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Mission Possible team returns to Haiti one year after earthquake
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Family Editor

When Haiti was hit by a massive earthquake a year ago this week, a team of volunteers from Mission Possible, a nonprofit Christian agency based in Findlay, was in the middle of a week-long mission trip. All returned safely.

Although the country is still in chaos, Mission Possible, which operates six Christian schools and a vocational school in Haiti, continues to send volunteer teams. The most recent team left for Haiti on Jan. 1 and returned this week.

Rachel Powell, a public relations representative with Mission Possible who co-led the team, said the team included people from Findlay, Akron, Catalina Island in California, Austin, Texas and London, Ontario, Canada.

The focus of the trip was health education. Medical clinics were set up at each of Mission Possible's schools, which serve approximately 3,500 students. Some of the schools are located in mountainous areas and not accessible by vehicle, so volunteers walked up to an hour to reach the facilities.

Powell said the medical clinic served 649 patients in four days.

"The main problems we saw were malnutrition, skin conditions like ringworm, intestinal worms and stomach problems. We educated about 1,000 people and passed out 1,000 adult and children health kits that included soap, shampoo, a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss and educational information in Creole on cholera and teeth brushing."

"We saw many children with signs of malnourishment ... , many families who hadn't eaten because there simply is no food, and many people who have suffered over the last year Our team members' hearts broke at the sight of these children," she said.

Soap, shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste were donated by Findlay residents, Powell said.

In addition, health seminars were conducted, with volunteers teaching Haitians how to prevent cholera, which has become epidemic in the months following the earthquake; and how to sanitize water, dig latrines and properly wash their hands and brush their teeth.

Powell said Findlay resident Monica Copeland led the cholera training and Findlay resident Andrew Yates taught the latrine-digging sessions.

Powell said that Copeland explained to the Haitians that cholera is a bacterial infection

that is spread by eating food or drinking water contaminated with the bacteria.

Copeland demonstrated how to use chlorine crystals to purify water as well as proper hand-washing techniques. She used a black light and a solution to show how cholera and other diseases can spread. The lesson also included information on the importance of properly cooking food and boiling water over a fire when cooking food.

Powell said Mission Possible volunteers work hard to teach the Haitian people about sustainability, not dependability.

"We want them to invest in their lives and make something of their situations. Our focus is to 'equip the next generation of Christ-centered leaders,'" she said.

For more information on Mission Possible, call 419-422-3364, visit www.OurMissionIsPossible.org, or e-mail Powell at Rachel@OurMissionIsPossible.org.

Article at:

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