

NEWS RELEASE

Campaign to House Haiti's Homeless Announced

Hope Force International to Provide 300 Durable Tents

Brentwood, TN March 28, 2010 – As the people of Haiti strive to cope with the state of their country after January's earthquake, a unique Tennessee-based charity is supporting the monumental task of directing resources to areas of most critical need. Hope Force International has been sending personnel and equipment to earthquake-affected regions across the country since the January 12 disaster, which took the lives of 200,000 people, leveled countless buildings and destroyed the country's fragile infrastructure.

"Ten weeks after the earthquake, two vital areas of concern are clear and must be addressed: housing and mobile medical clinics," explains Jack Minton, Founder and President of Hope Force. "The constant cry we hear from government leaders, aid organizations and individuals is for "tents and more tents". Our planning efforts are now directed at procuring the most appropriate tents that can be put to use in high-need areas. We are committed to meeting the needs that are present in Haiti to provide shelter and healthy communities."

Aid officials recently reported that large swaths of the earthquake zone remain untouched by aid. Trucks and volunteers have barely begun to scratch out safe places in the wreckage for people to live. The need to purchase and send tents that can serve as patient recovery and volunteer housing is predominant.

The rural village of Sous Savanne is located in the countryside near the city of Leogane – the epicenter of the earthquake. It is estimated that more than 80% of the dwellings in this region were destroyed on January 12th. Recent assessment trips to Haiti's earthquake-affected regions have resulted in Hope Force pin-pointing this area as a prime focus for aid projects.

According to Jack Minton, "On our first visit, we arrived to find that most of the village's inhabitants were living in an open field. Hundreds of people were surviving under crude dwellings closely compacted together for protection and support. Blankets were held up by sticks while sheets were strung together, providing minimal relief from the heat and virtually no protection from the rain. It was clear they had received no outside assistance whatsoever."

Even with a small amount of rain, people in the affected area have to stand up instead of lay down because of the wet conditions. Mud is everywhere. Suitable tents will provide for the immediate needs of Sous Savanne and also encourage families to return to their own property, enabling favorable health conditions and the prospect of rebuilding.

Minton recalls, "That night I could hear the rain on the roof of our building. It came harder and my mind went to the men, women and children of Sous Savanne. Sheets, blankets and sticks – these are woefully inadequate to protect people from the rain. And it appears that the rainy season has arrived early. Adequate shelter is a very clear and desperate need that, once met, will aid in the transition to a sense of normalcy for the people of this community."

Hope Force has set a goal of procuring, shipping and distributing 300 high-quality tents for the people of Sous Savanne. Agency leaders point out that these are durable tents, designed for post-disaster situations and capable of lasting two years. The tents will provide interim

dwelling as rebuilding gets underway. This project will help families get back on their own land, in a dry and more sanitary environment.

Hope Force is seeking contributions toward the cost of purchasing, shipping and distributing tents for the people of Haiti. Jack Minton is quick to point out, “With a goal of providing shelter for 300 families, I believe that caring people will step up and find a way to sponsor at least one shelter. Families, companies and churches have even greater capacity and there will be those who want to sponsor two tents, ten, or a dozen.

“The average family in Haiti comprises seven people, including parents, children and extended family. Our tents cost \$475 – an average cost of less than \$70 per person. I can think of no better investment than enabling the 300 families in Sous Savanne to return home to a dry dwelling, allowing them to rebuild their lives.”

Hope Force International (HFI) is a Christian response to the need that surrounds us at home and abroad, reaching out to those who experience suffering and loss. More than \$3.5 million of supplies have already been made available to the Haitian people through Hope Force. A generous donation from orthopedic manufacturer Smith & Nephew, along with anesthesia equipment, sterilization machines and a hospital generator have helped support the mission of numerous medical personnel who have reached Haiti through the organization’s efforts. .

As a leading non-profit organization dedicated to disaster response, HFI is comprised of individuals who are dedicated to utilizing their expertise to inspire, equip and mobilize thousands of volunteers into areas of crisis around the world. Hope Force is rapidly approaching its goal of 1,000 active HFI Reservists ready to respond to crisis points around the country. Founded by Jack and Cherie Minton in 2003, Hope Force International endeavors to become a leading volunteer response force, bringing hope to those affected by crisis or disaster.

Contributions to the Hope Force International response in Haiti can be made at the website.

www.hopeforce.org

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