

November 2010



Dear **Happy** Friends,

**Ten months after the earthquake devastated so much of Haiti, the Happy Hearts team visited to assess the needs of children, identify potential partnerships, and scout out locations for schools.** Happy Hearts focuses its efforts in “the gap” – the period of time after “first response” is completed but before governments respond to the needs of children. For many children, this “gap” period can last for 10 or more years - long enough to lose the opportunity to be educated in their lifetime.

**Right now in Haiti, many of the “first responder” organizations that have provided critical water, food, medical care, and shelter are bringing their efforts to a close.** The outpouring of attention and support for Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake has slowed, and news and media have moved on to other stories, except when hurricanes or cholera bring Haiti back into the news. **Petra commented: “What we saw in Haiti is similar to what we see in so many countries nine-plus months after a natural disaster: first responders beginning to extract themselves and the need for a sustained response that provides the opportunity to engage, involve and empower.”** Happy Hearts steps in to begin its work during this “gap.”



*On children's faces and in the street, the message is the same.*



*Massive heaps of rubble remain everywhere in the hardest hit areas.*



*Many streets have been cleared, but over 95% of the rubble remains.*

The Happy Hearts team visited Haitian schools on opening day - the first day of school this year, and for most children, the first day of school since the earthquake. With freshly scrubbed, radiant faces, many arrived looking much like children look all over the world on the opening day of school. Phil Caputo observed: "The children were dressed in their best clothes, celebrating the opportunity to learn and be with friends. They were happy and, like the adults, remaining positive about the future. Also like the adults, the children seemed to carry an underlying concern about what might happen next. It was clear the trauma of the earthquake remains present and has deeply affected these strong children. We could see and feel the urgency for them to have a safe and happy place to learn."

**There are tremendous unmet needs. More than 75% of schools in Port-au-Prince were destroyed in the quake and many schools in that area did not open this year.** Many children arrived hungry or sick, and some did not arrive at all, without money to buy school uniforms or pay school tuitions. Some schools opened this year in tents or temporary structures. **There have been massive efforts to remove rubble throughout the hard-hit areas of Port-au-Prince and many roads are now open, but less than 5% of the total rubble has been removed.** That means that houses, schools and buildings throughout the city still look much as they did shortly after the earthquake. Petra observed, "Haitians have a beautiful spirit and remarkable resilience. The people we met and spoke with seemed cautiously optimistic about their future and the future of their country and beneath the strong and proud exterior, we sensed the need for tangible progress to keep hope alive."



*There are few places without rubble to relocate the hundreds of thousands living in camps.*



*Food, water, sanitation, and shelter are in tragically short supply.*



*These children and their families gathered around a small table here taking registrations for a tent school that will open soon.*

The Happy Hearts team visited sites for kindergarten, primary and secondary schools that need to be repaired, rebuilt or relocated. We met inspired educators, supportive parents, and motivated children to partner with. In addition, we connected with organizations working together in increasingly collaborative ways so that children benefit exponentially from the support. For example, there are organizations that provide food so that lunches may be offered to children; others that remove rubble so that new schools can be built; and still others that bring medical expertise and supplies to schools so

that children can attend school and return to health. **New visions for a more comprehensive and supportive education are emerging among educators as they develop ways to support Haitian children. Phil Caputo observed, “The most important thing will be partnerships. Solutions will only be limited by the creativity of collaborations that are formed to provide them.”**



*Even without words, all children tell the same story.*



*When a school begins, so does hope.*



*With education, these lives could change.*

**HHF receives specific donations to underwrite all administrative and fundraising expenses, allowing all public donations to support our programs. HHF is extremely grateful to our corporate partners – Continental Airlines, DLA Piper, HP and ING – for their philanthropic commitment to**

**help build a future for children affected by natural disasters.**

With our happy heartfelt wishes,  
Happy Hearts Fund Team

HHF is committed to help accomplish the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MGD's). In the meantime, we would love to hear from you! Let us know if you like our "HAPPY newsletters" and feel that they are informative. If you have any questions or comments on what you would change or programs you want to hear about please email us at [feedback@happyheartfund.org](mailto:feedback@happyheartfund.org). We would be really happy if you connect with us – remember, communication is a two-way street!