



ONE

Choice...

To Do More

Imagine life outside the comforts most of us experience on a day-to-day basis. Life in a world where one-third of the children never make it past age five and the life expectancy is only 50 years. Life in a world where rising prices does not mean cutting back on a luxury, but instead means there is literally no way for you to buy food for your family. This is life right now in Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere and the work to improve these poor conditions is monumental.

After hearing stories like that, some may be moved to contribute to a special offering designated for third-world countries, but often it stops there. However, one woman decided that she had to do more.

When Nora Léon, a member of Holy Cross, Jenison, heard

America's Favorite Mom

On Mother's Day 2008, NBC and Teleflora unveiled what they called the "America's Favorite Mom" award and Nora was nominated by her daughter and was voted as one of the five finalists. Viewers had an opportunity to go online and leave notes about the finalists for the awards. One person said of Nora: "[She] is a saint! [She is] totally selfless in every way, living to help others, never thinking of herself."

about the plight of people in Haiti, she was especially moved. She gave up everything she had here in America and moved to Les Cayes, Haiti to work at the Children of Israel orphanage.



Eye exams were conducted during Holy Cross and Immanuel's mission trip.

Several Lutheran churches in Michigan and Ohio have made efforts to support Nora and her work at the orphanage. Two of these congregations are Holy Cross, Jenison and Immanuel, Grand Rapids who teamed up this past February to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ, medical care, and supplies to those in need. The team was led by Pastor William Wangelin of Holy Cross.

While there, the team found that the

majority of Haitians are indeed poor.

Poverty in Haiti is the result of overpopulation, inflation, illiteracy, no industry or export, and little viable industrial or government infrastructure.

Most Haitians are poorly educated and speak Creole (a pidgin French, a mixture of dialects that is seldom written). The educated speak French and some English is spoken by both. Their basic nature is friendly and warm, but that is tempered by frustrations over lack of government

services, less than adequate food supplies, and a confusing system of transportation.

Eighty percent of Haitians are Catholic. Many also believe, to some extent, in Voodoo. An increasing number have become Protestant because of the efforts of missionary work. Religion may play a central role in the life of an individual, especially during an illness or other crisis. Often, religion is seen as magic. It is



Mission team members work on the construction of the chicken coop made for the orphanage during their recent mission trip.

Children of the orphanage standing below a banana tree.



Members of the team collecting information from the patients during the clinics.



four and five foot waves, a Haitian asked one of the team members, “Would you do this again?” Answering for the whole team, the answer was a resounding “Absolutely!”

not unusual for a person to consult physicians, sorcerers, and utilize natural remedies for the same medical condition.

Doctors and hospitals are in short supply in Haiti, so clinics are quite popular.

The team quickly found the children from the orphanage captivating and adoptable. Warm smiles, big hugs, and beautiful singing voices endeared them all to the hearts of each team member. In contrast to the malnutrition evident throughout the country, the food at the orphanage is deliciously prepared. Meals include pancakes, eggs, and cereals for breakfast, spaghetti with sauce, salads, amazing pumpkin soup, potato salad, and rice. Chicken, fish, and roasted goat meat rounded out dietary offerings.

The team fit people who came to the mission with eyeglasses, treated infections, distributed vitamins and medications, conducted worship services and Bible studies, and built and stocked a new chicken coop!

During the weeklong mission trip, which included a wild hour-and-a-half ocean ride to a distant island in an ancient shallow wooden boat that crashed its way through

For more information about the orphanage and recent hurricane aftermath visit www.norainhaiti.spaces.live.com.

Note: Team information and photographs supplied by Rev. Timothy Verity, Emeritus and Nora Léon. Wikipedia was used to gain statistical and general information on the country and people of Haiti.



Nora Léon showing a child how to work the sewing machine.