

## Helping Hands 4 Haiti Timeline

With any journey of faith, one only needs a sense of general direction and faith in a God who cannot fail to begin. It was no different for us. When we began to feel that part of our course was to be involved in the assistance of Voice of the Children Orphanage in Port au Prince Haiti, common sense said that it was difficult to tell children how much you love them when they are hungry. In addition, simple shelter and other basic needs took immediate priority for us. Therefore, we embarked on our new journey to take measures to secure the most basic needs of any human being. The pictures in the video tell a story. When we first arrived, the facility was deplorable. The children were extremely malnourished; not by neglect, but rather by lack.

[See more photos](#)

In 2013 HH4H headed up 4 teams to remedy this problem. Starting in February we had a small group show up with budget money in hand with only a shell of an idea how we would achieve it. But thanks to our workers and financial partners, we have been able to make great strides to improve the daily lives of 43 children at Voice of the Children. Below is somewhat of a timeline of what was done at the orphanage:

- built a shelter over the destroyed common area
- repaired many broken items related to living quarters
- demolished existing girls quarters
- extended building past common area with a new girls room
- Built new dining table and repaired the broken one
- built onto first two sections with an adjoining pitch roof to completely enclose entire property
- repaired boys roof leaks
- created a guttering system to retrieve water for washing etc.

- built and bought new beds for children
- cleaned entire property
- created a small gardening area
- repaired front gate door
- concreted floors throughout the entire facility



The first thing we noticed when we returned for our second visit was the beds (or lack thereof). We took video and pictures of the metal bunk beds, a common site in orphanages in Haiti. We discovered that 2 boys slept in one twin bed each and 4 girls to one bed. Some even slept on the

dirty concrete floor for lack of a bed. The beds had no mattresses; only cardboard and some blankets to keep the mesh wire from the bodies of the children. We were heartbroken. Michelle and I went home promising we would change that one thing if we didn't do another thing! After prayer and some discussion on the way back home, we had a plan! I called my translator and asked him to go around town and price me some mattresses. We told him we needed 20 and at a good price! Moise messaged us back and we could get them for \$65 each. So we went on our Facebook page and began challenging people to sponsor a bed. We had an overwhelming response! 29 people



stepped up and we bought more than we originally planned, but it has worked out well because we have added 4 more beds since then. Now EVERY child has their very own bed and mattress!

Moise and our friend Patrick delivered them to the orphanage and the children were simply ecstatic! Sweet dreams have begun for our sweet children at Voice of the Children!



Since HH4H began, we have undertaken the task of providing workable shelter solutions for the children in Port au Prince. A combination of factors had made living conditions deplorable. The earthquake had destroyed part of the porch area where the children stayed and then two hurricanes in the fall of 2012 took roofs off the common area. As a result, bedding spaces became cramped with around 50 children (at that time) living in less than 400 square feet under a reasonable roof.



Our first project was to get a roof over the common area. This is the area where the children eat, convene, do homework and fellowship. It is essential to orphanage life. As we arrived some rather old canvas tarps were providing some shade for the kids.

It is 90-95 degrees on any given day in Haiti and the sun is relentless, even if you are used to it. Rainy season is in May and it often rains in the evenings in other months of the year. If rain occurred at mealtime, the children had to improvise by taking their food into their already cramped living quarters.

With the help of a few friends and partners, we were able to build a 20x27 structure over the common area. During the trip we discussed the next phase of the project and decided we would enclose more of the structure to make it more safe from the sun and rain.

In 2013, Phase 2 became bigger than anticipated. We decided to tear down the old girls room and dry in part of the formerly erected structure to make room for the girls who were sleeping 4 to one twin bed. (Needless to say, purchasing more beds is a priority as well.) As we tore down the old structure we salvaged much of the lumber for reuse and extended the new structure out and up another 18 feet. In addition we built a porch across the front so water drained properly and rerouted existing roofing with new guttering with water barrels catching the rainwater for reuse. Oh, and while we were at it, Mama asked for more tables for the children to eat...yeah, we did that too! Ask and ye shall receive!

In 2014 we had 3 teams come to Haiti to volunteer. The Cape 1st team did an unbelievable job tearing down the remaining unrepaired portion of the orphanage and began rebuilding it. a new common area, new room for Mama, a new walk-in food pantry and distinct sleeping quarters for the children.



With the completion of that project in the rearview, we began the process of adding 400 square feet and a new boys room as well as 2 new toilets and 2 new showers!



And now the facility is complete...for now!

