

# Dreams for Haiti

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People have asked what I do when I go to Haiti. If they are interested in going they often tell me they have no talent or gifts. First I do not believe God would put the desire in a person's heart if he didn't plan on using them. Some are teachers, some nurses, some are great at helping keep me organized and take notes. Sometimes their gift is just being able to come back and share with others what they experienced. So, in this newsletter I would like to take you along for a virtual trip.

First, we get up at 3 am to head to the airport. The flight to Miami leaves at around 5 am. In Miami we switch planes to head to Port au Prince. Getting through the airport is our first big hurdle. Porters are touching or grabbing your bag and telling you that you owe them money because they "helped" you. Going outside and being blasted by a wave of hot air, glaring sun, masses of people and the smells of diesel and charcoal fill the air. So much fun as we quickly catch up on the latest news of friends and the programs and we chat non-stop.



If things go really well, the next morning bright and early we head to an unloading spot that we pray will be safe. The containers start getting unloaded. Our twelve guys say a prayer and then start to work unloading and sorting each mission's belongings. This trip there were 15 different missions that had placed things on the containers and each had a special color on their boxes so they could be quickly sorted and placed in piles so the Haitian mission person could come and retrieve them. Does this always work? No, in haste some boxes are picked up by the wrong mission. It is difficult to get things returned as the missions are scattered miles apart and sometimes even over bodies of water or up a mountain. The great part is being able to visit with the Haitian friends we have made over the years and catch up on their lives. Each mission usually brings about 6 people with them to help load their items up so you can soon start to see

how busy and confusing things can get. Add to that the fact that things very seldom go as expected. This past trip in November both trucks that haul the containers broke down before they got them to the unloading place, which made it too late to unload that night. We called on a dear friend who lived close by and he put up 13 of the helpers at a nearby school and put 4 more of us at his home and he slept on the floor. He took care of feeding everyone and making sure we were all comfortable. Thank you Josue' !

Our next stop on this trip is Gonaives. After traveling on a very dangerous highway, bandits and gangs control the area, we finally reach Gonaives. We say hello to Charles' family, see how much the kids have grown and start unpacking all the boxes and getting organized for the week ahead. Ariol and Alix travel with me and are great at interpreting, taking pictures and sometimes explaining the culture for me.

The next day we visit the school and see the children busily working. Well, at least until we show up! Some that we have visited in their homes will be brave and run up and start chattering, others hang around and just give us a shy little smile. We talk with the teachers and see their needs and hear how the school year is going. And we often see the children being fed large bowls of the rice we had just brought on the container. For many this is the only meal they will receive that day. I am always surprised how much food those little tummies can hold!



These twins were recently sponsored and are now going to school. They are so proud of their new school uniforms. Aren't they precious??



Sponsored girl standing in front of her house with gift from sponsor



Admiring the new baby at a sponsored child's home

The next few days are busy from early morning till after dark visiting the homes of all the sponsored kids. We sit in front yards, sometimes in shade, sometimes in blazing sun as we interview the family. We do not sit inside as generally there is not enough room in a 10 X 10 room for all of us. But we can see there is no electricity, no water and only a dirt floor in the home. We rejoice with the news of new babies, someone getting a job or that the children are doing well in school. They thank us for their sponsors and tell us how much this means to them. We also hear what is going on in their lives, their hopes and dreams and usually their sad reality. Pictures taken, hugs given and on to the next home.

As we drive around we stop and see different families that are part of the animal project. We see the chickens with baby chicks following them around, we see pigs laying in the mud with their babies, by the small river we see families with ducks, and so many goats it is hard to count! We hear how these animals have changed people's lives as they sell eggs, or offspring at the market, and can now buy food.



Little girl proudly showing off her goat!

On Sunday we get dressed up (the Haitians wear their very best for church on Sunday) and attend Church service. It is loud! It seems there has to be bullhorns or microphones to be a good service! There is singing and praising God. There are prayers on knees as the worshippers ask for mercy and help with their everyday lives.



Many prayers needed for life in Haiti

After school one day we go upstairs where the ladies are holding sewing classes. They learned to sew masks and give out in the neighborhood. They are learning embroidery, clothes sewing, macramé and crocheting. They are thankful for the sewing machines and material that a group of ladies have sent.

We return to Charles' house and eat a meal of rice and beans and are thankful because we know so many we have visited that day have nothing to sit down to. We take a shower of cold water, thankful we have this luxury; we spray down for mosquitoes and prepare for another day.



Ariol and Alix having fun blowing bubbles for the kids

All too quickly our time in Haiti has come to an end and we head back to Port au Prince, down the bumpy road, through the market places and to the airport. It is always good to get back home but it is so difficult to leave our friends in Haiti. I hope you have enjoyed your trip to Haiti with me and consider joining us on one of the real trips soon! I promise, you will laugh, you will cry and you will count the days till you can return! Come make your own Dreams for Haiti!