

Mission Possible Is Making a Difference in Haiti through Its Help for Survivors and Its Generous Spirit

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When a disaster strikes somewhere in the world, Americans are quick to respond with needed help. The recent 7.2 earthquake that hit in Haiti on Tuesday, January 12 provides an excellent of such a response.

In fact, Mission Possible, an interdenominational Christian ministry located in Findlay, had a team of 12 volunteers in Haiti. They were just one of 15 to 20 volunteer groups from the organization who serve in Haiti yearly. This particular team was there to provide a Women's Health seminar and also to take photographs of children being sponsored through Mission Possible.

The group had also brought with them first aid supplies, medicine, baby products, diapers, and blankets they had collected from friends and family. "Little did we know [that] all we had collected.. would not be used for our Women's Health work, but [would] provide immediate relief to those in . . . desperate need," Julie Bishop, leader of the team, says.

Although the team had to leave quickly because of concern about aftershocks and the need to get trauma medicine, their desire to help has not waned. "We want to get back as soon as we can," says Bishop.

Mission Possible has been in existence since 1979. It was begun by Gene Kandel who wanted to create a hand up ministry, not a hand out one. By that, he wanted to avoid creating an organization that would make the recipients of its aid dependent upon the organization. This, he believed those people would then have an unhealthy self-image. A hand up ministry, on the other hand, would enable those people to contribute to their own success. They then would value what they have earned.

For instance, Mission Possible runs six schools, which served 2500 Haitian children. Haitians staff those schools with Mission Possible volunteers offering assistance to them. At present, the organization is focusing its efforts on the need of the Haitians to have both medicine and medical teams, in spite of the fact that two buildings of one of its schools were damaged and will have to be rebuilt.

This makes for a lot of work for the five-fulltime employees. "It's been pretty hectic here," Kurt Bishop, President of Mission Possible, comments. Even though the organization has several large donors, it has a significant need for volunteers to help at its office on 125 West Front Street. In particular, Mission Possible needs sponsors for children in Haiti and in the Dominican Republic where it ministers to 550 children.

Sponsorships provide immediate help for survivors who are in local hospitals.

Anyone wishing to volunteer need only come to the office or call 419-422-3364. Those who want to be a sponsor can either do it locally or through the website at www.possibilitykids.org. They can register to participate and can even pick a child (or children) to sponsor. Sponsors keep in touch with the children through letters to and from the child and they also can learn about their child and the country itself through Mission Possible.

Kurt has been associated with Mission Possible for a long time. Gene Kandel was his grandfather. In the 1980s, "He asked me to come to Haiti where he lived," Kurt says. He went and experienced for him a life changing experience. He's been involved ever since.

Raising money is critical at present, since Mission Possible cannot return to Haiti until the government there says they can. "Funds are needed to purchase basic supplies to keep these earthquake survivors hydrated, clean, and nourished," Julie adds. People can stay updated on Mission Possible and the Haiti earthquake at the organization's web site, www.OurMissionIPossible.org.

Interested individuals can also volunteer to be a member of a short-term Mission team and actually go to Haiti. Both Kurt and Julie note that volunteers will not only have a rewarding overseas ministry experience; they will also gain useful experience in construction, medical ministry, evangelism, and teacher or pastor training.

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