
MERCY & SHARING FOUNDATION

A 501(C)(3) CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

9th Edition

www.haitichildren.org

April 2004



Su-Lynn, featured in our November 2003 newsletter, is now a healthy 8-month-old living in our Cazeau orphanage.

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National Press Club Presentation

by Susie Krabacher

Note: The following is an excerpt from an April 2 speech Mercy and Sharing President Susie Krabacher gave at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The speech was aired multiple times on C-SPAN and C-SPAN 2. The events leading up to the Mercy and Sharing crisis were prompted by the attempted rebel movement take-over that resulted in the departure of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

On Feb. 22, my Haiti Director Stanley Joseph warned me that the night before, the facility which houses two of our orphanages, one of which is an orphanage for terminally ill children, had been surrounded by a dozen or so of Aristide's Chimere gunmen with stockings over their heads and automatic weapons. They demanded that we give them the property or give them money for it. The spokesman for the gang told our orphanage director that if we did not do this they would kill every one in the facility, including the children.

I immediately booked a flight and left my home in Aspen for Port-au-Prince, Haiti. After arriving in Haiti, I went directly to the orphanages to see the children. On the way, there was a massive barricade of burning tires and overturned cars. At that barricade, several armed and masked men surrounded the truck shouting at us to get out of the car. I scanned the men in front of me and was sad to realize these were not men – they were merely scared teenagers with weapons. They were protecting a president they probably had never met in person and risking their lives to do it, likely just to keep their families fed and clothed.

Stanley Joseph, our director, was driving and at the barricade was the first to get out of the car. I opened the passenger door and one of the men pointed the gun at my chest while another put a gun to the window of the back seat where two of our

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Update from Stanley Joseph

Since the departure of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Mercy and Sharing has experienced significant success stories. For example:

1. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, Mercy and Sharing has become the original orphanage program in Haiti to receive food aid. Traditionally, the UN gives food only to schools. The food from the UN's World Food Program helps us tremendously. Unfortunately, it will take quite some time to replace what was stolen during the Chimere raid of our warehouse in Haiti.
2. We have a new warehouse in a safe location and once the funds are raised, we have plans to build our own, allowing us more control of the security of goods sent to Mercy and Sharing.
3. We are in the process of negotiating a new contract to expand our Abandoned Baby Unit at the government General Hospital in Port-au-Prince. A larger facility is desperately needed, especially since the influx of abandoned babies as a result of the most recent political uprising.
4. Mercy and Sharing President Susie Krabacher has been featured in multiple TV, newspaper and magazine stories generating valuable supporters, like you!

Birthday Checks - by Meshell Woodrow

Birthdays in my extended family go something like this: You will receive a phone call from the family member who says "Happy Birthday. I just sent you a check for your birthday because I didn't know what you would want, so go out and buy yourself something from me." The truth is there is really nothing I "need." Sure, there may be things I want but can live without; nothing I really "need." Then on their birthday I do the same thing and return the favor by sending them a check (of the same amount).

I'm not sure how we got to this point of being so careless about each other's birthday but exchanging checks has become the tradition. This year, we've decided to do something about it. The adults in my extended family have agreed to stop exchanging gifts (checks) for birthdays and Christmas. Instead, we have agreed to give the money either to a charitable organization or even to a single parent or friend in need.

Mercy & Sharing would be an excellent recipient of this gesture. How about you and the other adults in your extended family discuss making this change in your giving tradition too? Perhaps each of you might agree to give a donation to Mercy & Sharing instead of exchanging birthday and Christmas presents. Every little bit really adds up to care for the precious children of Haiti. I would much rather know that those children are receiving food and medicine than for me to get a new shirt.

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staff sat. A man who appeared to be the leader ordered the young men to shoot. Mr. Joseph, with his hands in the air, began shouting back explaining that we take care of Haitian children. With my hands above my head, I was shouting that we respect them and only wanted to go to our orphanages. Mr. Joseph was finally able to convince them to remove part of the barricade and let us pass.

Once we arrived at the orphanages, we negotiated with the gang members and offered them access to our drinking water well in exchange for protection of the orphanages and peace for the children and our staff who live there.

As a result of the hold-ups at the orphanages, the children were much more clingy than usual. Usually we'll see a glum face or two at the end of the day when my staff and I leave the orphanage. This time there were many tears and pleadings that I would not leave Haiti. I promised I would not. I promised that I would return the next day to play with them. My thoughts were always of the kids when I could hear gunfire in the middle of the night.

The next few days we were held up at frequent armed barricades. People were being killed daily in the streets. Any Haitians on the streets were out because of life and death necessities, such as collecting food or water for the day. On the way to our school in Cite Soleil, which is the worst slum city in the Western Hemisphere, we passed a dead man whose face had been mutilated. A few yards away the men who killed him sat drinking rum and laughing. Later, the same day we witnessed another man being bludgeoned to death with an iron bar.

The intensity in the three days before Aristide fled the country was profound. I decided to reinforce our security at the two orphanages with extra guards. An informal curfew had been put in place the night before and the streets were virtually empty, however when the extra guards arrived they had weapons but no bullets. We had to break curfew and hit the streets to find ammunition. During the revolution, bullets were easy enough to find. After getting reports of gunfire in Cite Soleil near our school, I went there

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Mercy and Sharing Facts:

The following summarizes some of the current projects as of April of 2004:

Cite Soleil School: 100 students
Address: Bellecourt District
Cite Soleil Port-au-Prince, HAITI.
Provision of schooling/books.
One meal per day; clean water.

Decouze School: 850 students
Address: Rue de L'Amitie,
Jacmel, HAITI.
Provision of school/books.
One meal per day; clean water.

Taint Saint School: 207 students
Address: Merger Carrefour, Port-au-Prince, HAITI.
Provision of schooling/books.
One meal per day; clean water.

Mercy House Orphanage I-
Terminally Ill and Handicapped
Orphans: 61 orphans; Address:
Tabarre 16 Rue Pierre, Cazeau,
HAITI.

Mercy House Orphanage II- 32
orphans; Address: Tabarre 16 Rue
Pierre, Cazeau, HAITI.

Cazeau School: 250 students;
Address: Tabarre 16 Rue Pierre,
Cazeau, HAITI.
Provision of schooling/books.
One meal per day; clean water.

Gode School: 240 Students
Address: National #2 Merger
Gressier, Port-au-Prince, HAITI.
Provision of schooling/books.
One meal per day; clean water.

Saint Antione: 230 Students
Address: Merger Saint Antoine
Church Road, Port-au-Prince, HAITI.

Mercy and Sharing Abandoned
Infant Unit: currently 17
abandoned/orphaned babies
(Number varies as they are placed in
orphanages or die of various causes)
Address: Hospital General H.U.E.H.,
Rue Mgr Guilloux, Port-au-Prince.
Newly orphaned or abandoned
infants.

A Special Request for Help - During this time of crisis and after losing so many supplies from our warehouse in the midst of the revolution, we ask for any extra financial contributions that you can make. Because of the setbacks we have suffered, it will take more time for us to raise the funds for our upcoming medical clinic and resource center programs in addition to replacing what we lost. Now more than ever, we need your help. Thank you so much for your support! (For details on the recent political uprising, see Susie's National Press Club Presentation beginning on Page 1.) **See www.haitichildren.org to donate!**

Needs List – We have many needs now, for over 1,800 children, orphans, and special needs children

As an organization committed to giving 100% to the children, you can help us by funding (or in-kind donation) of these items in bulk (for shipping purposes), and for financial support. We realize items by the case are costly, but they are unrealistically expensive or unavailable, in Haiti. You can be crucial to our survival by sponsoring certain items monetarily. Funds are needed for:

- **Equipment – baby incubator; diesel generator; freezer; rolls of metal screens**
- **Mini-van or small bus (for transporting handicapped children)**
- **Funds for Supplies – laundry detergent; shampoo; soap; Comet; mosquito repellent; baby powder (in bulk only please)**
- **MONTHLY Sponsors for individual projects**

Mercy & Sharing Foundation does not believe in charity. In all of our projects there is a common thread – opportunity. We teach our children and in return they learn and teach others. We feed them, and when they are old enough we teach them to feed themselves and to feed others. We educate them in their youth, they learn a trade in their adolescence, and in return they provide for themselves and their families. There is no empowerment in charity, so we choose to empower instead. We employ a staff of over 140 native Haitians (average salary is US\$70.00 per month), who mentor, nurture, love and respect the children. In return our children learn to love and respect others.

Board of Directors: Susan Scott Krabacher; Joe Krabacher; Ray Buchanan; E.J. Christensen; Dr. Steve Gorlin.

Advisory Board: Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D. Mich); Dr. Serge Parisian (Orthopedic Surgeon); Stanley Joseph (In-country Director, Haiti); Mark Gillette (Defense Attaché – U.S. Embassy, Mongolia); Michael Chiu – Trustee, Cornell University.

Honorary Director: John Branchizio (1966-2003) U.S. Navy SEAL

Thank You...

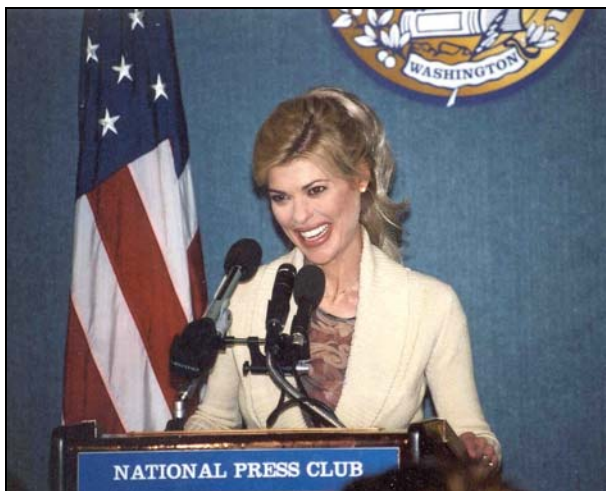
Due to recent media attention, we have received an outpouring of new supporters and contributors.

We would like to thank all the members of our Mercy and Sharing family, new and old donors both large and small. Thanks also to those who helped bring light to the work of Susie and Joe Krabacher and the foundation.

First and foremost, **Jose de Cordoba** of the Wall Street Journal, *thank you*. It was a joy to work with you and a blessing to be the subject of your pen.

Thank you also to the St. Petersburg Times' **David Adams** and **John Pendency**, Rocky Mountain News' **Joe Garner**, ABC Detroit Radio's **Kevin Collard**, **Diane Sawyer** and **Melinda Arons** of Good Morning America, **Martin Savage** and **Marilyn Joseph** of CNN, **Micheline Mendelsohn** of the National Press Club, **Steve Scully** and **Martine Rodriguez** of C-SPAN, **Debra Norville** of MSNBC, **Greta Van Susteren** of Fox News, **John Bowman** of Fox 31 Denver News, **Scott Sandow** of the Armstrong & Getty Radio Show, Aspen Times' **Scott Condon** and **Bob Ward**, and freelance writer **Alan Steinberg**.

Thank you all!



Susie Krabacher speaks at the National Press Club

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to make arrangements to meet with Amaral, the gang leader in the area of Bellecourt, which is the same location of our Mercy and Sharing school. I also wanted to meet with Billy, the gang leader in the area adjacent to our school.

I really wanted to sit with Billy and Amaral, the two gang leaders, together at the same time. I hoped it would give me a small advantage because I believed these were the two gangs shooting at each other in the area. This on-going problem is of grave concern to me as I already have had one of my girls, a student at the Cite Soleil school, caught in cross-fire. She was shot in the stomach three times. It was a miracle, but she is actually surviving.

The opposing gang letters agreed to meet together on Billy's turf. I was absolutely amazed and a bit cautious wondering why they had agreed to see me together. I hoped I hadn't made a mistake.

They took me deep into Cite Soleil to a large vacant church. We sat down on a long bench and I asked Amaral if he was pleased with the school that Mercy and Sharing had built in his area as well as the basketball court we had built for the children. Amaral nodded that he was.

I told him that I did not want to stop my work in Cite Soleil. But I explained that my board members and I needed to feel safe about the children in order to continue operating the school, and the Mercy and Sharing nutrition program. I reminded him that I had lost 12 children in the last decade to gang gunfire, and only a month ago had one critically wounded.

Amaral assured me that he would keep the shooting away from the school, and that he would warn us of any violent demonstrations in the area. I also told him that we needed to bring fresh supplies and food to the school, but we were afraid they would be stolen. So he said he would provide us with security when we brought in the supplies.

Billy, Amaral's adversary, asked if I would take a few minutes to come to his turf. He wanted to see if Mercy and Sharing could help with a school in his area. I walked with him through his

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...Press Club (cont. from page 4)

area and met several members of his gang as well. I tried to end the meeting while we were all on good terms. One thing I've learned over the past 10 years is that although many of these men are drug dealers and murderers, they stay in power because they help their families and communities. After the meeting, we walked toward the truck and my staff and I left immediately.

The next day we got word early in the morning that our main warehouse had been looted. Everything was taken. Just after daybreak, about 20 Chimere arrived with flatbed trucks, held our guard at gunpoint and took tens of thousands of dollars worth of diapers, rice, beans, and medical supplies. In one day we lost what took at least one year to raise, collect and send to Haiti.

Having our main supply of diapers and food stolen, we immediately put all nine of our Mercy and Sharing projects on survival rations, one meal a day. We go through approx. 6,000 diapers a month, and that's without any diarrhea epidemics. Since our diaper supply was stolen, we began using torn-up towels. It's always the children who suffer as a result of this violence and crime. At the General Hospital – where Mercy and Sharing operates one of the only abandoned baby facilities in the country at the government hospital – things were quiet during the week prior to and after Aristide's departure. Most people were cut off from the public hospital because of all the armed roadblocks. This left many people without urgent medical care, especially children, the elderly, and vulnerable pregnant women. Yet the following week, when roads were safer to travel, the influx of children was astounding. We had so many babies we were placing two and three babies in one crib.

Only time will tell whether justice will be done in Haiti. In an attempt to escape justice for at least a decade of oppression, several of Aristide's staff and ministers followed the former president's example by fleeing the country. Other officials are in hiding. Remaining ministers, congressmen, and top-ranking police officials are required to stay in the country while the new government investigates charges of political murders, attacks and drug dealing. The general public is beginning to feel impatient with the

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the Escrip Program

Frequently we receive requests from people who would like to donate to the foundation but who don't think they have the financial means to do so. We have a program that *anyone* can contribute to, and it can be done at no cost to you! It's called the Escrip Program. Here is how it works:

- 1) Go to our website at www.haitichildren.org and click on the "donate" tab.
- 2) Click on the ***Escrip*** icon on the Donate page.
- 3) Click **sign-up**, then search for the "Mercy & Sharing Foundation" at Group ID #154729897, and then enter your Visa or MasterCard information. That's it!

Escrip will then donate a percentage of all charges on your card to the Mercy and Sharing Foundation at no cost to you!

Vicki with Susie...



Susie holds Vicki Bane at the Cazeau orphanage in the courtyard with the children. On the February/March trip, Susie hired extra security to assure the safety of the children during the recent political uprising.

...Press Club (cont. from page 5)

relaxed attitude about bringing these criminals to justice. And it's no wonder.

On March 4, looters found a safe underneath Jean-Bertrand Aristide's home with an estimated \$350,000 US in disintegrated and rotting cash. Though some claimed it could have been anyone's money and not Aristide's, the crumbled cash, wasted and unused in a country that is devastatingly poor is emblematic of Aristide's reign in power and a symbol of how little he did to help his suffering people.

Yet despite all of this, I hope with great passion that Haiti's new Prime Minister Gerard Latortue will be a welcome change. For the first time, I think we're going to see a new day in Haiti. And I pray everyday that my children will have a good year.

Whether my children have a safe year and a healthy life will depend greatly on the amount of support Mercy and Sharing as well as other humanitarian organizations are able to get, especially during this critical time of crisis.

Most children in Haiti get their only meal a day at school. With all of the recent violence, most schools have been marginally functional since last September. Schools have only been open periodically for this past school year, and because of the real and perceived danger for students of all ages, the attendance is not up to 100 percent. Not only does that interrupt the education in Haiti where more than two-thirds of the country is illiterate, it also increases the likelihood of death due to starvation and malnutrition. Deaths of babies for the month of March were 5 times what they typically are, according to reports from hospitals in the north, where the rebel movement was swift and violent.

In an attempt to prevent such starvation, Mercy and Sharing has been distributing food in destitute areas like Cite Soleil at risk to the lives of the people handing out our last reserves of food. We are taking this risk to be assured our children are getting the important nutrition and clean water they desperately need. Just like food and clean water, medical supplies are also rapidly running out. Even the premier hospital in Port-au-Prince barely has enough anesthesia. The morgue at the best hospital in Port-au-Prince ran out of gas and

begged Mercy and Sharing to share our gasoline because the generator has not been working for three weeks. This increases all kinds of risk, and the prevalence of disease and infection. Other hospitals are even worse. The kind of medical care people are getting from public facilities is extremely alarming.

The humanitarian community needs to join together and brace the country for the long-term ramifications of a decade of violence, corruption, and apocalyptic poverty. This can't be done without worldwide support.

For the first time ever, Mercy and Sharing just received a donation of food from the United Nations World Food Program. Thank you. We deeply hope to form new relationships with UNICEF and USAID. We'd also like to thank Fund for the Poor, Catholic Relief Services, Healing Hands and American Airlines for their faithful partnership and continued support.

The need is so great, but the rewards are plentiful. I can see it in the eyes of my children everyday. Su-Lynn, for example, was the tiniest thing I've ever seen when she was born at 3 months premature, weighing only 1 pound 2 ounces. Her head made up half of her weight. Now, she's now a healthy 8-month-old baby with chubby cheeks that smiles all the time. Sedrak likes to listen to music and is always willing to lend a helping hand --- maybe he'll be the next director of one of my orphanages. And little Micheline wants to be the president of Haiti when she grows up. I implore every one of you to listen to your heart and answer your conscience. Though the food, water and clean diapers you give are important, it's the love you give and the love you need that tie you to humanity. In these children, I see and feel love. Before I began this work, I was nothing.

I'll conclude with a quote from C.S. Lewis' "Mere Christianity." It reads: "In religion, as in war and everything else, comfort is the one thing you cannot get by looking for it. If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end: if you look for comfort, you will not get either comfort or truth -- only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin with and, in the end, despair."