



**Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief®**

Christian Service in Relief, Disaster, Settlement and Development

## **HAITI APPEAL RESPONSE APPROACHES \$400K**

Winnipeg, February 5, 2010 – As the Canadian Lutheran World Relief Appeal for Haiti enters its third week, donations continue to flood into our Winnipeg head office. As of 9:30 a.m. yesterday, the total amount of donations received topped \$370,000. Stacks of unopened letters will certainly push the total past \$400,000 in the coming days.

### **Deadline looms**

In order to have your donation matched by the Canadian government, it must be received and deposited by CLWR by **Friday, February 12**. Initially, the government announced that it would match donations made by individual Canadians to a maximum of \$50 million. While this cap has since been removed, the deadline for donations qualifying for this match has not been extended.

### **Accessing matching funds**

CLWR continues to work with Canadian Churches in Action (CCA) to prepare a proposal for submission to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to access a portion of the matching funds pool being created by the government. The delay in submitting this proposal can be largely placed on the difficulties faced by our partners on the ground in Haiti, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance, in gathering information and developing a longer-term plan for assisting the people affected by the earthquake.

ACT's preliminary appeal, released last week, calls for financial support of US\$20 million. CCA continues to work with ACT and the LWF to designate a portion of this \$20 million program to the funds being collected by CCA members. CCA remains confident that once the proposal is in place, it will be viewed favourably by CIDA. Prayerfully, the end result will be a doubling of the value of donations.

Details about the matching fund application will be announced once the proposal has been submitted to CIDA.

### **Nicaraguan Lutherans support the CLWR appeal for Haiti**

The Lutheran Church – Synod of Nicaragua, meeting in convention last week, resolved to designate the offering from its closing service to the work CLWR is doing in Haiti. The US\$120 donation was delivered to CLWR by Lutheran Church–Canada President Robert Bugbee who attended the convention. Bugbee noted that although the gift may be small by our standards, “It

comes from the second-poorest land in our hemisphere trying to help the poorest. It was a substantial gift of love when one considers the poverty of the donors.”

### **The Situation in Haiti**

(as reported by ACTCOM, *the communications arm of the ACT Alliance.*)

According to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Situation Report, the latest figures indicate 112,392 deaths, 196,501 injured, with one million homeless. Food aid and shelter are still in high demand, despite the many distributions already taking place. Airports and water ports' capacities are overloaded with supplies, in particular because of transport and security issues, which complicate the distribution process. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is reporting that nearly 300,000 people have left earthquake-affected areas, migrating north and west in search of shelter and material resources.

### **The Lutheran Response**

The LWF and ELCA are working together to provide temporary shelter for an initial 19,000 individuals in Petion Ville, Gressier, Leogane, Ti Goave and Thiotte.

## **BORN IN THE RUBBLE**

*The following story comes from ACTCOM*

Chris Herlinger/ACT, Port-au-Prince 5. Feb. - Marie Sylsalve cradled her 10-day-old son, McAnley, and reflected on three weeks that have taken an almost incomprehensible toll. She last saw her husband in the moments immediately following the 12 January earthquake. The family's home was destroyed and Sylsalve saw a wall fall on Andre. She presumes he is dead—it has been three weeks now. And twelve days later she gave birth in the ruins.

The birth of McAnley cheered her some, but Sylsalve, who worked as a vendor and now lives at a displacement site in the Belair neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, is faced with supporting her infant son and three other children. She has no immediate prospects for work. She retains some hope for her infant son, saying that “everything that comes his way will be good.” But life right now is hard, she said tersely and dispassionately, continuing to cradle McAnley.

Sylsalve's dispiriting experiences and lament are all too common in Haiti today, and the assistance being provided by the ACT Alliance in Belair—including tents, water, hygiene and baby kits—while needed and appreciated, is only a first step toward recovery. Another is in providing psychosocial support—the process by which those who have been traumatized begin to resume normal life.

### **Martial art as therapy**

Sylsalve's displacement site has a long association with the Brazilian organization Viva Rio, which is supported by ACT members working in Port-au-Prince. One of the psychosocial programs for children involves the practice of *capoeira*, an Afro-Brazilian martial art taught by Viva Rio staff that is used as therapy for young people recovering from trauma. Drawing is another form of trauma therapy.

On a recent afternoon, several children involved in the program gathered and talked about their experiences. Capoeira was generally more popular than drawing—seven-year-old Ricardo Jacques and 10-year-old Mario Pierre said the dancing and exercise of capoeira made them feel good—“ready for the future,” Pierre said. But Jean Ritson Mertilus, 9, said he preferred drawing because it was more peaceful than capoeira.

### **Are you hungry, you get angry**

The need for survivors to find some semblance of normality and peace undergirds the ACT members’ plans for adult psychosocial programs. Bjorg Roedland, a Norwegian nurse and a consultant with ACT/Norwegian Church Aid, acknowledges that psychosocial work is not what survivors like Salsalve need immediately. “If the people don’t have food, how can they do other things?” Roedland said. “They have lost a lot of weight. They get angry if they don’t eat. You have to start with the basics. “But dealing with trauma must eventually be addressed, especially in areas where Port-au-Prince residents, particularly women and children, were vulnerable before the earthquake.

### **Stealing children**

Fear of sex trafficking is one concern, as are rape and sexual abuse. Compounding the need for protection of Haitians is the fear that children may be trafficked out of Haiti as orphans, as evidenced by the recent arrest of a group of US citizens for attempting to take Haitian children into the neighbouring Dominican Republic.

A US government report on trafficking notes that as many as 300,000 Haitians, ages six to 14, were trafficked in 2008. Many were forced to work as domestic servants both here and overseas. The report noted a “sharp increase” in the number of Haitian children trafficked for the sex trade.

Roedland said ACT Alliance staff in Haiti is working with local partners and community leaders, as well as with the Haitian government, to ensure that children most vulnerable to trafficking are identified and protected.

### **The scars you can’t see**

Trafficking is just one worry. There is also the ever-present possibility of another earthquake in Haiti. Tremors are felt daily even now, three weeks later. “Their fear is increasing. It’s in their stomach all the time. When the aftershocks come, it’s right there,” Roedland said. “They are starting their lives over again. But some people can’t handle this, and our most important job now is to identify those people who can’t resume their lives.”

Adults bear the most psychological scars; children seem more resilient, though that also depends on a number of factors. “If the mother and father are there, they can cope,” Roedland said. “But if the parents are missing, it’s much more difficult for the children.”

The children involved in the ACT-supported programs spoke about their lives with a poignant mixture of sadness and optimism. Though none lost immediate family, all realize the enormity of what has happened in Haiti. “Too many people died in our country,” said Mario Pierre. Asked what he wanted to do when he grew up, 10-year-old Nacilien Josue replied, “Become a ship captain.” Why? “To bring in medical supplies.”