

Two aussie girls head to Haiti. Why and what will they accomplish?



Lisa and Cay

G'day my name is Cay Merritt (in the green) and I am a High School teacher of French. I also volunteer for the Christian Radio Station (1WAY FM) in Canberra. On air I am known as Crazy Cay dealing with Monday Madness! So how the heck did I come to make the decision to head to Haiti and volunteer with Haitian Christian Mission (HCM)? Well, I am glad you asked.

My hubby, Max, and I had already done some volunteer work in Haiti the year before at an orphanage in Port au Prince (PaP) and after the earthquake we decided that one of us should return to help out in some way. We then decided that I should go as Max had to go back to his job, or lose it.

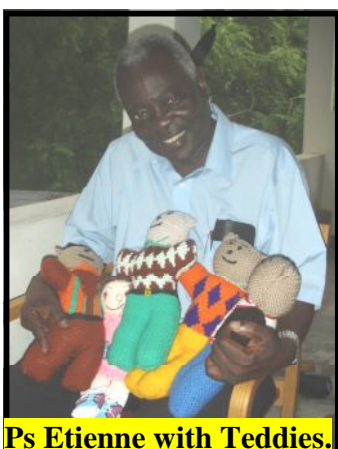
A friend of mine – Lisa Clarke (above in the purple) – aka Mad Motorcycle Midwife, was also interested in coming to help so we touched base with Ps Etienne (the Director of HCM) and asked whether we could serve at his mission – he said “When are you coming? We are waiting for you!” Ps Etienne is a true gentleman and such a lovely, wise man – I made the most of my time with him to glean some from his experience of years of mission work and building of HCM.



Lisa with child from clinic

Lisa and I spent one month at HCM in Fonds Parisien – a small town about an hour east of PaP (the capital of Haiti and the epicenter of the 2010 earthquake). By being with the mission for a month, we were considered “long termers” and asked to help coordinate short term teams who came to assist with the mission. Many 4 – 6 day medical teams came from the States and Canada with the desire to help in whatever way they could. It was my job to prepare the teams culturally as well as show them around and troubleshoot any problems they had.

At HCM there were many areas that we could be involved in and Lisa and I helped: to coordinate school lessons about health, to run the medical clinic, to organise mobile medical clinics – these were often held in the village church, to distribute food to the poor, to initiate work parties such as painting, building etc.



Ps Etienne with Teddies.

While we were at HCM we also had the privilege of distributing trauma teddies, that were donated by an aussie hospital, to children who had been injured in the earthquake. There was a tent city not far from HCM called “Camp l’espwa” meaning Camp Hope where we visited to give out the teddies. It was very distressing to see children without legs or arms as a result of the 2009 earthquake. But we tried to keep a brave face and felt blessed to be able to give the kids a little token of hope from Australia. Many children lost their parents and many parents lost children. It was an awful, devastating time and only now is rebuilding really starting to happen.

Thanks to HCM - their medical clinic serves a large community and many people travel by foot or taptap to be seen by one of the HCM or a visiting medical team from the States. There is a lively church on the mission grounds as well and you can see just how much HCM has invested in the lives of the local people.



Little Dubi – a baby we helped save.

Visiting and serving with HCM was a wonderful opportunity to see how important this ministry is and how they have given a corner of Haiti hope – and hope brings life. I would recommend anyone who would like to visit or donate finances and resources to this mission. Ps Etienne and his wife Betty are honest, transparent people who work hard to make a notable difference in Haiti.

By Cay Merritt