

# DARYL CAGLE'S The CAGLE POST<sup>SM</sup>

## Service to Others

Martha Randolph Carr 11/10/2008

By Martha Randolph Carr

Often, the best way to move out of a feeling of self pity and back into gratitude and peace is to be of service to others. It's a quick way to remind ourselves that the economy and our 401k may be in dire straits but our time and talent is still valued and can help someone else have a better day. We are no longer labeling ourselves as a victim.



An opportunity to help sits very close at hand and lately has been battered beyond recognition. Just across a short stretch of ocean from the Florida coast sits Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere that is in dire need of services.

Just this past Friday a church-run school, La Promesse, in Petion-ville, on the outskirts of the capital of Haiti, in Port-au-Prince, collapsed trapping half of the school's 700 children inside, killing 93 and injuring many more of the students who ranged in age from 3 to 20 years old. The school was in the process of adding another floor to the structure, allegedly based on a design drawn up by the school's pastor who is not an engineer or architect. The government is considering legal action.

Several relief agencies, including the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders, and Mercy & Sharing sent in doctors to treat the children because the staff at the nearby state-run hospital was on strike and refused to lend a hand. Small arms and legs were visible pinned underneath the rubble as anxious parents helped dig and waited for news.

The country was still in the process of recovery from hurricane Gustav, the fourth in the season, and resources were already stretched thin. The country continues to absorb one tragedy after another and yet continues to strive for a better day.

That has to be the answer if only because there are so many children growing up in Haiti who deserve a better future than the one that has been offered up in the past. Fortunately, there is something we can all do to reach out to our neighbors who are a boat ride away from Miami. Mercy & Sharing, [www.haitichildren.com](http://www.haitichildren.com), a foundation started by Susie Krabacher on a shoestring budget has grown into one of the most successful relief organizations operating in Haiti with feeding centers, hospitals, day clinics, orphanages and schools.

Every penny from every donation goes directly to the people of Haiti. No funds are used for administrative salaries back in the states. Krabacher and her husband Joe, a Colorado attorney, take money out of their own pockets to meet all other expenses.

Funds, supplies and volunteers are put to use in a country that lacks a lot of the basic infrastructure such as clean water for everyone and where every gesture of kindness has an enormous impact.

While it's true that the problems the U.S. faces as a country are complicated and painful, there are still ways we can find to come together and create solutions not only for ourselves but for others we may never meet. Today, we can turn our focus away from what we see as lacking and gather up our friends and neighbors to share ideas and resources for the children of Haiti. Include photos and stories with your donations that can be shared with the people of Haiti.

If you're not sure what to do with the talents your group has, offer up the resources and ask how they might be best utilized. Sometimes, we assume that what we have is not enough to matter or we miss our possible contribution through our talents altogether and so we never speak up at all. Here is an opportunity that is ripe for everybody to be able to make a difference with whatever they can do.

Benefits will come back to all of us, including a new habit of working together with our neighbors to build better communities and seeing each of us as necessary components to the solution.

Martha Randolph Carr's latest book, *A Place to Call Home*, a memoir about the reemergence of U.S. orphanages is available wherever books are sold. If you'd like Martha to come and speak to your group visit: [www.newvoicespeakers.com](http://www.newvoicespeakers.com). Martha's Big Adventure coming soon to World Talk Radio and Voice America. Email Martha at: [Martha@caglecartoons.com](mailto:Martha@caglecartoons.com) or visit [www.martharandolphcarr.com](http://www.martharandolphcarr.com).

©2008 Martha Randolph Carr. Martha's column is distributed exclusively by Cagle Cartoons Inc. newspaper syndicate. For info call Cari Dawson Bartley at 800 696 7561 or email [Cari@cagle.com](mailto:Cari@cagle.com). Download Martha Randolph Carr's black and white mug shot photo.