



## **Encompass Ministries-Haiti Trip Dec2011**

### **- What is one experience during this past trip that made an unforgettable impact on you?**

There were many impacting things on this trip because it was during a time of civil unrest, but some that I really remember were seeing a man dip his bucket into the dirty water streams amongst the garbage and use it for his drinking water. And seeing two young girls dip their plastic water bottles in the street water to clean themselves. I also didn't know that the government provided water that you would have to lift a heavy metal lid on the sidewalk and dip your bucket into it to get water. The people always boil this water. The water in the tent cities is provided in big tanks and there is usually a line up to get the water before it runs out. Then they have to carry the water a long way. Then they still boil it. Me, I turn on the faucet. I am grateful!

### **- Why would you recommend someone else going? Will it change their life, perspective, attitude, etc?**

I would completely recommend that people go to Haiti. It is life changing to see how people just two hours away from the United States live. To see the comparisons between our kids and their toys and the children there playing with dirt balls. The difference between our two people in a nice home to five people in a one room shack. The difference of our full plates and choices in variety of food and their rice and beans hopefully once a day. You leave feeling grateful and sad at the same time.

You leave Haiti with the looks of the people on your mind and thoughts of 'How can I live a simpler life in order so that they may simply live?' And, 'what is my responsibility to these people?'

### **- What is the most important thing that you brought the people of Haiti on your mission? What were they most appreciative to you about? Love, hope, food, water...?**

The people we work with are sooooo happy that they aren't forgotten. I think that is the most important thing. If you can't do much in the physical to help them, just for them to know that they are not alone, that someone remembers them is so important to them.

For the particular group that we work with, The food is so important because they are too poor to get much on their own and in the city you can't have a garden. It is concrete upon concrete. But the food is only the first step, that keeps them alive. Then we help them to get started in their own business. This will enable them to take care of themselves without outside aid. But even after they are no longer on the feeding program and are providing for themselves, they still want to know that they are remembered and not alone.



## **Encompass Ministries-Haiti Trip Dec2011**

### **- What are your immediate plans for returning, needs that should be met next trip?**

We plan on returning to Haiti in July. Here we will do some business training, meet with the feeding program recipients, do a woman's clinic, and children's day. We will meet with the people who received RICE water bottles and pumps and see how they like the bottles and receive feedback from them. Then give them replacement filters.

### **- What recommendations/ precautions do you have for other organizations or relief groups that are going to Haiti to help?**

Remember, just because you are bringing them aid, doesn't make you their hero. Although the people are very grateful for your help, you get to leave Haiti and go back to your nice safe home. There are many people you can help, but so many more that you cannot. These people see you as the rich white westerners. Even if you are not rich in your home place, you are rich in their eyes. With the many years of governmental abuse, many are beginning to lose hope and become angry, and YOU may represent part of the problem to them. There are more and more aid agency's going over and the aid is not getting to the masses so the aid workers are starting to look like 'aid tourists' in many of the Haitians eyes. At first people would go and take photos and tell them the photos would help to raise awareness of their plight, but then they see people come and take photos of their misery, go home and nothing changes.

When you go to Haiti to give help, don't expect to receive accolades from them for your great sacrifice. The ones you help are grateful but due to where you are from they always expect more. You cannot blame them because they are living to survive right now. But you will see in the eyes of the ones you can help, the hope that you have brought in your love more than in your supplies.

### **- How did RICE help on this trip? Is this something that you would contact RICE about again to take for future trips?**

Without the support of RICE we would not have the water systems to help prevent these people from getting cholera and possible death. The bottles RICE gave took an element of fear away for them. Now they could drink freely without fearing from cholera.

I am very excited about the relationship that I have with RICE. I believe that we can continue to work together in the future to help those in need whether in Thailand, Haiti, South America, or here. Whatever I can do to help promote RICE in the fields that I work in, I am more than happy to do.