



## SIDE by SIDE, June 18-25, 2014

Our Side by Side for Christ Team, led by Lennie Fenton and Stacy and Mike Veseling, spent June 18-25<sup>th</sup> on mission in Haiti. First timers and veterans to this work were both forever changed by our experiences and the people we met. Praise God for his goodness and for the hope and joy he lavishes on us and, above all, for the salvation found in Jesus Christ. We hit the ground running and were a part of activities and projects at Village of Hope School (VOH), Hope House and Little Children of Jesus (LCJ).

At Village of Hope we, first of all, were privileged to attend the kindergarten graduation ceremony. The children were beyond adorable as they performed. "Raise Haiti" was the theme and pride in the country and the focus on recovery from the years and years of devastation and extreme poverty was inspiring to witness. Hope is alive and these children will become amazing leaders and agents of continued change. It wasn't all fun and games though! The work teams spent many days at VOH making modifications and improvements on the water system on the roof of the kitchen building – a huge undertaking. We purchased and installed a new stove for the kitchen and also replaced the old sink with two new ones! The kitchen floor was scrubbed on hands and knees as well! The boys and girls bathrooms received new toilets and other much-needed plumbing improvements as well as a thorough cleaning! Even the roof of the building received a major cleanup removing many branches and other debris including some unwanted critters. The interior courtyard walls of the health center at VOH received a fresh new coat of white paint and look beautiful.



We visited LCJ several times spending much one-on-one time with the disabled children who reside at this orphanage. This place is all about love and ongoing relationships. The staff and children squealed and literally jumped for joy when they saw Stacy – one of our leaders who has made this her personal mission field. We danced, colored, blew bubbles, played soccer, and helped with feeding. There was much laughter and hand-holding. Never underestimate the power of the human touch and a smile! It was hard to say goodbye on the last day – these kids will be forever in our hearts and prayers.

Hope House, where our team lived, was a wonderful haven thanks to the dear Dixon family and we were so thrilled to be able to work on some big improvement projects there. Our team worked tirelessly on the water system, a new trash incinerator, and new shelving for the storage depot. Huge strides were made by hours and hours of labor making this an even better functioning basecamp for the mission teams to come. Additionally, we put together school kits for the approximate 650 students and the teachers at VOH. The donations of so many will certainly help kick-off the upcoming school year but the supply depot, now cleaned and organized, has some empty shelves!

We toured Food for the Poor and were able to take turns serving a few of the almost 1000 families that rely on them for their food each and every day. What an amazing organization which many literally could not live without. We saw Feed My Starving Children Manna Packs there – so cool to see the end of the line for the packing work so many of us do in the states. Keep going and packing that food everyone! The need is so great.



We attended a small local church where we praised God in two languages and heard an inspiring sermon on the power of Jesus. We were reminded how we all worship and serve ONE amazing God and are part of ONE family. Two brief outings to lunch high over Port Au Prince and to shop in the metalwork district showed us a different view of Haiti and we were impressed by the natural beauty of the country and the resilience, industriousness and artistic skills of the local people. Team members who have been going for years said they saw big progress in the roads, quantity of garbage and building efforts in some horrible and previously devastated areas – a step in the right direction but a long, long road ahead. Rise Haiti!

Tracy, Marshall, Cameron, Devin and Kaiden Dixon were gracious hosts and we are so blessed to have been able to join them for even a short time. The staff there was amazing as well – hardworking, kind servants and so wonderful to us. The work they do each and every day is growing His Kingdom by leaps and bounds. Thank you for answering the call to serve our dear Lord in this way. We are humbled and inspired. God is good.