



René and Marianne Lako
Hope Force International - Port-au-Prince Haiti
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Running the race together... Heb. 12:1



Dear Friends,

How to put on paper all we experience in Haiti on a daily basis? We will try and do our best, if you need further explanation feel free to write us. Keep checking us out on our website as we keep it updated with stories from the field: www.lakomission.org

This year has flown by, or is it because we get older and it only seems that way? Anyhow, January found Rene in Haiti, Marianne went in the spring and the months of April through July we were involved with disaster relief after the tornadoes in the USA. If there is one thing we have learned through this; “no matter where you live – when disaster hits you or your area, it affects you and it dramatically changes your life”.

As of July we are fulltime missionaries with Hope Force International and our task is to oversee the long term activities in Haiti. As HFI has been working in a village just outside of Leogane since the January 2010 earthquake, we have mainly focused on that area. The people of the village have become a part of our lives. We rejoice when it is time for celebration and mourn at a time of loss. Sadly we experienced that last week when, through a tragic accident the wife of one of the community leaders was killed by a truck. She was only 36 yrs old and left her husband (38) and four kids (5, 8, 10 and 13) behind. All we could do is to practice the ministry of presence. Words will never be enough to express how our hearts ache for this family and the village. We drove Joseph, the husband to appointments and reached out with God’s love. After the funeral; we walked with him through the mountains to the burial site, accompanied by a “fanfare” music band; it was an experience we will not soon forget.

Yet there are also good stories to tell; we hosted our first small outreach team and experienced how God directed us daily in our work in the area. We led a small community health education team and offered professional counseling to some of the children who still suffer the consequences of the earthquake at one of the primary schools. We reached out to a local orphanage with a health assessment for the children. And we had a small part to play when the first transitional home was primed and painted. This final touch will give the house more durability.

We also realize that you never know what the future holds, we thought we would have moved into our HFI team house by now, yet when we arrived in Haiti it became clear that this was not yet the right time. We need to have our own wheels as well as the funding and materials to move in. Yet God knew this too and we are thankful for a great team house where we can stay for the moment and host our teams coming to help out. A great secure facility, the only draw-back is the drive to and from the village, only 33 miles but this can take anywhere from 2 – 3 ½ hours.

Next week we will be able to host a small team again, this time we hope to visit different compounds and continue the teachings and consultations.



We will also be involved with more health education at the school. We hope to be part to see the next house painted. And before the team leaves we will have our December food distribution at which time the participants will receive a gift bag with some gifts from their sponsors for Christmas.

During this season of Thanksgiving and Christmas we want to express our thanks to you our friends for standing with us in this adventure. We are blessed by your commitment to us, as it stands at the moment we have reached 50% of our budget. We trust the rest will fall into place within the next few months as well. Haiti is a very expensive country; the presence of a large international community has made it even more expensive. We are still working towards the purchase of a vehicle and hope to be able to start seriously looking into this in January.

Of course more than anything we are thankful we can once again celebrate the fact that Jesus is the reason for the season and we pray that we will be able to share that in word and deed with the people we meet. This is based on our love and life for Him and we hope those around us will wonder what this is all about and we can share the real Christmas story.

We are thankful for:

- Protection on the road and at the house we live
- Our support, at present we have reached 50% of our goal
- Money which is coming in for the needed vehicle
- the open door we have in the local school
- A safe and great place to live
- Volunteers who come and join us
- A God of compassion who gave us new life
- Our children and grandchildren – Finley Anouk was born June 2011
- You our friends!

Prayer points:

- Ongoing protection – Haiti can be less safe
- Our health
- Our children and grandchildren, we are currently living in 4 nations
- For the people of Haiti and especially the village and local school
- Better understanding and speaking of the language
- That we will see our personal support meet our target goal
- People/church groups to come and join us on outreaches
- Project money to reach out to the once still living in a tent
- Project money to help rebuild a school damaged in the earthquake

In closing we want to wish you a wonderful Christmas Season realizing that “Christmas is not about opening our presents but opening our hearts...”

René & Marianne

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