

Helping Hands 4 Haiti (HH4H) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the compassionate care of orphans in the nation of Haiti.

We are a *Christ-centered* organization with a mission to share the unconditional love of God to orphans through food, shelter, education and medical needs. They believe the love of God and the gospel of Christ is not only to be shared in word but also in deed.

Our vision is to impact the orphan culture in Haiti by restoring hope. Many children are not "true" orphans in the strictest sense, rather have been given to an orphanage due to poverty conditions within the home, thus a result of having little hope to care for the children. This is an all too common occurrence in this country. This organization was born out of a passion placed by God after the earthquake of 2010.

Haiti was only the name of a country whose people were suffering in abject poverty only worsened by the earthquake. But with the unfortunate event of January 12, 2010 their hearts melted with compassion for the people of this tiny nation.

### **Our Journey**

---

The journey began with Michelle going to Haiti as a volunteer on a "short-term mission trip". It was love at first sight. The people, the children, the country as a whole was endearing and she soon knew this was no ordinary trip; it was the beginning of something great.

On this trip she met a young boy named Kerby, age 12 at the time. He was smart and very personable. Most volunteers gravitate to the little ones, but not Michelle. She could see the look in the older children's eyes, saying "Hello, I'm here too". Kerby and Michelle hit it off immediately and there was a divine connection that soon drew an introduction to his little sister Kerlandy, age 6. Each day she visited

the orphanage they became closer. She knew on the last day that this could NOT be the last time she would see Kerby and Kerlandy.



### **The Adoption**

After coming home and sharing the details of the March 2010 trip with Jonathan, he knew that he would have to go experience this for himself. After much prayer the adoption process was underway and also trip to Haiti for Kerby and Kerlandy to meet their new dad. Upon arrival it was love at first sight for all parties. The circle was now complete. It seemed as if the purpose for their initiation into Haiti had met its fulfillment; adopt these two beautiful children.

On Jonathan's first trip, they stayed with the same missionary Michelle had gone with in March, Rebecca Maesato. She graciously allowed them to stay at her guest house even though she already had a group there. Each evening, devotions were held for the weary volunteers and the session ended with prayer. After a few nights, Rebecca chose to pray the closing prayer and in the prayer she asked God to send Michelle and Jonathan to Haiti to serve as missionaries because she felt she recognized their "heart". Needless to say this took both by surprise but it was a seed sown that would soon come to fruition.

## **Our Support**

---

Both Jonathan and Michelle knew there was so much more to this venture than adoption. The people were beautiful and the need was great. There was no longer the question of “Why Haiti?” With little knowledge of how they would pay for the expense of an adoption let alone how they could ever garner support to help such a broken country left questions that could only be answered by a great and mighty God.

International adoptions are lengthy, complex and costly. Over the next 20 months there would be 9 more trips to Haiti and with each passing trip the burden grew larger. Seeing so many orphans and suffering children in a country devoid of social assistance for the 5 million youth in the country was heart-wrenching. Each trip was accompanied by visits with Kerby and Kerlandy and visits to various other orphanages. Bags were filled with relief items such as food, books, shampoo, medicines and toys for these suffering children. It had begun.

Many conversations on the plane ride home spoke of how the people could be helped. Finally it was obvious an organization would have to be formed. Countless ideas of how to help were discussed but the theme was constant; it would be an organization to help orphans.

**(continued below)**

## Our Mission

---

The name Helping Hands 4 Haiti seems cliché, but the purpose cannot be just about handing out help but rather lending a hand to help. Haitians are proud and resourceful people. Unfortunately the economic climate is one that produces many blockades to social and economic development. Therefore, they are committed to creating an environment with orphans to help them see a way to a better life. In short, we want to see them *HOPE!*



Obviously, this begins with the necessities of life such as shelter, food and the daily necessities that people in the United States often take for granted. But the goals are to educate these children and then begin the process of helping them develop social skills that will serve them well outside the orphanage setting.

As they grow, identification of talents, gifts and interests must occur and create opportunities to transition them into a trade or perhaps further their formal education. This strategy enables them to see through their passion of tapping into the God-given gifts already in them and then assist their development into functional parts of Haitian society. It will create new family units that will “pay forward” this ideology for generations to come.

No, this is not a quick fix. There is no such thing when a country has methodically been ravaged of its resources through poor economic infrastructure and corrupt governments that ignore the needs of its own people. It starts one boy, one girl at a

time. A seamstress here, a welder there, perhaps a teacher, minister, accountant, translator, truck driver; many opportunities are available to those who may only need a little assistance and someone to love them and believe in them. HH4H is built to do just that. It will take time and resources but it CAN be done!

After months of wondering where they could start their operation God opened a door to visit a place in Port au Prince called, Voice of the Children orphanage. Our friend and translator Moise Blanc knew a man who was a policeman in the city who was connected to this orphanage. The orphanage was in desperate need of assistance. Their story was sad. With just under 50 children at the time, their first visit to Voice of the Children was on a trip with Jonathan with some senior mission's officials of a denomination that wanted to see Haiti and what was going on there. After visiting many orphanages, this one seemed to be in greater need than any we had encountered.



The orphanage director Martina Etienne, aka “Mama”, as we affectionately call her, was the widow of a pastor from a city just east of Leogane, which had been the epicenter of the earthquake. The pastor had passed away before the earthquake and Mama had moved the orphanage to Port au

Prince because with her husband gone, so was the life-blood of the financial support of the children. The NGO's (non-government organizations) of Port au Prince posed a greater opportunity for assistance for the children. Mama's sister had a house in Delmas 33 (area of Port au Prince) and allowed her to bring the children to the outside yard area of the house.

God impressed Jonathan and Michelle that they were to partner with Voice of the Children Orphanage. There are a great many details to the story that time and space do not permit. Suffice to say, the relationship felt like destiny for both parties. Always taken by the gratitude shown by the people of the orphanage, it has been a partnership made in heaven.