



Wednesday, January 27, 2010

## Mission Possible: Helping hands hard at work in Haiti

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By Sara Bailey

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PANDORA - They're ordinary people with extraordinary hearts.

Mark and Pam Macke, of Pandora, have a passion that fulfills not only their lives, but those of others as well.

The Macke's goal is to spread God's love through Mission Possible of Findlay, a ministry that was established in 1979 which helps third world countries by supplying natives with schools, shelter, food, supplies and most of all, love.

In 2008, Mark and Pam went with a church group through Mission Possible to the Dominican Republic on a medical mission. The couple saw the incredible work being mastered by the ministry and decided to embark on more journeys with the organization in the future.

Two weeks ago, the Macke's took advantage of another mission trip to Haiti.

Mark, an electrician by trade for Ford Motor Company, worked on building a vocational school in Montrouis, Haiti, during the trip.

"I joined a construction team that was already down there and my job was to finish up the wiring," said Mark.

Pam, a registered nurse, also volunteered her time to the women of Haiti.

"I went as an OB nurse. We had a women's clinic and we gave out birthing kits. We showed them how they could deliver their own babies," she said.

Having both been to other third world countries in the past, Haiti was a different experience for the Macke's because of the amount of poverty they saw so close to America's shores.

"We both have been to third world countries before, and having a third world country so close, realizing the need there and also knowing that Christianity can be spread there is why we're so passionate about it," said Mark. "The change that we've seen and the good things we've seen by God working through the structure of Mission Possible keeps us going."

In fact, their immense compassion was put to the test on Jan. 12, while working in Montrouis, Haiti, about 35 miles away from Port au Prince.

"We just finished for the day and we were putting our tools away and all of a sudden, I mean this building just started shaking, and it felt like the building was coming down," said Mark about a building he could see from his job site. "I did not think it was an earthquake at all.

"I just thought for some reason this building was falling apart and was going to go down. And then we were all standing there together, and finally I said, 'this is an earthquake!' So then, I went right down the steps and out the door, and they were soon after me. I didn't look back.

"It felt like someone real big, like a football player or something, grabbed me by the thighs and shook me as hard as they could shake me. And this lasted just under a minute."

Once everyone was out of the school building in which they were working, Mark and his co-workers kind of laughed about the situation until they heard 200 some children running out of the school screaming in fear, which made Mark uneasy.

"I was probably about five miles from Mark at the Mission Possible compound, and there were three nurses there and we were organizing all of our supplies," said Pam. "I think at first, none of us knew what happened. We just kind of looked at each other and thought we need to get out of this building. And so we ran out and we realized this must be an earthquake."

It wasn't until later that evening that Mark, Pam and all the Mission Possible volunteers heard of the extent of the impact, as cell phones were down. However, some people were able to pick up a satellite Internet connection on their computers. In fact, Mark and Pam used Facebook to stay in contact with their family members.

One Haitian woman, the wife of Herve Pierre, Haiti's Mission Possible Field Director, was listening to the radio that evening when she heard that thousands of Haitians had lost their lives in the earthquake.

Then came the tsunami warnings, said Mark. "And we were on the water. The ocean was less than 100 feet from the front of the building where we stayed."

Fortunately, the tsunami warnings were later cancelled, but tremors occurred throughout Tuesday night and into the next morning. Mark and Pam could actually see the tremors shaking a basketball hoop outside, and their bed shook throughout the night as well.

After the earthquake, Haitians slept outside because they were so afraid to go back into their homes, and schools were cancelled, possibly for the rest of the year, said Pam.

On Wednesday, Jan. 13, Pam realized just how many extra medical supplies they had with them that were given to Mission Possible.

"I was almost frustrated that we had so much stuff and I knew it was never going to get used in the schools, so Herve, who's the head of Mission Possible in Haiti, came down and said, 'can we take these supplies to St. Marc?,' since the hospital in Port au Prince had been destroyed.

Volunteers gathered the supplies and loaded them in the bed of a small, Toyota pickup truck. Pam and another nurse dropped off the supplies at the hospital that night.

"We had sutures, we had antibiotics, baby diapers, etc. It was amazing how much stuff we had that we would have never used in those schools. So it was really neat how it worked out and we were able to take those supplies to people in need," said Pam.

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