

The Loving Shepherd

Summer 2008

Volume 5, Issue 1



Breaking New Ground



Five-year-old Rosette hadn't eaten for almost 24 hours, and she wasn't sure if she would have anything else to eat today but a little bit of rice.

Of course, there was the dirt. Many starving Haitians had taken to eating the dirt, even creating a name for the concoction — mud cookies.

Her mother had died years ago. Her stepmother had died as well, and her father, a farmer, had not married a third time. Perhaps the pain was too much. Perhaps the outcome was too inevitable.

Regardless, Rosette had no one to watch her or care for her while her father tended the animals.

Until now ... thanks to Loving Shepherd's donors.

Life in Haiti

Today in Haiti, the average family lives on less than \$2 a day.

And a mother in Haiti has to spend a third of that \$2 just to buy enough rice to feed her family of eight once a day.

Hope blossoms in Haiti

And Haiti's chronic poverty only grows more serious whenever one or both parents die or are physically incapacitated. It is no coincidence that Haiti, which is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, also has the highest percentage of orphans in the Western Hemisphere.

After their parents die, Haitian orphans might live with relatives — a whole new set of caregivers that can barely feed them.

For another 10 percent of Haiti's children, a worse fate is realized as they become virtual slaves — known as restaveks — for other Haitians.

Poor families send their children to slightly better-off Haitians with the hope that these children will have access to school, adequate food and safer living conditions.

Unfortunately, this rarely happens.

Restaveks (some as young as three) in Haiti are often beaten when they don't clean the chamber pots well enough; they are beaten when they play with their "master's" children.

They are beaten for snatching a few minutes to play.

"To be a restavek is to be an untouchable, the ultimate have-not in a society of have-nots," said one former restavek.

In addition, thousands of children live on the streets, scrounging among the garbage dumps, store fronts and sidewalks.

Securing their safety

Loving Shepherd's group homes care for those children whose parents or guardians are either dead or



Most Haitian children and their extended families live in thatched huts about the size of an American's living room. Loving Shepherd group homes, by comparison, are about five times larger.

physically incapable of taking care of them.

When Loving Shepherd interviewed Rosette and her father, he said that he felt her life would be better in the group home. He wanted her to have two parents

who could always tend to her needs.

As dire as Rosette's home life was, other children in the homes have experienced worse.

Two brothers, ages 9 and 11, were living with their blind grandmother and grandfather (who could no longer work). The boys' mother had died, and no one else could take care of them.

Then the fire destroyed the hut where they lived.

But now the boys are

Story continues on next page



Loving Shepherd Group Homes provide more than shelter

living in a Loving Shepherd Group Home in Kpoux.

“The grandmother of two of the boys ... was crying as she recounted the burden that had been lifted with us taking them into the home,” Loving Shepherd President Ed Schwartz said. “She loved the boys, but she had no money to buy food for them and herself.”

Securing their hearts

Loving Shepherd looks for children living in these kinds of conditions and who are most in need of safety and a family.

When they move into the donor-funded group homes, each child can claim his or her own bed, personal totes and stackable plastic drawers so that their clothes no longer lie in the Haitian dirt.

Meanwhile the children will no longer sleep on cardboard on the ground, where blood-sucking parasites attack their bare skin.

At the group homes, the toilet will properly dispose of waste and help prevent disease, and children will have access to clean showers.

And all the water flows from a well filled with only clean water.

Yet more important than the physical comforts, the group homes provide something that the streets and even an orphanage cannot: a family.

Most children in orphanages have beds, but they do not get tucked in.

Most children in orphanages have meals, but they

don't have supper time.

Most children in orphanages have roommates, but they don't have brothers or sisters.

Loving Shepherd group homes, however, create that family environment.

The house parents are thoroughly screened to ensure that Christ is the head of their marriage. They're active in their church, and they care deeply about children and have agreed to raise them in the group homes as their own.

The father leads the children daily in devotionals.

They have meals together, and they have play time together.

On Sundays, the house parents take the children to the local church, which is within walking distance of the group home.

“Seeing the girls from the Torbeck group home walk ... in their brand new dresses from church to their home was a beautiful sight,” Schwartz said. “There is great satisfaction in knowing they were rescued from terrible conditions and placed in an environment where they can now bloom and grow.”

Securing the future

Even with the generous support of its donors, Loving Shepherd realizes that we can't help every child in Haiti.

But those children we can help will receive an education, including vocational training, along with a solid Spiritual up-



Above: Children in the group home in Kpoux pray before their meals. Each group home includes a dining area next to a 100-square-foot kitchen. The kitchen features a two-burner stove to properly cook food, cabinets to safely and sanitarly store dishes and a large wash basin to clean dishes and pans. **Left:** The children eat three nutritious meals a day. The meals provide them with the essential nutrients needed to grow.

bringing.

Our vision, not just in Haiti but around the world, is to grow these children into leaders who will be the catalyst for change.

Gradually, these worldwide leaders will break up the dried, cracked ground that condemns all hope to wither.

They'll replace it with a

fertile soil where children aren't forced to starve

They'll encourage others to have a faith that is genuine and leads to salvation.

But until then, they'll be learning how to love — not only from their house parents, but their extended family in America, all the donors at Loving Shepherd who have made this possible.

You can be a Hand of the Shepherd

We are excited to announce a unique giving program targeted specifically to support children in our group homes: Hands of the Shepherd.

“Hands of the Shepherd” offers you the ability to join with others to support these life-changing homes.

For more information, go to www.loving-shepherd.org and click on the “Become a Hand of the Shepherd” link.



Email: info@loving-shepherd.org

Visit our Web site at:
www.loving-shepherd.org

(260) 824-9000

Bluffton, IN 46714

P.O. Box 375

Loving Shepherd International
Services and Foundation Inc.



Not-for-profit
US Postage
Paid
Bluffton, IN
Permit No. 491
ZIP CODE 46714