes and shovels on the landscaping project, we were serenaded by children from the school across the road practicing their singing. What a joyous sound to hear these children who have so little, singing their hearts out!

This afternoon we enjoyed an excursion up into the hills above Port au Prince to a restaurant where we sampled some traditional Haitian dishes (including goat!) There was a great view of the city and the surrounding countryside from the restaurant.

Later we visited the God's Littlest Angels orphanage, also in the hills high above Port au Prince. The traffic was terrible and the roads even worse, but it was well worth the trip. It was so inspiring to see how the children there are cared for by such loving people. They have over 40 babies under the age of 2, each one a precious little bundle of activity. We had dinner with the staff and heard their stories, and spent an hour or so playing with some of the children or just holding them.

Every day we spend here, we feel more blessed to have this opportunity to serve in Haiti.

From the Sunrise Haiti Mission Team

Update #4: 22 March 2011

And still another beautiful day in Haiti! Sunny but breezy. We spent the morning back at the Vocational School. All of those boards we pulled off the roof had lots of nails in them. The boards will be reused for projects at the school, or for burning. The people of Haiti do not waste anything. Everything gets reused. The nails will get recycled or reused too. So today we pulled nails out of the boards, sorted and stacked the boards, collected all the nails in a bucket, and cleaned up around the front of the school building. Even the pieces of false ceiling were stacked and saved. Whoever

knew there were so many tricks for getting nails out of boards! I sure didn't!

We went back to the guest house for lunch, and then returned to the school to complete our clean up tasks. School was back in session today since the election is over. As we passed through the grounds of the school, it was fun to see the children of all ages in their yellow school dresses or shirts, and to hear the same sounds you would hear on any playground anywhere in the world. I use the word playground loosely. Actually the steps and sidewalks that connect all of the school buildings on the campus. There were typical school yard games going on, including lots of soccer, but there was a noticeable lack of the equipment our children are accustomed to having. Instead they were using whatever was available, such as a plastic water bottle or a tennis ball. We would have loved to have had dozens of soccer balls with us to give out.

Two other teams arrived today from their work out in the field--that is other places in Haiti. They will stay here over night before flying home tomorrow. There are currently projects going on in 5 other communities in Haiti being managed by the staff here at the Methodist Guest House. Teams are arriving at and leaving from here all the time.

After yet another delicious supper, our team met for our daily Bible Study. We ended it tonight with a very interesting discussion about the symbolism of pulling out nails. One member of our team felt it provided very appropriate Lenten preparation for the Resurrection. The nails reminded her of sins--both the little and big ones, and the twisted ones; all the nails we have pounded in to Jesus we were trying to remove one by one. Others were reminded of the nails they had to pound straight when they were kids, so nails could be reused in their family too.

We are looking forward to tomorrow, when we will work during the morning--not sure what we will be doing yet--then go out for lunch in a local restaurant, and then spend the afternoon at God's Little Angels home for children, cuddling and playing with babies. We will have supper there also. This will give us a chance to get off campus and see more of the surrounding area.

We ask you all to pray for strength and energy for us for Wednesday, the traditional low energy day for mission teams. The first half of our week here has been excellent!

Surprise Haiti Mission Team

Update #3: 21 March 2011

Dear friends,

Another day of perfect weather! The other team (from Michigan) left the guest house today to build a church in a more rural area of Haiti. We will see them again on Friday night.

Patrick was our Haitian project leader today with Ishmael translating. The younger boys could not help us, due to the nature of the work, but the crew of Haitian men never seemed to tire. When we would take a break to have some water, they kept right on working.

I've always wanted to work on the roofs of our Habitat for Humanity houses, but my timing has never worked out...always being either too early or too late. I find it interesting that here in Haiti I was able to get up on the roof the very first day at the site! We completely removed the rotten, leaking and termite-infested roof of a vocational school. I'm not going to go into the details, but I'll only say that OSHA would not have approved!

It's such a wonderful feeling at the end of the day to know that the work that you've done has made a difference. Yes, we were filthy, exhausted, and aching...but we are all full of joy and thankful to the Lord for this amazing opportunity to serve Him and our brothers and sisters here in Haiti.

We returned from the work site and feasted on a fantastic dinner prepared by Tante Nette Claire. Chicken, rice and beans, salad, sweet potato fries (which are white here in Haiti) and what we think is mirilton, a delicious local vegetable that was new to all of us.

Blessings to you all and thank you for your prayers. You are with us in spirit, and it gives us strength!

Your sister in Christ,
Barb Treacy

Update #2: 20 March 2011

Hi Friends & Family,

This morning a Haitian brother explained how one could estimate the time during the night by listening to the roosters' crow. After last night we decided that we didn't want to know the time every 10 minutes. There are a lot of roosters here.

Before we relate our experiences today, we thought you should know some statistics we have learned that will help us relate to the lives of our hosts. At birth 38 babies die in 1000 births. (In the U.S. it is less than 2 per 1000 births.) The average length of life is 30 years. The average age is 21. The average Gross National Product (GNP) per person is \$1200 to \$1500.

Today was election day. Because of the threat of demonstrations and possible violence, few people were in the streets and many church services were cancelled. However the Methodist service in the church on the Methodist mission property here proceeded as usual even though two of school buildings were used as voting poles. To be safe, we were escorted past the poles by one of the Haitian residents here.

The church is simple and similar to the traditional church building. Steep roof, steeple, large open frame room for congregation. The roof is steel, the walls white painted concrete block and most of the arched windows are open (no glass).

The service was a wonderful experience. Because of the election, attendance was a bit reduced but not the spirit. The entire service was in the Haitian Creole language. The first hour consisted of exuberant and beautiful singing and reading of scripture. A Haitian lady helped us locate the words in the hymnal so we could sing along in Creole (no music). We did our best, even though we had no idea what we were singing. The next 45 minutes was the sermon, which was followed by closing comments and blessing. We were truly blessed to be included in their service.

After lunch we cleared and burned a monumental amount of brush on the site. Together we accomplished in 4 hours what appeared to be a couple of days of work. It seems the Lord has put the right people together to do the tasks we have been assigned by the Haitian and mission Methodist planners. We look forward to the following days. With his continued guidance, we feel confident we will succeed in the tasks we are assigned and be an excellent example of our faith to our hosts.

Keep us in your prayers!
Sunrise Haiti Mission Team

Update #1: 20 March 2011
Hello from Haiti!!

At both DIA and the Ft Lauderdale airports we learned that summer sausage might not be a good thing. At both airports John had his carry on luggage searched after the sausage raised suspicions. It was a non event in Denver but a major issue in Ft Lauderdale as they tested it for chemical residue and sent it through the x-ray again. After spending a short night in Ft. Lauderdale we boarded a fairly full plane for the 1hour 45 minute flight to Port au Prince. Thoughts on the approach included how barren the land looked since it is a rocky island. We made it through immigration and customs with no issues, even with the sausage.

On the drive to the Guest House we passed the UN security forces compounds and Aristide's house. There is still a lot of damage and clean up going on. But there are also buildings with multi national businesses working out of them. There were several sites where families were working clearing rubble or building a house. We also passed a couple of cemeteries, which are above ground due to the rocky nature of the area. There were a couple of funerals going on, later on we passed a funeral

procession with the pall bearers carrying the coffin down the middle of the street in traffic, with people walking behind them.

After arrival at the at the house, we talked with Tom and Deena a little bit. They are each down here for 6 month stints to help the relief effort. We went out for lunch and then over to the Methodist Orphanage, where around 35 kids live. After a slow start we spent a couple of hours playing with them, soccer and basketball were the favorites, with a round of signing Jesus Loves me thrown in. The kids hung on us and we hugged and held them, language was not a problem as the hugs spoke loudly.

We found out that Aristide came back into the country on Friday and Baby Doc is still here after his arrival in January. The run-off for the Presidential election is tomorrow (Sunday) and while there are ads for the 2 candidates on the ballot, there were banners of support up for Aristide. Not much has been heard out of Baby Doc since his arrest and release.

We met and spoke with Bill VanDeBerghe from the Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City. He heads up their Haiti mission project and is down here for 2.5 months laying the groundwork for their teams.

There has been progress in the last year. The jetways at the airport now work, although the terminal is still damaged. There is now a conveyor belt for incoming luggage, instead of being carried in and laid out on the floor to be found. Leaving the airport is less chaotic than a year ago, not nearly as much vehicle traffic nor as many people wanting to carry your luggage for a tip. All in all a lot more organized. There are still 3 lanes of traffic though, 1 each way for cars and trucks and 1 in the middle for motorcycles. The motorcycles play a big game of chicken, since they are going in opposite directions in the same 4 foot space. There has been progress in cleaning up the rubble and it looks like in some building.

Prayer requests are mainly for the Haitian people as they vote on the 20th. May they chose a President who will be effective in moving this country forward and may peace reign over the elections, with both Baby Doc and Aristide in country people are not sure if they will stir the pot. We also need to remember the orphans we visited, so needing of love and caring, but the team also saw the way they cared for each other, which was heart warming. And finally, pray for the team, as we work to replace the roof on a vocational school and to build relationships with the Haitians we encounter, may we work with smiles and not let language be a barrier.

The Haiti Team