



Haiti: Mission Possible: Pandora couple survive quake, deliver medical aid

Feb. 1--PANDORA -- As she organized box after box of medical supplies, Pam Macke wondered what she would do with everything. The generosity was appreciated but overwhelming. There was simply too much for her small mission group to use.

A day later, she and her husband, Mark, heaped the once unneeded provisions in the back of a small pickup truck and drove to St. Mark Hospital outside Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

"It turned into a blessing," Mark said.

Mark and Pam Macke arrived in Haiti on Jan. 9 on a mission trip with Mission Possible, an organization that operates six schools and several Christian churches throughout the impoverished nation.

Mark, an electrician, was finishing the wiring in a new vocational school that will offer computer training, a two-year nursing program, and teach construction trades. Pam, an obstetrics nurse, was one of three nurses presenting women's health clinic. Most Haitian women must deliver their own children.

When the earthquake hit Jan. 12, Mark was in the schoolhouse, about 35 miles north of the epicenter in downtown Port-au-Prince. Pam was at the mission's base compound in Montrouis, about 30 miles from downtown. Both buildings withstood the tremors and Pam and Mark made it through unscathed.

The trip was their first to Haiti, though both have traveled on mission trips for years, visiting Alaska, Mali and the Dominican Republic.

A few years ago, they were involved with Mission Possible and sponsored a child in Haiti, helping the child get vitamins and at least one good, hot meal a day.

"These people live with so little and they make do. The kids were playing soccer with a gas can and having a great time," she said. "I probably have six soccer balls back there."

After the quake, many of the Haitian people whose homes remained standing refused to go in. They slept outside, in fear of more destruction. Those who were injured had trouble finding help -- and a hospital that remained standing with enough provisions.

Mission Possible's leader in Haiti is Pastor Herve Pierre, a man the Mackes heap with praise for his knowledge, leadership and spiritual guidance.

He told the Mackes to go ahead and take everything to St. Mark -- sutures, antibiotics, vitamins, blankets, hydrogen peroxide, slings and thousands of bandages.

Makeshift cardboard splints, scrounged by the wounded, were replaced by cut-down 1/4 -inch thick luan board that Mark's crew was using to build walls in the school. "It worked perfectly for splint material," he said.

Soon though, Pierre made the decision to get the missionaries out of the country.

"Once word started coming in of the casualties and the needs and you're there, you say what can I do? And then they tell you you're going home," Mark said. "You feel you could have done something but you understand the reason they made the decision they did."

Pierre arranged for the group to take a four-hour trip across the border into the Dominican Republic. They flew out of that country.

Mark and Pam are a bit reluctant to tell their story, wanting to make sure the spotlight stays off them on the work of Mission Possible and the need of the Haitian people.

"We see good things coming out of the missions," Pam said. "This is teaching, training leadership, training people to make a difference, to break the cycle. You see that and you want to help. You don't want to give it to them, but you want to help them."

Donations, 100 percent of which goes to the relief effort, can be made through Mission Possible's Web site, www.ourmissionispossible.org . As soon as Mission Possible is ready for missionaries to return, the Mackes will be back.

"I think a lot of people say why Lord did something like this happen? I think he's saying what are you going to do?" Pam said.

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