

January 23, 2010

Haiti Earthquake Relief Update

What day is it? I had to really think hard about that a second ago. This will be just a quick note but I wanted to pass along how encouraged Caleb and I both felt to have some very selfless volunteers arrive yesterday, willing to do anything. At present, we have a group of four men who had previously provided post-Tsunami aid in Indonesia arrive from Memphis Fellowship Bible Church as well as some Haitian-American nurses arrive from Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. Also, two volunteers from King's Ransom Foundation came to help. Caleb arrived with the last group around 10 P.M. from the Dominican border last night and left at 5 A.M. to go and hold a funeral service in Port au Prince for a close friend. He plans to return to our community later today. Tomorrow he is helping to host some international Rotarian leadership personnel to plan next stages and donations priorities.

Yesterday after receiving several relief flights into our local airport, I came back to check e-mail once more before going home. A few days ago one contact had asked me if I could help house some volunteers en route to Port au Prince if necessary. I had responded, sure, just let us know. The message came through Friday at 4 P.M. or so that they were fine and they'd found a flight to Port au Prince. I packed up my laptop and was walking down the dust blowing streets when I received a call. "Debbie, do you know someone from such and such a mission". Turns out they were dropped off at our grass strip airport after all! No problem, after finding our truck which was out delivering water, I picked up three really wonderful folks who didn't quite know where they were. I got them settled at our camp facility for the night and they had already made arrangements to fly with Mission Aviation Fellowship (www.maf.org) to Port au Prince tomorrow. It was so comical to me that I'd just received a message saying they were taken care of. The reason I share that story with you is to illustrate again how fluid the situation is here and how important it is for volunteers who consider coming to: a) remain very flexible, b) make sure they have functioning contacts on the ground. Again, please be patient as all the organizations here in Haiti struggle to manage the needs and best utilize all the resources coming in.

Three of our volunteers today were willing to go and spend the day at the airport with our staff to help receive potential (?) air drop flights. I'd heard there would be 4 flights coming throughout the day from either the Dominican Republic & the Bahamas. Since we didn't know the times and phone service here is non-existent at times, this means these guys are staying there all day, busy unloading boxes some times, waiting for an hour or so at others. That is flexibility in action. I thank God they are willing to help fulfill that need. Our other volunteers currently are working at packing up rice for distribution. These two gals pictured are nurses from Miami, FL. Please note, they are willing to do anything, because at present, the nurses at our local hospital have the situation under control. So they are pitching in as needed. As more and



more people enter the provinces (country-side) looking for help, we are setting up food distribution plans. Of course, those coming to the camp will be fed. Those that have families/friends in the area would rather stay with them, which makes sense. Even though they are very crowded in small homes, it



is comforting being with those you know. However, these families don't have the means to feed 12 extra people daily. Rather than have people line up, we know from experience, it is best delivered house by house. So today we asked our volunteers to help by sacking up rice and sugar we'd already purchased and stored here in town. Once Caleb arrives back, we'll start delivery to those in the community. The cute 3

year old above is my nephew, Abdel Lucien, a pastor's son who is observing the food bags prepared for distribution.

Please know we share everyone's sense of "we wish we could do more" but if each of us does what we can, we can change the world around us. Thanks for your prayers, thanks for helping us do what we can.

Debbie Lucien www.hosean.org