

Haiti Reflection

Like so many others, my heart has been very heavy these days with the tragedy that continues to unfold following last week's earthquake in Haiti. Having visited Haiti five times, often with other members of the LC community, I think of the friends we have made there and how their already difficult lives have been made even more challenging.

But I think also of the beauty of many of the places we visited, and the strength, courage, resilience, and deep faith of our partners there. Although the intensity of this disaster is overwhelming, I know that our Haitian friends would urge us to stay positive and to focus our energy on what we can do to help.



My Haitian host family in May, 2009.

Our instinctive response might be to collect tangible items of support – food, water, clothing, etc. However, trusted organizations have asked us to refrain from these efforts for the immediate future. Instead of using funds for shipping, we could support the relief efforts on location in Haiti, which will utilize local resources whenever possible. Should there be an influx of temporary refugees into our community, collection efforts of needed items can then be mobilized.

For now, any and all monetary donations are critically needed. Already the campus community has responded generously. Just over \$1000 was raised at the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on Monday. On Wednesday, the men's basketball team donated all ticket and raffle proceeds to relief efforts and raised almost \$1400. On Saturday, a benefit concert will be held in Snidow Chapel. No fundraising effort is too small whether you storm the dorms, give up the cost of a pizza, or choose to make ongoing contributions each month to help sustain the efforts. As one relief worker stated: "Helping Haiti is not a sprint race. This will be a marathon effort."

Although many reputable organizations are seeking financial contributions, I strongly urge members of our community to consider supporting our partnership school, the Matenwa Community Learning Center. Although they were not affected as directly by the earthquake as those near the epicenter, their access to

food and water has been greatly diminished. The community is being flooded with family members and others who have escaped the city and the main land in hopes of finding shelter at Matenwa. If you wish to contribute through our office, please make checks payable to LC-Haiti fund and mail to the Chaplain's Office. Should you prefer to make a secure online contribution, go to <http://matenwaclc.org/> or <http://www.beyondborders.net/index.php> You can also read regular updates and see video clips from our partners at the school and in the surrounding region when you go to these links.

Finally, on behalf of our friends in Haiti and in the language of the people there:

Mesi anpil. Thank you so much.

Men anpil chay pa lou. Many hands make the load lighter.

Bondye beni ou. God bless you.

By Anne Gibbons, Associate Chaplain