
MERCY & SHARING

A 501(C)(3) PUBLIC CHARITY

11th Edition

www.haitichildren.org

May 2005

Paola

by Betty Henderson

About five years ago, one morning before dawn, I was awakened by such an intense wailing and moaning that (had I been already awake and had some Haitian coffee) I might have jumped to the conclusion that *the apocalypse had begun...*

As I flew down the stairs and through the entryway of our little orphanage for termi-



This is Paola as she looks today
- what a beautiful little girl!

nally ill and disabled children, I saw the tall metal security gate apparently under siege, as our elderly guard tried to fight back a bevy of flailing arms and hands...

Through the opening in the gate, I observed a woman trying to run away, as she kicked and cursed at the young man struggling to hold her in place. The young man may have been her partner or husband. He wept silently while trying to comfort her with a soothing motion of his trembling fingers. Another much older woman (who had the unnerving ability to control the entire group with just the expression on her face) thrust a bundle of towels through the gate while the young woman finally managed to break the grip held on her. The young woman ran, never looking back. Several villagers joined the young man in pursuit of the fleeing woman.

(continued on page 2...)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Paola
- 2 New Director Search
- 3 Goods and Shipping
- 4 New Board Members
- 5 Farewell to Maryse
- 6 Q&A / Needs of M&S



*Paola at 16 months old
(before numerous surgeries
to correct her many problems...)*

The bundle held a newborn child, now known to us as Paola. The infant had an extreme cleft lip and palate, taking up most of her face. I felt I understood why the young couple had abandoned the child. They must have felt that some Voodoo Mamba had put a curse on them. I know how the witch doctors and those who practice voodoo often use the power of fear to extract money from the poor in order to "lift the curse." Since a cleft palate is a "tough" one for the Voodoo priest or witch doctor to "cure" (knowing how it works) I assumed one of the aforementioned priests or "Doctors" may have convinced the couple that they could take the curse away when they got rid of the child and parted with a few gourdes (the Haitian currency).

I turned to go and retrieve our head nurse, but she was standing at a distance, ready to take the newly born child and bathe it. I had slept fitfully the night before and returned to my bed to sleep until the sun rose. Keep in mind, with over seventy children and twenty employees living in our little compound and a flurry of daily crises, that morning a week

ago, when I woke again after sunrise and asked about the child, everything appeared normal. When I asked if it was a boy or a girl, I got the answer "oui" which is "yes". The child was sleeping, and we were speaking quietly, so I wasn't sure I heard the response correctly. At the time, I was being pulled out of the nursery to rush off to some type of government meeting so I was too distracted to question the response to my question.

During the following week, the child grew beautiful in my eyes. The old nurse, who had originally taken it on that first morning, was becoming weary because the little thing would have nothing to do with letting anyone else hold it. I let the old nurse take a shift off and go home for a day.

Once again, now that the old nurse was replaced temporarily by another less cranky one, I asked what we should name the child. Was it a boy or a girl? The nurse's hand slowly went to her mouth and she looked up as if her entire future rested on the accuracy of her answer. At this point, I was thinking to myself, I have either got to get a full time interpreter (because my Creole is really awful) or this girl may be short of a full deck. The girl slowly, with both hands, pulled back the little sticky-tape of one side of the baby's diaper. She then pulled the diaper back to show me something. I felt my mouth drop open. Ok, I did not know what to say. The poor little baby had everything, *or both!* By then, the nurse was in tears. This poor child had an entire suite of deformities; the appearance of both sexes, as well as a cleft lip and palate. And, years later, we now know that there are some internal plumbing issues that make urinary tract infections a constant problem. After years of testing, we know that her birth defect has a name, Cloacal Exstrophy.

(continued on page 3...)

(...Paola, continued from page 2)

We named the baby Paola. It is a little girl's name because, after preliminary testing, her chromosomes indicated that she was female. She is so pretty and loves all things girlish. Paola is an angel and a hero in our eyes. That baby just had such an effect on all of us. We fell, inch by inch, in love with her.

- Note from Susie Krabacher -

There is no way to describe the joy this child has brought into all of our lives. Paola has been living for the last four years with the Henderson family in Fort Meyers, Fl. This family of six took our little Paola into their home as a foster family to care for her while she received the surgeries for her cleft lip and palate. At the time, it was an urgently needed surgery due to the fact that she was having difficulty breathing and swallowing.

It saddens our hearts to recall all the suffering this child has been through. Yet, in spite of her numerous surgeries and incredible medical obstacles, she has a delightful loving spirit. There are so few people on this earth with her extraordinary spirit. I know we are very blessed to have met this little person.

The reason I am telling you about Paola now is that the child needs us to help her, and we simply cannot do it without your personal support. Paola is, for all intents and purposes, the Henderson's daughter. The Henderson children consider Paola their sister. Paola has the complete support of the Henderson's extended family and friends as they consider her a member of the Henderson family. The Hendersons want to make Paola a permanent addition to their family through adoption and we are working on the adoption process with them. In the meantime, Paola is still in need of urgent medical care to correct the Cloacal Exstrophy that is caus-

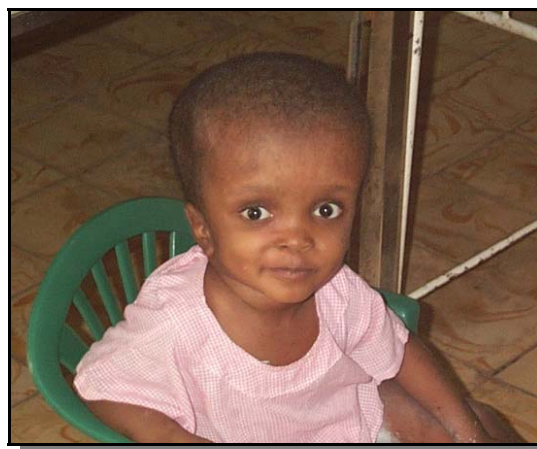
(continued on page 4...)

Search for New Director Under Way

Mercy & Sharing is currently looking for a new In-Country Director to oversee our operations in Haiti. We have appointed a temporary Acting Director who is extremely well qualified and who is spending much time and effort making sure that the children are safe and being well cared for.

The previous In-Country Director, Mr. Stanley Joseph, is no longer working for Mercy & Sharing, and in fact he has confessed to stealing large shipments of milk and other items from Mercy & Sharing and selling them for his personal gain. Mr. Joseph was placed under arrest in Haiti on April 21, 2005, and further appropriate action will be taken to protect our children, personnel and operations. Mercy & Sharing has "zero-tolerance" for fraud and corruption within our own organization, even though that kind of activity is frequently encountered in Haiti.

We are now actively interviewing candidates for In-Country Director. We will have someone in place as soon as possible. Please forward any concerns or questions about this situation to us at trish@haitichildren.com.



Here is Marty—he's making a wonderful recovery from his surgery for hydrocephalic syndrome...

(...Paola, continued from page 3)

ing her severe urinary tract infections. Mercy and Sharing brought Paola to Fort Myers, Florida because another organization (who will remain nameless) promised to give Paola the medical care she needed. The other organization has since admitted that they are unable to do so, and they have now withdrawn her from their international program, leaving the Hendersons without any options at this time. Paola cannot qualify for medical coverage in the United States. All of Paola's surgeries must be donated or paid for out-of-pocket by the Hendersons. The Henderson family does not have the financial ability to pay for Paola's extensive surgery which will require highly specialized surgeons and operating facilities. Although there are surgeons who are willing to do the reconstructive surgery, the Henderson's have been unsuccessful in finding a qualified hospital to donate the operating facility. However, it is imperative that Paola receive the surgery ASAP due to the dangerous nature of her infections. Left untreated, she could suffer irreparable kidney damage as well as other complications which are now threatening her life.



Princess Paola with her brother Billy and sisters Jenn and Katie...

This is why we are sending an **urgent plea** to our readers to help us raise the needed funds for Paola's surgery...

- How you can help Paola -

There are two ways you can help:

1) Send a donation marked as "For Paola" to

Attn: Paola Surgery Fund
Mercy & Sharing
201 N. Mill Street
Aspen, CO 81611

- and -

2) Purchase the Henderson's book - ***Melody of My Heartstrings*** - about Paola, online at:

www.xlibris.com (search for author Henderson).

All proceeds from the book will go directly to Paola's surgery fund. Please help us to help this beautiful little girl have a normal and happy life...

Donated Goods and Shipping

In 2004, Mercy & Sharing shipped over 200 tons of donated milk, food, rice, cooking oil, clothing, medical equipment and children's toys to Haiti! Thank you! We are always seeking donations of new items. Mercy & Sharing runs its own shipping operation using all volunteers, a donated warehouse facility in Miami (donated by our good friend Jose Garcia at Cargo Express), reduced shipping rates from Seaboard Marine (a special thanks to John Lynch and Tom Paelinck, the new President of Seaboard Marine), and in Haiti Mercy & Sharing has another warehouse as well as a depot at the Cazeau orphanage. We would like to thank our various

(continued on page 5...)

Mercy & Sharing Gets New Board Members

by Joe Krabacher

Over the past six months, Mercy & Sharing has expanded its Board of Directors to add several new individuals who have shown an unrelenting desire to volunteer and assist in the work of Mercy & Sharing. Mr. Jeffrey Leck is a private equity investor and entrepreneur from Tampa, Florida who has joined the Board, along with Michael Lypka, an investment banker at Babcock & Brown in New York City, Ricky Hicks who is President of Comme Il Faut in Port au Prince, and Richard and Carol Horn from Canada, who are working with our children and volunteers.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that Mr. John Lynch, Chairman of Seaboard Marine, has also agreed to join the Board and has brought his many years of experience in shipping and international business. We want to thank each of these individuals, and we ask for your prayers for their work for Mercy & Sharing.

(...Shipping, continued from page 4)

sponsors over the past year, including the Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City; Wes Morgan and New Directions International; Rotary International; The Gap; Old Navy, and many, many others. Without your donations of in kind goods we would not be able to accomplish the important humanitarian work of Mercy & Sharing, which forms the basis for our efforts to reach these children.

THANK YOU!

Farwell to our little girl

by Susie Krabacher

About 7 weeks ago today, a tiny little girl named Maryse Joseph was abandoned by a nameless person in front of the government hospital which houses the Mercy and Sharing Abandoned Infant Unit. The poor little thing was extremely thin and had a terrible cough. Our staff doctor diagnosed her with severe malnutrition and tuberculosis. We have had so many babies and children left with us in similar condition who have somehow pulled through, and who have become healthy, growing toddlers. Little Marie just didn't have any strength left to fight. She died Saturday, April 7th. She was, we believe, 3 years old. Her funeral was held at the orphanage where she passed away, with our nurse Madame Osias at her side. Please pray for all the children in Haiti and in the world who die alone, hungry and thirsty. Each day in the third world, over 30,000 children will die from lack of food or water, or from an easily preventable illness such as diarrhea.



From all of the children and staff and supporters of Mercy and Sharing we would like to say to our little girl Maryse Joseph: "Honey, in this world you were loved"

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.

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.

Terrier Rouge:

Provision of food for 300 children

Gonaives - Emergency Response

Project: Medical care, food, water and clothing for up to 300 children.

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 14 abandoned/orphaned .

Address: Hospital General H.U.E.H., Rue Mgr Guilloux, Port-au-Prince.

Newly orphaned or abandoned infants.

Mercy Clinic: Opening very soon : a state-of-the-art paranatal clinic.

Needs List -- We have many needs for over 2,500 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 – all kinds of office & waiting-room furniture for our Clinic**
- **Ambulance for transporting critically ill children to our new Clinic**
- **Funds for Supplies – laundry detergent; shampoo; soap; mosquito repellent; baby powder, etc.**
- **MONTHLY Sponsors for individual projects**
- **Guardian Angel Program (see www.haitichildren.org for details)**

Mercy & Sharing 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 USD \$70 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; Frank Scott, Jr., E.J. Christensen; Dr. Steve Gorlin, Mr. Jeffrey Leck, Mr. Michael Lypka and Mr. Rick Hicks.

Advisory Board: Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D. Mich); Dr. Serge Parisian (Orthopedic Surgeon), Mark Gillette (Defense Attaché – U.S. Embassy, Mongolia); Michael Chiu – Trustee - Cornell University, Richard & Carol Horn (Volunteers Directors) and Mr. Mark Salter (Programs Advisor).

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