

## Sacred Heart Haiti Mission Foundation, Inc.

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October 2015

Final preparations are being made for our trip to Haiti in November. We are hoping to stay through the winter. Plans are being made to organize another trip of volunteers to go down this winter. The volunteer house fills up quickly, so if you are considering a trip, please let us know.

The packing and shipping date has been set for October 16; so by the time you receive this letter, the containers will be on their way! People have been so generous and the packing crews are so diligent that we are sending two 40' containers! We have decided to continue to rent a storage unit after this shipment goes out because we simply cannot turn down the donations that keep pouring in from around the country. The shipment should arrive in Haiti by the second week of November. That will give Sisters and the priests time to sort and get ready for Christmas. It would be wonderful to have a group of volunteers from here go down to help unload at the port when the containers come in. It is a lot of work; but so rewarding to see the appreciation on their faces!

Summer has been extra busy; shipments have been coming in from all over the country. We made several trips to Winona, first to pick up all of the church goods we mentioned in the last newsletter, then to pick up donated goods coming from as far away as Maryland by railway. Many, many toys have been donated. There are at least 10 barrels, as well as several boxes and loose packed riding toys.

There have been requests for us to help priests in several parishes. Their Sunday collection does not even take in enough money to pay for their groceries for the week; yet they would like to be able to help some of their parishioners. Requests have been made to build houses for a few specific families. We will do the best we can. We know what a house means to these families! The donations that continue to come in go directly to assist these requests. It is by the grace of God and the generosity of so many that we are able to honor these requests.

The Bishop wanted chairs to be used in schools and churches. We purchased 100 folding chairs and 52 more were donated. We are also getting many wood chairs from a hotel chain in Rochester.

We wanted to give an account of someone who has been on a trip to Haiti and stayed at the volunteer house to show you what the trip is like. The letter below is from a woman in Rochester who went to Haiti several years ago as a high school youth:

*When asked to paint a picture of my trip to Haiti for prospective volunteers, I thought to myself that there is no possible way that words can capture this experience. That being said, there is one particular word that comes to my mind, **extraordinary**.*

*There are many aspects of Haiti that were extraordinary and challenged my perspective in ways in which I did not know were possible. One experience that I will never forget is the food distribution. It was remarkable to see families that would arrive at the sisters' compound from miles and miles away just to receive a container of rice and beans. Additionally, it is even more remarkable when you realize how essential these items are in supporting their families for weeks at a time.*

*Another component of the trip that is **extraordinary** is the wound clinic. It is fascinating to see the innovative strategies that the sisters come up with to distribute medicine and treat patients. For example, old bed sheets that are typically thrown away in America are cut up and used as bandages.*

*While both of these experiences of my volunteer trip will always stay with me, there is one piece of the trip that is truly encompassed by the word **extraordinary**. This experience is seeing the laughter and playfulness of the children in the orphanage and children's hospital. This is not ordinary laughter. This laughter is from children who have been diagnosed with HIV, who have been abandoned by or may have lost their mothers, who are suffering of malnutrition, or who may have only a couple years left to live. However, this laughter is also determination and resilience, and the children will share their extraordinary gift with you, just for being with them.*

(over)



Food distribution



Spending time with the kids

The Sisters pray every day for our volunteers and supporters and we thank you all for everything you do.

God Bless you,

*Dale & Joyce Grabarkiewicz*

P.S. While Dale & Joyce are in Haiti, please contact Lisa Jessen at 507-884-9020, if needed.

A Facebook page was set up in January of this year. If you haven't yet, please go to the Sacred Heart Haiti Mission Facebook page and "Like" us. This is a great way to keep everyone updated and informed about what is happening in Rochester, MN as well as in Haiti. We also share pictures on Facebook; so if you have any pictures or a story about YOUR experience in Haiti, please post it on our Facebook page.

Invite others who may be interested in learning more about our mission to "Like" us on Facebook. Social media is a great (& inexpensive) way to spread the word!