

## What is Important to You? by Tara Kasey

This year the kids participated in an electronic postcard program where they exchanged their ideas and thoughts with kids in the United States. They wrote on two subjects: "What is Important to Me" and "Who is My Hero." Here are some excerpts from those essays:



Michelet came to the orphanage following the earthquake.

"My name is Michelet. I am in 4th grade. I am the first in my class. I hope to find parents to adopt me soon. My father has died. I have three sisters and three brothers. I love God very much. When I listen to the words of God, I am happy. God bless you. Thank you." - Michelet

"I want to be a nurse because I would like to help people and I think

that helping others is a good thing. I like people who are simple, kind, like others, care for others. I like people who understand others. I think for

all people God should be the most important because He loves us and He gave us life. I also think we should love God because of all of the things He has done for us. After God, the most important thing for me is other people and my friends." -Kattia



"My hero is Jesus because he gave to me a family. He sent His son to save me and forgive my sins." -Nadia

"Who is my hero? I have many heroes. God is my first hero because he loved me, he loves me and he will always love me. He saved my life. He let me become his daughter. He always is close to me and never leaves me alone. My mom and my father are my second heroes even if they are not alive. After them it's my daddy and my mom, the Bernards, because they give me another chance to have a family and because they take care of me and give me the opportunity to finish my secondary school and go to college. My fourth heroes are my friends who love me so much. -Youdemie

## Education and Beyond by Mark and Marsha Romens

We first met first-grader, Sentia, hanging out after school. When Mark met her, he decided that her body was abnormally thin and she needed to see a doctor. Sentia's mother sells bread on the street outside the orphanage, so we talked to her about a doctor's visit. We offered to accompany them and pay since the family income was so limited. When the doctor weighed her, she was 38 pounds. Blood tests showed that she had E-coli. She was given an antibiotic and was put on the lunch program at school to provide her with extra food. The doctor found another abnormality in Sentia and wanted to take her to a specialist. The doctor at the clinic actually accompanied us to the specialist and negotiated the public tap-tap system for us.

It turned out the abnormality was simply a benign growth and was not causing her weight loss, nor would it be an issue to address—that gave us some peace of mind. A couple of months later, Sentia was up to 46 pounds and hopefully will continue to gain weight.

Sentia is just one of the children who now have a scholarship through the generous gift of her

sponsor at the Marion Austin Christian School ran by Hope for the Children of Haiti.

At the end of last school year, we had 141 students in attendance. This year, our student population more than doubled, to 329. Our population explosion can be mostly attributed to the Board's decision to waive this year's tuition fees of ≈\$200 USD and charge only registration fees of ≈\$125 USD. Even then many parents still could not afford the registration fees so we increased the number of scholarships given by opening up the students for sponsorship. When the average wage in Haiti is around \$2 a day or \$730 a year, you can see how paying for education can be almost impossible. That is probably why less than 50% of the children in Haiti attend school.

Our prayer is that more would offer their support to these children and allow children like Sentia to not only get an education but also loving care from the HFC workers and missionaries.



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## Prayer Requests

### Please pray...

- For focus for the children as they do their studies.
- For wisdom for the teachers who not only educate but are examples to the children.
- For the missions teams who will be serving in Haiti this summer.
- For ongoing missions trips—that people would heed the call.
- For the community of Bolosse and those serving in Haiti.
- For the Board of Directors and staff to seek God's wisdom and discernment in ministry planning.
- For a calling upon the lives of new Board Members.
- For funding and volunteer interest to continue.
- For Haiti to stay in the hearts and minds of people.

## A Triumph for Democracy? by Meg Nam

On Saturday, May 14, 2011 Michel Martelly was sworn in as Haiti's next President. The election that decided his victory took place on March 20, 2011 which was a run-off presidential vote among the top two candidates from the November 2010 election. This is the first time in Haitian history that there have been a second round of elections. Many involved have noted that this could help make this election one of the most successful in Haitian history in terms of legitimacy and support from the Haitian people.

The November first-round of elections was described as chaotic, violent, and fraudulent. Twelve out of eighteen presidential candidates declared that the election should be canceled, and most specifically that President Rene Preval engaged in fraud to secure victories of his Unity party's Parliament candidates and Presidential candidate, Jude Celestin. Mr. Celestin was initially projected as one of the top contenders. However, months after the November election Haiti's electoral council announced that Jude Celestin was not among the top two candidates to be included in a run-off election, following a report by the Organization of American States (OAS) that suggested that when accounting for fraud, Michel Martelly, former musician, was ahead of Jude Celestin. The March 20 elections allowed Haitians to vote between Mr. Martelly and Mirlande H. Manigat, a former first lady and academic.

Initial reports said that the voter turnout in March was larger than the November elections when only 23% of voters participated. Reports have also indicated that the most recent elections have been marked with less violence. The Police Nationale d'Haiti (PNH) and the UN Mission for Stabilization in Haiti (Minustah) seemed to have had more presence in the March elections, where some said there were at least 2 PNH officers and 2 Minustah officers at each polling station and 55 people were arrested for violence or fraud related crimes. The head of the electoral council, Gaillot Dorsinvil, called the March elections "a triumph for democracy." Although there was improvement, many problems surfaced including two deaths related to political violence, and lack of supplies at polling places that caused many delays.

The relatively positive outcome of the election is particularly noteworthy given that two former leaders in Haiti's history had just recently returned to the country



from exile and some officials feared that they would interfere with the elections. Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned to Haiti from exile on March 18th, and Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier returned to Haiti in January after 25 years of exile. Mr. Duvalier faces prosecution for many crimes including torture and corruption.

On April 4, it was announced that Michel Martelly would be Haiti's next president. Since being voted in, Martelly has been preparing to take this step of leadership. He created a transition team, visited reconstruction sites across the country side, and discussed projects that he intends to complete including re-instituting the army, financing free education, addressing housing for the more than 600,000 people still homeless, and limiting the impact of the cholera epidemic.

Martelly was sworn in on May 14, 2011 when the presidential sash was given from former president Rene Preval to Martelly. President Martelly said during the inauguration ceremony "Hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, we are going to change Haiti. We are going to remake this country. We are going to remake its face. We cannot continue with this humiliation of having to extend our hand for help all of the time."

There is still debate as to whether the unpredictable former entertainer who often utilized shock tactics through his singing career will be able to bring change that he promised during the campaign. There is no question that he has significant work ahead of him. While I cannot begin to speculate as to whether or not Martelly is the right person for this position, my hope is that the Haitian people will be patient with him and give him the opportunity to serve his country as best he can.

Although Haiti is no longer in the forefront of news as it was in the days following the earthquake, the number of significant news sources reporting on the elections and inauguration reflects significant improvement from the past when it was difficult to find news reporting on the outcome of Haiti's elections for days. I hope and pray that with the world watching Haiti can rise to the challenge.

### Meet Intern Nate Lowe

I spent my formative years growing up overseas in Singapore as a missionary kid. In 2000, My family returned to America to provide my brother and I with an American high school and college education. I spent my college years earning my degree in Mechanical Engineering and neglecting my personal faith. After college I entered the workplace as an engineer until the auto industry crashed in 2009. The job relocation in 2009 brought me back home to my home church, where God began challenging and growing me spiritually. God convicted me to leave engineering and enter

seminary to prepare for a life of ministry serving the poor and needy overseas. The initial plan was to quit my job in the summer of 2011 in time to commence seminary in the fall of 2011 at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston. God had other plans, and brought the opportunity to serve in Haiti at the HFC orphanage .

So here I am now, serving with HFC in Haiti. I live with 16 boys in a house across the street from the main orphanage building. The boys are so much fun. The end of my internship in July will begin my return to academia in seminary where



I will be earning my Masters in Counseling. My ultimate ministry goal is to be running an orphanage in a developing country. I am currently exploring education and service opportunities to prepare myself for such a future. I don't know much beyond that but I believe that is where God needs me, not knowing the details so I am ready to respond to where and when He calls.

## No Expectations by Kelly Schaaf

August 8, 2010

Upon entering Haiti I was overwhelmed by its beauty. From the plane we stole a birds-eye view of the clear blue water and the cluster of homes nestled in the majestic hillside. We flew into the US Military controlled airport in Port-au-Prince. We stepped off the plane into the 95 degree sticky heat. As I walked toward customs I heard sweet Caribbean tunes echoing down the long corridor. This would just be one example of the resiliency of the Haitian people. There are thousands dead and broken; there are hundreds living in tents and homeless. But, despite the rubble and dirt they find the music and the joy in the worst of circumstances. There is no pity, this is their reality and they embrace it everyday. The people may need help, but they don't need, nor do they ask for anyone to feel sorry for them.



We cruised through customs and proceeded to the carousel to collect our bags. We had all but one, so I ran over to retrieve it, and nearly tackled some man in front of me. He quickly grabbed it for me, and as he handed it to me he smiled and said, "Thank you for coming." I was speechless.

We then proceeded to cart our bags through cluttered, pitted roads. I helped an older Haitian man guide our luggage to the van. At one point he looked me straight in the eye, and through broken English said, "Nice...You're nice." He appeared to be complimenting my smile. This was right after I nearly dumped our load of bags into a ditch. I was stopped in my tracks by his kind words.

Then all nine of us and our 18, fifty-pound bags packed into a 12 passenger van. I was amazed that the van could still move. The back tires looked nearly flat under the weight of our team and supplies.

The roads were lined with tent cities. I watched men, women, and children mill around their canvas homes. As we carried on I was impressed with the amount of energy and activity that lined the city streets. I had created a picture in my mind of downcast and sorrowful victims, who had been struck down by disaster; this was not the case. There were many selling goods, walking the narrow streets, picking up stones and concrete that once offered shelter. They were busy getting their lives back in order.

The mountainous, and lush landscape was intoxicating. We couldn't take our eyes off of it as our truck pushed its way up the dangerous and tightly crowded roads. The rules of the road do not apply in Haiti; they seem to make it up as they go along. We zoomed past pedestrians, barely missing their faces with our rearview mirrors. No one seemed phased. Soon the orphanage came into view. The kids greeted us with hugs and big beautiful smiles. We unloaded and started filling the shelves with food and

supplies that had been donated by so many. It was amazing to see how these supplies were filling such an immediate need. When we were done we went back and forth with the

kids attempting to communicate. They were very patient with us. We couldn't stay long, because we needed to travel to Bethel House before dark.

At Bethel House, I encountered hundreds of people who had come to Haiti with a united purpose, to serve the Lord faithfully and to help the people of Haiti in anyway they could. I couldn't cease meditating on what an honor it is to be involved in God work.

August 15, 2010

Woke up at 5am to travel to the airport. On the way I was visited with an overwhelming feeling of sorrow. I am not ready to go. As we drove through the streets of Port-au-Prince I was brought to tears over the current circumstances of its people. In one of the tent cities I made eye contact with a little boy. He looked to be no older than 2 years old, he held a tiny broom and only wore a dirty, ripped t-shirt. He watched as we passed. He was alone. One of many babies working to survive...

I am in the air and I weep as the place and the people of Haiti get smaller and smaller. This week brought me to my knees and opened my eyes to the needs of the people of Haiti. I was tutored in patience and reminded of my own need for prayer and dependence on the Lord. I enter back into the States with a thankfulness for all that I



### Taking it to the Rooftop

Last August, a summer team paved the way for a rooftop garden to be planted at the orphanage. Using materials found there—an old mattress, torn clothing, and soil from the nearby Seminary—chard, beans, watermelon, and eggplants were planted and used in the months to follow in their daily meal preparation. Now that we know they will grow, we are ready to start succession planting that will provide produce year-round.

Be a part of a missions team and help make a difference in Haiti. Everyone has something to give and often ends up receiving so much more in return.

had been given, an education, a family who loves and cares for me, and a God that involves me in His amazing work of redemption.

May 14, 2011

In April I was given another opportunity to visit the orphanage in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. After my trip in August 2010 I knew that Haiti was not done with me, but I did not know to what extent. Since I met these orphans at HFC I have been

consumed with love for them. The mark they have left on my life has changed me. It was incredible to spend just a few short days with the girls, hanging out, playing games, working on the language, and seeing what their day-to-day lives entailed. The girls and boys of HFC have developed a community among themselves, a family, that is a testament to God's love. It was an honor to be adopted into their world for a short while. I hope over the next few months and years through prayer and hard work to help in anyway I can to create more educational opportunities for these bright young people and give them hope in a future that works for God's good pleasure.

I will be returning to Haiti in August 2011.

# HOPE for the children of H A I T I

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## Meet one of our Sponsored Students

— Erilus Andremiz —

My name is Erilus Andremiz, I have three sisters and three brothers. I am in the 13th grade so I will finish school this spring. I have parents but it is like I don't have parents, so I live with my aunt. My mother is crazy since I was in the 6th grade.

I like studying French, Chemistry, and Biology. After I am finished with school, I thought I would study medicine, but not in Haiti, because I don't like how they teach medicine in Haiti. I think I will study accounting and business.

I want to become a businesswoman.

I am so thankful for the work you do for me and the other students. I know that not just anybody would do the things you do, and I know that God will reward you. Thank you for everything you have done for me.



Hope For the Children of Haiti (HFC), a Massachusetts based 501 (C) 3 non-profit organization, owns and operates a Christian school and orphanage located in Bolosse, an impoverished section of Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. The Marion G. Austin Christian School currently provides education for the 37 children living at the orphanage and for more than 200 children from the community.

HFC is called by God to give Haitian children, particularly orphans, the opportunity to experience the hope and the future God has planned for them.

## Sign up today to sponsor a student for the 2011-2012 school year!

Student sponsorships are a 1-year commitment. **For \$25/month, you can be assigned to a child for the 2011-12 school year.** This will provide them with a high-standard education, books and uniform.

For an additional \$20/month, you can provide that child with a daily meal. Just return the enclosed envelope with the first month's sponsorship and we will connect you to a child in need.

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