

Dreams for Haiti

3012 Mockingbird Dr.

St. Charles, MO. 63301

Email: info@dreamsforhaiti.com

Website: dreamsforhaiti.com

Phone: 636-947-0370 or 636-399-8049 or 636-399-8050



I am always having people ask me when my next **trip** is, or how was the last trip. This is difficult to answer as there are so many things to tell and so many emotions to deal with. In June I took my husband and two youngest adult children.



Friend Josue' and his wife and daughter.

There was happiness as they got to meet my Haitian friends, but sorrow as I had to share with them some of the things we saw.

In Nov/Dec, board member, Marlene Hoehn went with me. She was born in Haiti and adopted into the United States at the age of three. She has biological family in Haiti that she met last year. This trip she went and spent a night at their house to see where they live and how they live. She was relieved to find they are doing ok. But it was an emotional experience for her as she could see her life if she hadn't been adopted. They shared pictures of relatives she had never met or didn't remember. She took lots of pictures and talked about that experience the whole trip.

The next morning we went and unloaded the Container. This is a nerve racking ordeal as 10 different groups send people to pick up their mission's items, plus the 12 young men that are there to unload etc so we often end up with about 50 people being there that day. But a fun time also as we see long awaited items being delivered and renewing old friendships and meeting new friends. We are hoping to ship again in March.



A new friend coming to pick up his boxes from the container

After driving to Gonaives we then went to visit the **school**. Each year we have had to add a grade so school now runs from preschool to 9th grade. The government mandates this and it is wonderful to see the older kids being educated but it also is putting a strain on the budget as we have had to build new classrooms and hire higher level teachers. They were excited we were there and made it a holiday by having a soccer tournament.



Playing soccer, a Haitian national pastime

We walked to a neighbor's field and they played there among goats that were tied up and ladies doing laundry under a tree. We had been able to send soccer uniforms that were donated (thank you Amer-Haitian Bon Zami) and the children and teachers were so excited. One game the teachers played the students and the next game the girls challenged the boys. There was much cheering from Marlene and I, but the girls still lost. Some of the students had no shoes so they played in their socks. There was much excitement and they decided to do this each month.



Marlene Hoehn and her sponsored child, Jamesly



Home where children live who are waiting on a sponsor

For several days we delivered Sponsorship gifts. It was so great to see all the students and their families that are sponsored. We visited each home and talked with each family. Sometimes Marlene and I would share a glance and it would be difficult not to cry. Other times it was so exciting to see the pure joy of a child receiving the first toy they had ever owned. It was so humbling to peek inside the homes and see a mat on a dirt floor, maybe a table, a few clothes piled in a corner and sometimes a plate or bowl and some cups. That would be all in a 10 X 10 foot home. Cooking is done outside on a metal stand over charcoal. Sleeping is done on the floor, maybe on a pile of clothes. Water is down the lane so someone has to carry all water used for cooking, drinking and bathing back home in whatever they can find to carry it in. Laundry and bathing, and cooking are all done outside.



Spider crawling on a dresser inside a home



Lady holding 2 of her ducks

It was really rewarding to see animals out in the yard of many homes we visited and passed by. Many families told us how grateful they were for the chickens, goats and ducks. It is helping their families have a small income, eggs and chicken to eat, and a feeling of self worth and pride. They are expected to help pay some of the school tuition out of their profit. Families are given 2 chickens. They sign an agreement that they will return the first batch of chickens back into the program to be turned over to the next family in line. Once they do well with their chickens they are in line for a goat. We have started on ducks this year and several families have asked to start on turkeys or pigs. This happens when they show they are responsible with the chickens.



Goat given to a lady after she showed responsibility

Along with the sponsored gifts that we delivered, we also had school supplies, clothing, sewing materials and machines, clinic and hygiene items and tons of food, literally. I have pictures of a little girl from last year whose hair was all red from being so malnourished. One year later when I visited, the same little girl had black hair and was giggling and jumping up and down and running around chasing her siblings. It is so gratifying to see how the feeding program is saving lives and helping families.



Giggling girls looking at sponsors gifts – no red hair here any more!

On Sunday we went to Church and saw that it was growing. Many of the families that we visited said they did not attend church because they or their children did not have clothes to wear. Several came by and picked out clothes from those we brought. It was great to see them in church on Sunday morning. In Haiti everyone dresses in their very finest to go to church. They were preparing the Christmas program while we were there and really looking forward to it. They knew that Pastor Charles usually has a small gift for them. This year we took left over Halloween candy and put in small bags once we got there. They also had some light-up toys that were donated, so I am sure there was a lot of excitement on Christmas day. These were more than likely the only gifts the children got.



Jackie Settle and Marlene Hoehn looking at clothing the sewing ladies had made in sewing class

Sunday night we went back to Church and afterward the ladies who had been attending the **sewing classes** brought some of their handiwork to show us. Most of the homes don't have electricity so the sewing machines are kept at the school and the ladies come there to sew when the generator is turned on. We are hoping they will be able to sew the school uniforms (also government mandated) in the coming years, and to make a living and help support their families.



Roof needing repairs

We visit others that Pastor Charles wants us to meet, those who need to be in the sponsorship program. One family he took us to visit was a mom and 3 of her 5 children. Her husband had just died the month before and left her with 5 children and she had just found out she has another one on the way. Two of her children had been sent to live with relatives. There was a large section of her roof gone and all the children had red hair. She was scared to stay there by herself and told of hearing an animal (one that is a bad spirit in Voodoo). We had someone donate a small amount of money for emergencies that we run into. We used the

money to have the roof repaired and gave her food and clothes for the children so they could attend church on Sunday. They came to church on Sunday and the children will be attending school now. We are hoping to find them a sponsor to help with their tuition(\$25 a month). Another family lived in a small hut made out of pieces of tin propped together on a dirt floor. It breaks our hearts so see such malnourished children without enough energy to get up and run and play. Hopefully they will be sponsored so they can be in the food program and attend school. The tears flow when we see these things.



Pastor Charles praying for a new baby

Haitian people are so full of fun and laughter despite the circumstances they live in and many times we are able to share smiles and chuckles with them despite the language barrier. To see the gentle smiles of the mama's when they catch our eye in church. To see the clothes that had been sent on the children that had been naked the day before. To see the people smile that had been in clinic the day before and all because someone donated a little medicine. To see the black hair that had once been red from malnourishment all makes our hearts happy and eagerly looking forward to our next trip. If you would like to be a part of a future trip please let me know. Be ready to have your life changed in so many ways. Be ready to laugh, cry and have your heart broken but be ready to go back again and again.