

URGENT APPEAL - March 2010

Mizak needs your help even more!



Dear Judi,



6 eggs

The space was barren except for dust and 6 eggs on a table. The house had no door to enter nor window to shutter; two walls were gaping holes. A slight column of concrete supported the roof. An even slighter, elderly woman welcomed us on the porch, her grandchildren giggling in the backdrop.

Paul Prevost, HAPI's in-country director, myself (Valerie), and Steve Hennighausen, a HAPI volunteer and architect, were near the end of a long day of housing assessment for the HAPI artisans. The assessment didn't take long to complete. We had no tarps or other materials to offer. Just gestures of compassion and concern. As we said our good-byes, our hostess excused herself and returned with 6 eggs in her outstretched hands . . .

(Please feel free to forward this email to your friends to help us bring awareness to the needs that remain in rural Haiti.)

Rebuilding Rural Life - Housing

Mizak is a rural community. Houses are tucked away down foot paths and the effect of the quake is more concealed and deceiving than densely populated zones. Tranquility and natural beauty greet our guests. Warm welcome exudes from our hosts and staff. Children laugh and play around us and snuggle into laps.

My first indication of change was that our artisans refused to work inside the coop building, pointing out every fine cosmetic crack. The building is structurally sound and virtually no surface damage, yet we had to hang tarps outside and reduce our production capacity because of fear.

Once the tarps were hung, the artisans were happy for the recent orders and for a special art project provided by team leader, Anne Ringger. Anne had special embroidery patterns, and, team member Tamara Kreigh assisted Anne in teaching acrylic painting to a small group of the women. These paintings will be reproduced into a coffee table book to raise funds to rebuild their homes.

Most of the artisans told me that their homes were 'destroyed' and needed rebuilt. Several artisans reported assessments occurring from another large relief NGO, but that they had been passed by when the NGO identified association to HAPI. They were told that "they already have an NGO to take care of them," pressing the responsibility of relief and rebuilding back onto HAPI.

The staff agreed to assess the artisans' homes and to begin this work while I



How to Help

Contributions may be generally designated 'where most needed' or specific contributions to:

FOOD RELIEF

Take the \$5k challenge and sponsor a week of food distribution!

HOUSING

- Rebuild
- Urgent repair cash fund
- Tarps, caulk & minor repairs

(Refugee housing details coming later)

TRANSPORT

Donations towards a truck. It is too costly to rent on a regular basis. A double-cab pick up would provide a good size cargo bed, and cab space for several people.

was in Haiti. We set off on the back of a 'moto' with a camera and, initially, I was frustrated. Several homes did not have the level of damage represented to me by the artisans: where were these destroyed homes?

As we listened to the stories, it became apparent that psychological trauma overshadows everything. They truly believe their house needs rebuilt, even if the damage is a piece of fallen plaster or broken wood on a door frame.

In other instances, the issue is not the house itself, but the many extended family members who have returned home from Port-au-Prince. How many adults and children can fit inside a house that is smaller than many master bedrooms in the United States? (Or on the porch at night?)

Complicating the assessment work is the sifting out of what is earthquake damage versus hurricane damage or simply poor initial construction. Most 'walls' are made of a mortar mixed with rocks and sticks. How do you assess structural damage versus surface damage, where there is no architect or engineer?

Part of the team, under the guidance of Jeff Ringger, worked to rebuild a room on the house of little Marie Claudine, our 'miracle' baby who at 18 months weighed only 6.7 lbs. Chloe VandenBrink initiated a nutrition intervention program using 'medika mamba,' a pre-fortified peanut butter, and little Marie was a bouncing 18 lbs at the end of 8 weeks. Chloe was there alongside the construction team, helping again to improve the health of the family, by providing shelter.

Serge Gabriel of our HAPI staff continues the housing assessment work on our artisans, health care workers, guest house staff and families of Peace Pals. This data will be compiled and ready soon. The pattern of emerging needs include:

1. **Total rebuilds** These homes are either on the ground or are so poorly constructed that there is nothing structurally sound to attach a 'patch' to. HAPI is experimenting with alternative building materials, resistant to earthquake and hurricanes. A group from Traverse City, MI will build the first earthbag homes later this month. This is not our exact model, but check out <http://www.earthbagbuilding.com/projects/haiti.htm>. We are planning a task force to draw up plans for a new artisan coop / community safe center using Nudura insulated concrete forms. Visit <http://www.nudura.com/en/NuduraHome.aspx>.

2. **Urgent repairs** Urgent repairs are walls that will not withstand another earthquake or high hurricane winds. Wall that move under the pressure of your hand, or which are cracked down through the foundation. These walls can be saved or small sections replaced. Many of them only require a sack of cement and rebar.

3. **Functional and cosmetic repairs** The woman who offered us 6 eggs had a house that was still supported, but it wasn't useable. Tarps are a temporary fix to regain the use of the space, while urgent repairs and rebuilds are attended to. Caulk guns to plug holes in leaking tin roofs is another simple yet helpful repair that can get families back inside homes that have decent walls. People are more willing to sleep under a tin roof than concrete.

4. **Refugee housing** How long will the relatives stay? The answer depends on whether the rural areas are built up with infrastructure and opportunity, or if job creation is concentrated in the cities. Many of these refugee individuals have skills in nursing, accounting, translating and business. They currently have

EMPLOYMENT

Product for sale brings income to Haiti. See the [HAPI website Store](#). Church groups may qualify for wholesale orders and great for fundraising projects!

Visit cdbaby.com and download [HAPI's UJECE](#) album.

TEAMS

Housing repair, construction, medical, children's outreach and art. Must have experienced leaders familiar with Haiti. Contact [Valerie Mossman-Celestin](#)

GENERAL DONATIONS

Please see www.haitianartisans.com and click donate for secure online giving through your credit card or PayPal account. Or, contribute through the General Advance of The United Methodist Church. Be sure to include 'Haitian Artisans for Peace International #3020490' in your donation and [send a confirmation email to Valerie](#). (Questions on how to give to the Advance please email.)

Quick Links

[DONATE](#)
[HAPI website](#)
[email](#)

Trauma

Aftershocks occurred on two of my nights in Haiti; I slept like a baby. I have never known anyone in Haiti to pay much attention to time.

no options except to return to poor, agricultural communities. They will stay-or move-with the creation of jobs. They need inexpensive interim housing with a duration of 5+ years, such as prefab wood housing. We are exploring a couple different options.

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

Food Relief - We Need You



As extensive as the housing need is, the need for food relief created the most vivid impression. HAPI had received a donation of \$5000 from one church and we purchased food supplies to make 550 family packages, estimated to serve 11,500 meals in one week for our Peace Pal and artisan families.

We were overrun. The 250 inscribed Peace Pals had become 300. . . then 500. . . and on this Wednesday, we had at least 1000. Our Peace Park has no walls. There was no threat of violence, only hungry children and anxious moms who did not receive and who stayed at the park until dark, hoping more food would appear. (photo courtesy of Julie Doll from recent visit.)

The need is real. Remember the relatives? Not only are they extra mouths, but in many cases, these family members used to be the "bread," sending money home from their jobs in Port-au-Prince. This economy has disappeared.

April and May have traditionally been the hungriest months in Haiti because they fall between the crop seasons; we haven't seen the peak yet.

HAPI needs continued pledges for food relief. Food is available for local purchase. We are working to improve our ability to manage, store and distribute food supplies. We are grateful to receive a grant from United Methodist Committee on Relief in the amount of \$10,000 towards securing the perimeter of the Peace Park with an earthquake resistant wall. We also received a \$2,000 grant from Communities of Shalom, Drew University, towards the wall and a cistern within the park. This will help with food distribution, safety, and community gathering. That work begins THIS WEEK. Larger-scale food distribution is planned to resume the week of March 21, as we are blessed.

HAPI in the News

- [Creativity at work: Artisans earn wages, serve rural community](#)
- [Haitian Artisans Offer Help to the Homeless](#)
- [Of HAPI-ness, Gratitude Journals, and Haiti](#)
- [MLive reports Community of Shalom in Haiti](#)
- [Air Mobile Relief Mission](#) Feb 23 blog
- [Michael Christensen - World Hope Corps](#)

Thank you Judi for your interest in Haiti and the ways HAPI is striving to work in business and community development. We know this response to the earthquake will bring more pressing issues and urgency but we hope it will also bring more possibilities and awareness of the best ways to make lasting impact.

However, on each morning following the aftershocks, local people would ask me "Did you feel it? 4:45 a.m. . . . 1:30 a.m. Three earthquakes last night." They are not sleeping.

My 15 year old nephew from Port-au-Prince stayed with me in Mizak. The first night, he kept talking over my yawns (and the downpour of rain) and I realized that he had not slept inside a house since the quake. He voiced his fears, saying that he believed that youth his age would be "the lost generation of Haiti" because they were so traumatized.

Aftershocks continue and the radio urges the population to not sleep inside their homes. Overall, Haiti is one big refugee camp. Teddy sleeps with his brother in the family car while an NGO has claimed the family's front lawn to pitch their tents-at least they have a car!

One of the best moments of the trip was watching a group of a dozen children ages 8-12 years old act out their perceptions of the earthquake, complete with their own 'Anderson Cooper reporting live' in the form of a 12 year old girl! The children were a testimony to the power of play and creativity to heal.

The play was performed on the raised platform in the Peace Park where the Peace Pole stands. It was part of a community

Your prayers and participation here and in Haiti are great blessings to us.

Peace,
Valerie Mossman-Celestin
Haitian Artisans for Peace International
US Executive Director
valeriem@wmcumc.org
616-446-9558

event hosted by the Methodist Faith in Action Church of Mizak. Seven local congregations participated and the crowds packed in under the blue tarps hung above the park. The rain fell and laughter rose. It was a good day.

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to kruisn@gmail.com by valeriem@wmcumc.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

HAPI Haitian Artisans for Peace Intl | PO Box 68227 | Grand Rapids | MI | 49516