


◦ [Courier Marketplace](#)

• - Last 7 Days - 

[RSS](#) | [Print](#) | [Comments](#) | [Tell a Friend](#) | [Larger Text](#) | [Smaller Text](#) | 

## Local News

**Thursday, January 14, 2010**

Mission Possible volunteer team safe



*Share Your Heart  
With An Evening  
of Romance & Comedy!!*

**Enjoy Enchanté Cabaret  
Dinner Theater "Journey's"**

Friday Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> Featuring:  
Chef Chris' Prime Rib Buffet  
Piano music by Michael Peslikis  
After the Show Dessert & Coffee

*Call Tony to make your credit  
card reservation at 419-422-5682*

**FINDLAY INN**  
CONFERENCE CENTER  
DOWNTOWN

200 East Main Cross, Findlay  
419 422-5682 - 800 825-1455  
www.findlayinn.com

By MARGARET DWIGGINS

Family editor

A team of volunteers for Findlay-based Mission Possible was in Haiti this week when the country was hit by a massive earthquake, but all were reported safe as of Wednesday morning.

Mission Possible operates six Christian schools in Haiti and regularly sends teams of volunteers to work with schoolchildren.

The team there now was planning to lead a women's health seminar and take photos of schoolchildren to provide to sponsors.

Kurt Bishop, president of Mission Possible, said his wife, Julie Bishop, 37, Mission Possible's director of public relations, was leading the team. They arrived Saturday for what was to be a week-long trip working with schoolchildren in Montois, a village about 40 miles north of Port-au-Prince, where the earthquake's impact was centered.

Team members from Findlay include Betty Flanagan, a member of New Life Assembly of God; Mark and Pam Macke of Pandora, members of St. John's Mennonite Church in Pandora; and Nancy Rook of Bloomdale, a member of First Church of the Nazarene in Findlay. Team members also included volunteers from Michigan and Wisconsin.

Trace Roth, Mission Possible's finance director, said team members felt the quake and its aftershocks.

As of Wednesday morning the team was still trying to assess how much the Montois area had been affected.

Kurt Bishop said he was told that one of Mission Possible's schools collapsed during the quake, but no students were injured.

"They're (the mission team) all holding up well, they're energized that they're there, but they don't know what's happening. We know more than they do at this point, we're feeding them information," he said.

"Communications and travel are a real problem right now," Bishop said.

There were no plans to send Mission Possible team members into Port-au-Prince.

"We're not a search and rescue relief operation," Bishop said. He said the security situation in Port-au-Prince is often chaotic and he believed it would be too dangerous to send volunteers there. He was focusing efforts on an exit strategy for the team.

The only international airport in Haiti, in Port-au-Prince, sustained heavy damage but was open to relief flights by Wednesday morning.

Bishop said Wednesday night he anticipates the volunteers will be coming home this weekend.

Mission Possible's six schools in Haiti serve more than 2,500 students. Children receive a Christian education and are also provided with nutritious lunches every day, a significant service in the impoverished country. The organization also has a Bible school and a vocational school.

"We're all about training leaders," Kurt Bishop said. "We're not set up for disaster relief in general."

By early Wednesday, the phones at Mission Possible's Findlay office were "ringing off the hook," Bishop said, with calls from supporters worried about the mission team.

"Our prayer request is that we would ask people in Findlay to pray for this team, that they'll have an effective ministry where they can, and for God to return them safely," he said.

Additional information on the status of the volunteers is available on the group's Web site.

The Churches of God, General Conference, headquartered in Findlay, also has a mission team in Haiti. None of the volunteers is from Findlay.

However, two staff members had just returned from a trip to Haiti on Monday.

Lance Finley, director of youth and family ministry for the denomination, and Don Dennison, director of cross-cultural ministries, attended an annual leadership gathering.

Finley said he is scheduled to take a short-term mission trip to Haiti in May with a group of high school and college students, and he was scouting out possible projects and places to stay. He believes the trip will still happen, but there are now "a lot of questions to be answered."

The Churches of God operates more than 30 churches in Haiti, 19 schools, a hospital and a medical clinic, but none is in Port-au-Prince.

According to Dee Callahan, an administrative assistant for the Churches of God Cross-Cultural Ministries, a team of volunteers from Celina and Middletown, Pa., arrived safely in Port-au-Prince Tuesday, less than an hour before the earthquake hit. Team members were to be transported to Pierre Payen on Wednesday and would complete their volunteer service working in churches as planned.

Barry Mickey, a retired professor of social work for the University of Findlay, has also been a regular visitor and volunteer in Haiti.

For many years, Mickey took UF students to Haiti to expose them to life in a developing country. After retirement, he taught social work at the University of Haiti in Port-au-Prince and served on the board of directors for International Childcare, a nonprofit organization which provides funding for Grace Children's Hospital. He has made repeated visits to Haiti for hospital work, most recently in August.

Mickey said most of the buildings in Port-au-Prince are made of concrete block with no structural reinforcement.

The buildings, Mickey said, are "one on top of the other on hillsides. If one on the top falls, it pushes the one below down."

He had no information on how much damage Grace Children's Hospital sustained, but he doubts the two-story building had any structural reinforcement.

From e-mails he's received from friends in Port-au-Prince, Mickey learned that the six-story guest house where he stayed in Port-au-Prince collapsed during the earthquake. People in a prayer meeting on the top floor when the earthquake occurred "rode the roof down," and miraculously, no one was killed.

Mickey said the earthquake is likely to devastate the small island country where the health care system was "meager to begin with," and is likely to undo the great progress that had been made with infrastructure and social problems in the last two years.

On the Net:

[ourmissionispossible.org](http://ourmissionispossible.org)

Dwiggins: 419-427-8477,

[Send an e-mail to Margaret Dwiggins](#)

[Subscribe to The Courier.](#)

### Comment on This Story

**NOTE:** Comment moderation has been enabled. If you see a comment that violates our [Electronic User Agreement](#), please e-mail [rebeccaonklin@thecourier.com](mailto:rebeccaonklin@thecourier.com). Thank you. If you