

Dear Friends,

The global YMCA movement continues to respond to the critical needs of those in Port-au-Prince, and surrounding areas. In coordination with **Gwenael Apollon, General Secretary of the Haiti YMCA**, global partners (including the Latin American and Caribbean Alliance of YMCAs (LACA), the World Alliance of YMCAs, YMCA Canada and YMCA of the USA) are working to provide emergency resources to meet the overwhelming needs of the injured and displaced. The team will also develop a long-term recovery and rehabilitation strategy for the Haiti YMCA once conditions stabilize and an overall assessment of the YMCA's facilities and operations is completed.

The Port-au-Prince YMCA facility was destroyed (thankfully all were evacuated safely) and the facilities outside of town are serving as shelters for many of the now homeless. **Andres Fortunato, General Secretary of the Dominican Republic YMCA**, led a YMCA delegation from the Dominican Republic under the security of the United Nations to transport emergency supplies to the Haiti YMCA. He reported that although the building was destroyed, the YMCA's furniture, equipment and other supplies were spared from looting because the community respects the YMCA's work and protects the area.

Below are excerpts from a Mission Report drafted by Gwenael Apollon on January 26, detailing the joint relief efforts of the Haiti and Dominican Republic YMCAs with support from the global movement.

Let all may be one

Andres Fortunato, in the company of the Chair person for Dominican Republic YMCA along with 12 Dominican Republic YMCA volunteers collectively broke the barriers of fear and insecurity that a disaster of such magnitude as the earthquake on January 12, 2010 could bring to a country like Haiti. Indeed last Sunday these great volunteers broke these barriers and came to Haiti to participate in a food distribution in Port-au-Prince, which occurred at the very site where the YMCA had stood for eight years prior to January 2010 and ran all its community programs for the benefit of the youth of its particular neighbourhood.

Thanks to the two escorts of 6 brave policemen that a long time YMCA Haiti friend has provided to secure our guests and the much needed food and health supplies that they so generously brought to the Haitian people and more especially to YMCA Haiti. Indeed, the police was very much necessary particularly as the crowd grew and at times were quite unruly.



When we arrived at 9:30 am, our YMCA banner was already in place in front of the damaged youth centre, the tables had been arranged, and several persons were already waiting for the distribution.

As soon as the truck arrived, 62 persons present from the collective YMCAs started to work as one to unload the truck. Indeed, our crisis committee members, friends and youth group members forgot for this period of time whether we had personal problems such as having a friend or family member still buried under the debris caused by the earthquake or if we have no house to sleep in when night comes.

Andres and his colleagues' forgot the tiredness of this long trip and the suffering and despair they met along the way, as well as their current personal safety, and just worked until the job was over. On that day we were one, indeed!

- *YMCA Haiti received food for 500 families and some first aid items.*
- *300 members of YMCA Port-au-Prince community received one box each, which contained numerous food and toiletry items.*
- *49 staff and volunteers received a box each.*
- *30 family members of Nan founi community received a box each.*
- *21 boxes were distributed in Wells Mountain Youth Centre in Kenscoff.*
- *9 boxes were given to the Mayor of Kenscoff for the people.*
- *35 boxes will be sent to Camp-Perrin to youth YMCA family members.*
- *35 boxes will be distributed to 2 orphanages in Port-au-Prince and in La Plaine.*
- *21 boxes are being distributed to various needy persons around Port-au-Prince area.*
- *The first aid items are kept in a temporary depot for the YMCA and will be used on demand.*



As the country is slowly awakening from this nightmare, our greatest wish at the YMCA is to find a place as soon as possible to resume our activities and start receiving our youth who are now on the streets with little or no support.

As the Haiti YMCA transitions from emergency relief to resuming the vital community support work it is widely known for, a critical area of focus will be on programs and services for young people. It is estimated that the earthquake destroyed 60 percent of the schools and young people, many now homeless, have nowhere to go. The YMCA will work closely with families and community partners to offer support and structure to Haiti's youth.



Gwenael Apollon concluded his report by saying that the *Haiti YMCA is very grateful to Latin American and Caribbean Alliance of YMCAs, the Dominican Republic YMCA, YMCA World Service (Y-USA), Y Care International, YMCA Canada and Quebec and everyone involved in this most recent distribution effort.*

Y-USA would like to thank the local YMCAs and individuals across the U.S. who have provided valuable technical and financial support to the Haiti YMCA. In this time of need, cash donations are the most efficient and effective way to support the Haiti YMCA. If you would like to help, please make a donation to YMCA World Service at www.ymca.net/worldservice or by calling (800) 872-9622. Please be sure to specify that your contribution is for "Haiti Earthquake Support." (Note: per the **Haiti Tax Deduction Bill**, a taxpayer may deduct a qualifying contribution made after January 11, 2010, and before March 1, 2010, on their 2009 tax return instead of taking the deduction on their 2010 return.) At this time, Y-USA will not coordinate the collection/distribution of supplies due to the extreme logistical challenges - including transport, distribution and storage - on the ground in Haiti.



Y-USA is coordinating a short-term assignment for a YMCA volunteer with experience working in Haiti. Dr. Stephen Ray Smith has an extensive background of working in Port-au-Prince (for seven years with World Vision) and is familiar with the context and requirements of an on-site assignment in the area. He is also fluent in Creole and French. Through consultation with the Haiti YMCA and the Dominican Republic YMCA, Dr. Smith will help to coordinate efforts and develop and implement immediate and long-term strategies to respond to the urgent situation.



We will continue to post information on YMCAexchange as it becomes available. You can find previous updates on YMCAexchange at <http://www.ymcaexchange.org/front/ymovement/International/>. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

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