

**René & Marianne Lako**  
**Haiti, Holland and Marathon Update # 135**  
**10/11 – Running the Race Together... (Heb. 12:1)**



Dear Friends,

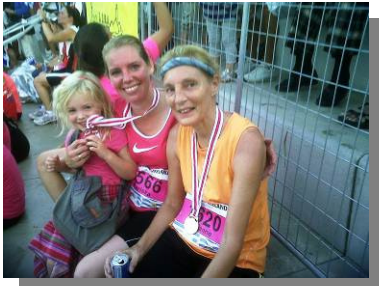


We live in eventful times. Many parts of the world are in crisis and conflict. In our lives, we made a major move in joining Hope Force International (HFI). We worked with HFI in relief efforts after several devastating tornadoes in Harvest, AL, Chattanooga, TN and Joplin, MO.

From August 21 we worked six weeks in Haiti, our new place of ministry. We represent the “boots on the ground” in the least developed, poorest country in the Americas and the Caribbean. The earthquake of January 12, 2010 cost an estimated 220,000 lives and made 1,5 million people homeless; approximately 650,000 still live in tent cities; cholera has claimed 6,300 lives in the past year.



Last year we were part of the early relief response as we camped in tents, opened a team house in Port-au-Prince and led a relief organization for 10 months. Earlier this year we both returned to Haiti with short Hope Force mission trips.



We work in the area of Leogane and the village of Sous Savanne, near the epicenter of the earthquake. During the six weeks we visited all 81 children in 68 families who are part of the Child Sponsorship program; we met with staff of seven schools and three pastors of churches in the area. We contacted organizations who also have projects and are looking at possibilities for partnerships and collaboration. We also checked out vehicles as this represents one of our major needs and we finally rented a house that will serve as a team house for visiting church groups.



We feel we have a better idea of what Hope Force can contribute to the further relief, recovery and rebuilding efforts in what we consider a geographical area that God has put on our hearts as HFI staff.

We also had “running shoes on the ground” as we trained for the “Marathon Zeeland” ladies run 10-k and full 26.2 mile marathon along the coast of our beautiful home province of Zeeland. Training long distances of up to 20 miles can be a challenge in Haiti as training locations are limited. We often ran with a local runner for safety and security in places like a track in a stadium and an abandoned army base on the coast. One time I ran 80 laps on the track to complete the 20 miles (32 k) with Marianne running with me part of the time and moving little stones in piles to keep track of the laps.



Pictures top to bottom: in Sous Savanne with kids; running in Haiti; Marianne after ladies run; René after marathon; medals. Next page: Marianne with rented car; in front of new home in Leogane; Marianne with girl in Sous Savanne; René with local pastor in damaged church.



Then we went to Holland for a whirlwind visit; we “hit the ground running”, arrived in the morning and in the evening Marianne ran the ladies run 10-k within her target time. I was there with our granddaughter Esmee to cheer Marianne and our daughter Mariska on. The next day was “M-Day” and I was elated to run the marathon and reach my time goal. It was a hot day and part of the course is on the beach and across sand dunes. This is why the event is called “The most beautiful and toughest marathon in Holland”.



Why did we run? We have run marathons and half-marathons before and even ran for charity. This time we wanted to run and raise funds for a Hope Force vehicle in Haiti. We simply cannot work and host teams without a reliable vehicle. In Holland we raised approximately 2,000 Euros through our home church missions account; one “cute” donation was a bag of coins saved up over time which netted almost 25 Euros. In North America we continue to raise awareness and funds through the Hope Force website: [www.hopeforce.org](http://www.hopeforce.org) - click the “Donate Now” button; to donate towards the Haiti vehicle go to “Other projects” and fill in to specify for “Marathon – Haiti vehicle”.



We just ran 7 miles this afternoon and since we have not yet reached our funding goal for a vehicle that will cost \$ 10,000 - \$ 15,000 I plan to run a half-marathon next weekend. One of our personal mission’s mottos is “Running the Race Together...” (From Heb. 12:1) so we invite people to sponsor our runs and work with us on behalf of the people of Haiti to see a vehicle released.



Back to our time in Holland; it was wonderful to be back and after the runs the days filled up quickly with trips in the country (passport, dental appointment and meetings). There were visits to my mom, as this was the one year mark of my dad’s passing away. Home means being with family and friends, a presentation in our church and the most fun part is time with our three granddaughters Zoey, Esmee and Sterre; we celebrated Sterre’s 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday together.

And now we are back in the Nashville area for a few days at the Hope Force office, meetings and further preparation to return to Haiti later this month. We hope to recruit church teams, both for health care and hopefully construction of new transitional homes in Haiti. If you are interested in joining a team, or if you want to put a church team together, please let us know and we’ll be happy to host you.

You can follow our adventures and mission by checking out our website regularly: [www.lakomission.org](http://www.lakomission.org) and by checking Marianne’s Facebook page (Marianne Lako), or my Twitter account: @rlako\_onthego

We value your prayer; Haiti has great material and spiritual needs. We wish you God’s blessing.

*René & Marianne*

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**For Donations: go to [www.hopeforce.org](http://www.hopeforce.org) and click on “Donate Now” then to staff support and our names  
To sponsor our runs & HFI vehicle go to donation page, click on “Other Projects” and specify “marathon/Haiti vehicle”  
[renelako@gmail.com](mailto:renelako@gmail.com) – [mariannelako@gmail.com](mailto:mariannelako@gmail.com) – website: [www.lakomission.org](http://www.lakomission.org)**