



YOUR TRIP STARTS [HERE](#) ▶

WHERE SHORT-TERM
MISSION TRIPS

COLLIDE WITH LONG-TERM
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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WELCOME

As you prepare for your trip, let us ask you a simple question: *Why are you going on a mission trip?* At Next Step we believe it's important to understand why you are serving and what your goals are.

Here at Next Step Ministries it's pretty simple. We have two goals.

Our first goal is to provide a trip experience that genuinely guides your students into the next step of their faith. Our prayer is that many would enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Our second goal is to provide a bridge between your one-week trip and the long-term development of the community you are serving.

We believe in serving **with** a community, which is why we are thrilled to partner with you, your students, and the dynamic community leaders you will be working along side.

It is our prayer that your trip is a glimpse of heaven on earth with people from all nations serving together to glorify Jesus' name. Serving each other, learning from each other, and worshipping together.

We are committed to making this the best trip experience you have ever had. If there is anything we can do to make your trip more special, please let us know day or night!

Thank you in advance for your hard work, sleepless nights, and servant hearts as you work along side this community. We are honored to have your team serving as the hands and feet of Next Step and appreciate you representing our ministry and most importantly the Kingdom as you serve.

Thanks again and have a great trip!

Nick Andy Todd

Nick, Andy and Todd
Co-Founders and Directors

BACKGROUND

MISSION STATEMENT

Next Step Ministries is committed to providing opportunities for students to explore their faith, experience God and extend services to those in need, all in the name of Jesus Christ.

WHO WE ARE

As a faith-based nonprofit organization, it is the goal of Next Step ministries to provide students with the opportunity to develop and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, while mobilizing them to make a real difference in the world. This is accomplished during life-changing, one-week mission trips to various places across the globe. It is also our goal for our short-term mission trips to collide with long-term community development. This is achieved through our full-time commitment to empowering the communities we serve along side.

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The beauty of a short-term mission trip is that it provides an opportunity for long-term growth, both at the student level as well as the community level. At Next Step, we believe that week long mission trips are only effective if ministry continues beyond one week. That's why we are focused on providing the resources to continue students' growth beyond their week long mission trip through programs like MyStep, our 365 day online follow-up program. In the same way, we are committed to partnering with communities to empower them to thrive long after our teams are gone.

OUR STORY

During the summer of 2002, two young college students and their passionate youth pastor decided to take a group of students overseas for a week long mission trip. It was here, behind the fancy hotels and sandy beaches, that we discovered a hidden world of mass poverty and fleeting hope. We returned home with heavy hearts, but at the same time, we were truly inspired by what we saw in our students. Something had changed in them. Over the course of one challenging week filled with sweat and tears, forty individuals learned how to work together as one, and in the process, began to learn what it really means to live for Christ. They returned to their families and friends with a newfound enthusiasm for Christ, excited to live their lives differently.

Ten years and many mission trips later, we have had the privilege of watching thousands of students grow in their relationship with Christ while bonding together as one to accomplish seemingly impossible challenges. We have also seen city after city take a small helping hand and turn it into a radical movement of spiritual and physical growth for their community. God has called us, and in response, we have created Next Step Ministries.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Next Step Ministries believes that there is one God in three distinct persons: Father, Son & Holy Spirit. We believe that God is love and that He extends His love to all people. We believe that God has created us with the choice to love Him. However, as a result of humankind's original choice not to love God (i.e., sin) we became separated from Him. It is for this reason that the Father has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who was sinless, and was persecuted and died on the cross on our behalf. We believe that God has raised Jesus from death to life to mend our broken relationship with Himself. It is our goal to bring this good news to all people who will listen through our actions and words.

Next Step Ministries holds that the Bible is the inspired word of God and is thereby applicable and authoritative for our lives today. We believe that God is all-loving and all-powerful, and is therefore worthy of all our praise and reverence. We believe God encompasses the fullness of love and calls us to love Him and all those around us regardless of race, political belief, religion, or gender.

We believe that God has called every Christian to ministry to the physical and spiritual needs of those around us. To that end, Next Step Ministries strives to enable and prepare students to further God's Kingdom throughout the United States and around the world. It is our goal to give people the opportunity to take the next step in their lives and come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and experience the real life, the life that only God's true love can give!

YOUR COMMUNITY

Welcome to the community of Fond Blanc, Haiti. Fond Blanc is a small mountain community about 2 hours from Port-au-Prince. After traveling the long and bumpy road to Fond Blanc, you will enter the gates of the orphanage, the home to 50 children built by Pastor Jean Claude after the earthquake.

Fond Blanc is home to about 10,000 people, although many of those residents live far up in the mountain. Most of their homes are small, wooden structures with tin roofs. While this might seem primitive to US standards, for the residents of Fond Blanc, these structures are their home — and they are naturally proud of their homes. As visitors to this community, its important we leave any notion of our American standards in America. These will only blind you to the true, simple beauty of this community.

We ask that you enter Fond Blanc as an engaged visitor, someone who is thankful for the unique opportunity to be invited into this amazing community.

Very few people have left Fond Blanc and the orphanage without falling in love with the children and feeling a profound change deep inside. You will work harder and sweat more than you ever knew possible. And you will worship alongside children who rely on God in a real and palatable way.

Simply, this community and experience will wreck you, in a beautiful and profound way. God will ask you to reexamine yourself and challenge your entire way of living. Be ready and open to this. Let God move freely and you will leave a new person.

LODGING

The Fond Blanc Orphanage

You will be staying at the orphanage in Fond Blanc. This is a gated compound that houses 50 children, as well as a number of staff, teachers and construction workers. It's a very safe place to stay and we have done our best to create a comfortable living space for our missionary visitors.

In 2013 we built new missionary housing on the third level of the orphanage. This includes space for 30 beds, six showers and six toilets. Hundreds of visitors have stayed at the orphanage with few complaints. Having said that, it's important that you know what to expect...

Haiti is hot (over 90' most days and very humid) and there are no fans or air conditioning units. There is no power in the community of Fond Blanc. We run a generator in the evenings for light, but even this isn't a certainty. While you will always have clean drinking water, water for showers has been known to run dry from time to time. This is because the orphanage receives water from a spring in the village that isn't always reliable.

You will receive two meals a day — the same as the children at the orphanage. These meals usually consist of large helpings of beans and rice, with the occasional luxury of eggs, chicken or fish. Pasta for breakfast is common in Haiti, and you might even get the chance to experience it for yourself. Know that while we would love to feed you more (especially since you will be working incredibly hard), we have intentionally chosen to feed our guests the same as the children and staff at the orphanage. As visitors, we prefer to be seen as equals and not given special treatment. We encourage our teams to bring nutritional snacks to eat during the day.

So while you will always have a safe roof over your heads, clean water and good food, you will probably be uncomfortable for at least some of your stay in Fond Blanc. In the end, this is the reality for the community 365 days of the year. You will experience it for a week. Instead of focusing on what you are missing, try to be open and grateful for what you have and I promise you, in the end, you will have an amazing, eye-opening experience.

MEALS

While in Haiti your group will experience mealtimes as the Haitian culture does, twice a day. We will have breakfast at 8:30am and a second meal at 3:00pm. The meals are filling and there is always plenty to eat. We have not had any problems with students feeling overwhelmingly hungry. We do however, suggest that you bring substantial snacks.

If your group has dietary restrictions, please notify us. We ask for your understanding and flexibility though as our options in Haiti are extremely limited. Severe dietary restrictions may require you to provide your own food.

Typical Menu:

Breakfast- eggs, grits, fresh fruit, coffee

Dinner- Rice, beans, chicken, spicy cabbage

PRE-TRIP PLANNING

FLIGHTS

- We strongly encourage you to schedule your flights to arrive in Haiti in the late morning/early afternoon. This will not only be helpful to our Haitian drivers, but also provide you with a great experience of traveling from Port au Prince to Fond Blanc while it's still light out.
- We also ask if possible to arrange your flight home to depart in the later afternoon as it makes it much easier on our Haitian drivers.

FRIDAY OPTIONS

Free Day Option: Wahoo Bay Beach

<http://www.wahoobaybeach.com>

- Safe, Secure beach
- You will need to purchase lunch (approx. \$15.00/person)

Community Day Option: Community Meal

- Continue working in the morning hours
- Special celebration meal on Friday afternoon with all orphanage staff, Haitian work crew, children, and members of Fond Blanc Church congregation.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

If your group wishes to hold a vacation bible school our staff will happily assist you! The children and even teens love crafts and the opportunity to be creative. Crafts should be simple and require little to no assistance. VBS should last a maximum of two hours and be very flexible. You will need to provide the materials if you plan a VBS.

For helpful advice or ideas for a successful VBS, please contact Alison Praisewater at alison.praisewater@nextstepministries.com

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Our schedule in Haiti differs from our typical daily schedule. Elements such as daylight, electricity, and the children's schedule, have helped us to create a new routine that works great and gives you the island experience!

SUNDAY (ARRIVAL DAY)

Land in Haiti
Meet the Next Step Ministries staff at the airport
Drive to the orphanage in Fond Blanc
Unload luggage/Free Time
Dinner
Orientation and Worship
11:00 pm Lights Out

MONDAY — THURSDAY (WORK DAYS)

6am- Wake Up
6:15- Begin work Day
8:30- Breakfast
9:00- Morning Devotional
9:30- Continue Work Day
12:00- Break/Lunch Devotional
1:00- Continue Work Day
3:00- Dinner
4:00- Free time/Showers/VBS Option
5/6- Church/Next Step Worship
9:30- Lights Out

FRIDAY (OPTIONAL FREE DAY)

8:00 am Wake Up
8:15 am Breakfast
9:00 am Leave Fond Blanc for Wahoo Beach
12:00 pm Lunch (bring money for lunch at Wahoo Beach Hotel)
4:00 pm Leave Wahoo Beach
7:00 pm Worship
9:00 pm Small Group/Church Time
10:30 pm Lights Out

SCHEDULE — WHAT TO EXPECT

WAKE UP

Rise and shine at 6:00 am! You'll have plenty of time to roll out of bed, but then it's off to the worksite to get in a few hours before the sun beats down on you. We'll break for breakfast around 8:30 am, go through our morning devotionals and then head back out to the worksite.

WORK PROJECTS

You'll work with a team of about 8-10 people on various projects around the orphanage. The Next Step construction team will lead you in the work. Around noon your team break for a group devotional. Soon after, it's back to work until your second meal at 3:00 pm.

SHOWERS, FREE TIME, DINNER & CLEANUP

After your second meal you have a few hours to hangout, eat snacks and shower. Before you know it, we'll be ready for worship.

WORSHIP

Get ready for an exciting evening with your Next Step band and worship team! We will take time to break into work crews each day to share how we saw God at work throughout the day. We will watch some videos, share some stories, and learn more about how to love and serve like Christ. Once evening programming wraps up, you will have time to meet with your youth group.

FREE TIME & LIGHTS OUT

Bring some cards or games to play with friends. We'll have plenty of time for enjoying one another's company. Everyone will head to bed at 9:30 pm to make sure we have enough energy for the next day full of hard work!

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Most of your stay will be confined to the Orphanage in Fond Blanc. It is gated and kept locked at all times though people from town often come to visit and hang out. Fond Blanc Evangelical church is located within the Orphanage gates and services are held every Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday. The gates are opened for church services.

The school in Fond Blanc is also located within the Orphanage gates.

We ask that you keep your belongings in your dormitories. Your belongings are safe but the children are very curious.

The orphanage is the children's home. Please be respectful of the children's schedule. Especially their bedtime. The children will be excited to play with your students but please help us to encourage them to go to bed at the appropriate time.

You will have the opportunity to worship with the Haitian congregation.

The official languages in Haiti are Creole and French. We will have three interpreters working for us this summer on site.

WHAT TO BRING

This is an individual packing list for every leader and student. The items on this list are items that you do not want to go on your trip without!

- Passport (plus two copies)
- Bedding – sleeping bag or sheets and a blanket
- Pillow
- Flashlight
- Water bottle
- Sunglasses/Hat
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Snacks – granola bars, trail mix and other nutritional items
- Bible
- Shower towel
- Swim towel
- Swimming suit – one-piece swimsuit or a t-shirt covering a two-piece is required for ladies.
- Sandals
- Toiletries – soap, shampoo, toothbrush, etc.
- Work shoes – an old pair of tennis shoes will work well. It's great to wear work boots, but they are not required.
- Work clothes – old t-shirts, athletic shorts, cargo shorts, or jeans. Some people prefer to work in long pants. It's up to you and your personal preference of what you will be most comfortable in.
- Work Gloves
- Casual clothes – bring a clean set of clothes to change into after showers in the evening. Dress casually and comfortably!
- Church clothes – dresses for women and pants/collard shirt for men.
- \$1 bills and small bills for cokes and souvenirs

ELECTRONICS POLICY & DRESS CODE

CELL PHONES IN HAITI

We strongly urge students not to bring their cell phones to Haiti for two reasons:

1. Reception is limited and there is a high likelihood that they will not work.
2. Though belongings are generally safe, the children at the orphanage are extremely curious and there is a good chance it could be picked up by a child.

We recommend one of three options pertaining to cell phones:

1. **Use the Next Step Haitian Phone:**
Before exiting the airport stop at the Digicel booth located after baggage claim, right before the exit. You may purchase a minute card and we will add it to our staff cell phone. You can use these minutes for quick check-ins with parents. Be sure to get International minutes. This option is approximately \$30.00.
2. **Buy a Haitian Phone**
Before exiting the airport stop at the Digicel booth located after baggage claim, right before the exit. For about \$30-70 you can purchase a Haitian phone. This will allow you to have a direct phone number to give to parents and to use for the entirety of your stay.
3. **Purchase a temporary international plan for your personal phone**
One or two leaders can do this and your students will be able to contact parents. Additionally, for data plans, you will be able to email, and access the trip journals to update churches back home.

DRESS CODE

As we are guests in this country, we want to be very aware of being appropriate in how we dress. Our staff may ask you to change your attire if you are not following the guidelines listed below.

LADIES

- **Shorts/Capris-** You may wear shorts or capris (or long jeans) while working during the day. Shorts must be to the knees. Just a reminder that Haiti is hot and denim is heavy!
- **Skirts-** We recommend 1-2 skirts. You will need to wear skirts to church on Wednesday and Friday night.
- **Tops-** Lightweight, breathable shirts are the best! No tank tops of any kind are allowed- shoulders must be covered. Please also be mindful of necklines. Bra straps, even sports bras, should not show at any time.
- **Bathing Suits-** One piece swimsuits are a must.

MEN

- **Shorts-** Shorts are acceptable at the worksite and hanging around the orphanage. Basketball shorts are acceptable.

- **Pants-** You will need to wear pants to church- no shorts. Jeans are fine or khakis or dress pants.
- **Shirts-** Short sleeve shirts must be worn. Please no cut-offs. You may see some of the Haitian workers in cut off shirts- we will still ask that you please abide by the no cut off rule. Thank you! You will need a collard shirt for church.
- **Bathing Suits-** Longer trunks are preferred.

DONATIONS

In an effort to preserve the environment that the children are living in and to avoid creating a community expectant and reliant on gifts and donations, we have put much thought and effort into a donation policy. We have spoken with Pastor Jean Claude and the Haitian staff at the Orphanage and have put together what we feel are best practices when donating items. Below you will find an explanation of how to go about donating items as well as helpful lists of great items to bring and those to avoid.

DONATION POLICY EXPLANATION

At Next Step, we want to be intentional in how we distribute donations. We believe donations pose an opportunity for families to receive the things they need. That being said, this process must deliberately foster dignity, as opposed to dependency.

DONATION GUIDELINES

Below are guidelines we have created for all donations in order to receive, allocate, and distribute each item in a way that does just that: dignifies and empowers the community.

- All donations must be sent to the Next Step Ministries office. Next Step will then distribute the donations accordingly.
- We strongly encourage that every item donated is new. Lightly used donations are accepted as well.
- Please keep all tags on any new items.
- All lightly used clothing must be washed before being sent.
- All electronics must be tested and fully functioning before being sent.
- Donations must be organized in labeled boxes.
- We will not accept any item that is torn or damaged

APPROPRIATE ITEMS:

- Soccer balls
- Jump Ropes
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Bubbles
- Kites
- Rubber bands and beads for girls hair
- Clothing for ages 3-12
 - Girls need summer dresses and underwear
 - Boys wear elastic waist shorts and t-shirts as well as slacks and button up shirts for church
- School Supplies
 - Pencils, Sharpeners
 - Crayons
 - Paper/notebooks

ONLINE FORMS

Every leader and student is required to complete an online participant form.

Please use the instructions listed below. If you have any difficulties submitting the form, please contact your youth leader or Next Step Office Coordinator, Beth Heneghan at beth.heneghan@nextstepministries.com.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE FORM

1. Go to www.nextstepministries.com
2. Select the tab "Participant Form"
3. Fill out form and submit with your youth leader's username

NOTE: Please keep in mind that the website is case sensitive and you must enter the username exactly as your youth leader entered it. If you have any difficulties with this or do not know the proper username to use, please contact Beth Heneghan.

Please also note that health insurance is required for every volunteer. If you do not have insurance, we recommend the Volunteer Card, which is an inexpensive and fantastic program. You can find information about the program on our site (www.nextstepministries.com). The program provides quality insurance for volunteers starting at \$25/year. Please send the confirmation of your temporary insurance to Next Step Ministries at missions@nextstepministries.com.

TRAVEL

DURING YOUR FLIGHT

During your flight have your passport accessible. Each passenger will be given two forms. A Customs Declaration Form (White) and an Immigration Form (Green). Please enter the following information for Pastor Jean Claude Sylvain:

208 Fontamara 41
Port au Prince, Haiti
Ph # 011-509-37054968

IMMIGRATION

Immediately after arriving you will walk out to Immigration. The immigration officer will ask for your passport and your green immigration form. They will stamp your passport and give the bottom portion of your form back to you (keep this in a safe place- you will need it for your departure).

BAGGAGE CLAIM

Once you get your group through immigration, you will turn right and go down the escalators to baggage claim. At the bottom of the escalators there are carts for rent if you feel you will need them. They are \$2 USD. You will find your luggage on the carousel- sometimes luggage is removed and lined up to the right of the carousel. We recommend making your luggage easy to spot with duct tape or ribbons. Once you have gathered your team's luggage, an airport employee will ask to check your tags to make sure you have the proper luggage. Once you have your luggage, you will continue to Customs.

**It is important to note that before you exit customs, make sure your groups uses the restroom. It will be your last chance until Fond Blanc.*

CUSTOMS

Once you have your luggage you will exit through customs. The airport agent will ask to have your white declaration form. Sometimes if they see a group, they will ask one person to collect all of the forms at the front of the line.

**Once you pass through customs you will turn right and see the Digicel booth (this is where you will stop if you choose to purchase phones or minutes).*

EXITING THE AIRPORT

You will continue to walk through the glass doors. Immediately upon your exit, several people in red shirts and hats will ask to help you with your luggage. Simply respond "No mesi" (no thank you). If they do help you, they will expect a tip. Continue walking out through the welcome area until you see the Next Step Staff. The Next Step Staff will lead you out to the parking lot. They will not stop to greet you- this is intentional as they are trying to get you out of the welcome area as soon as possible. As soon as you get to the trucks in the parking lot, they will be happy to introduce themselves and greet you.

PARKING LOT

In the parking lot we will do a headcount to make sure the group is all-together. Then we will pack into the trucks and head to Fond Blanc!

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- **In the case of separation from the group**
 - If at anytime a member of your group gets separated we ask that they return to the **Digicel phone stand** inside of the airport, just near the baggage claim area. If we notice a missing person a Next Step staff member will be sent back to the Digicel booth to retrieve them.
- **In the case of a missing person:**
 - In the event of a missing person inform our Next Step and Haitian staff immediately. Call Pastor Jean Claude at 011-509-37054968. Jean Claude will alert the proper authorities depending on the situation (Haitian Police, US Embassy, or UN).

CONTACT INFORMATION AND DAY OF TRAVEL

The week before your trip you will receive an email from Beth Heneghan. It will include these step-by-step instructions as well as any updated travel information. It will include Haitian phone numbers of the Next Step Staff as well as a photo of your staff to locate them at the airport.

TOOLS

Please make every effort to bring all the tools on this list. Next Step will contact you a few weeks prior to your trip if there are any changes to this list. Whatever you are unable to bring, Next Step will make sure to provide.

The tool list below is based on a group of 25 students. If your group is smaller/larger by more than 10 students, please contact Next Step for a revised list. Quantity of tool is in parenthesis.

Again, it is OK if you are unable to bring all tools. Next Step will make sure you have everything you need, please make sure to let us know.

- Mud Trowels (10)
- Dry Line (4)
- Utility Knives (5)
- Extension Cords (4)
- Circular Saw (1)
- Cordless Drill (1)
- Levels

Please note that nail guns are NOT allowed.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

At Next Step Ministries safety is extremely important. We believe safety begins with our mentality and attitude. There are four core values to guide all of our construction work to ensure our time together is safe, efficient, and effective:

1. Safety
2. Relationship Building
3. Quality
4. Production Time

SAFETY

This is our top priority while serving on the mission trip. To help ensure safety at all times, the following rules have been established while working on construction projects:

- For certain projects, safety glasses will be required at all times.
- For certain projects, hard hats will be required at all times.
- For ALL projects, close-toed shoes are required. We strongly suggest boots, but they are not mandatory.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Home repairs and construction projects directly meet a physical need within a community. However, more importantly than this hands on work, the heart behind the mission is to connect with the community we are serving alongside. We will work hard to accomplish as much as possible while building and repairing homes, but there will also be a strong emphasis on taking time to connect on a relational level with the residents. Furthermore, working together on construction projects offers a unique opportunity for students and leaders to continue to grow in their relationships as well.

QUALITY

Next Step Ministries will make sure all work completed is of the highest quality possible. We will only begin work projects that we are confident can be completed well. Our construction staff will take the time to properly prepare projects, lead your team step-by-step in the building process, and follow-up with every project to ensure that it was completed with high quality!

PRODUCTION TIME

While working together our goal is to take the time necessary to complete each project well. You may be working on a project that cannot be completed in just one week. Please understand that you are a part of a long-term partnership with the community and the project will be completed by Next Step Ministries. This will help ensure our work is safe, high quality, and allows for time to invest in relationships.

Due to safety reasons, nails guns are NOT allowed on any Next Step Ministries mission trips.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

We strive to offer your group the best mission trip experience you have ever had! We are available day and night to answer your calls and questions. Please save the important numbers listed below to use in case of emergency or general questions. Again, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Toll Free	866-534-2009	missions@nextstepministries.com
Beth Heneghan (Office)	608-514-4051	beth.heneghan@nextstepministries.com
Nick Cocalis (Director)	608-213-2650	nick.cocalis@nextstepministries.com

COMMUNITY

INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

You have made the exciting decision to spend a week serving with the people of Fond Blanc this summer... a community of people I have fallen in love with. Haiti is a breathtaking country filled with beautiful people. In response, we want to do all we can to prepare you. That is why we have created this Fact Packet: to communicate information about Haiti that will be significant as you live within this community.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- **By The Numbers:** Specific statistics regarding the community.
- **Background to the Numbers:** An explanation as to why some of these statistics exist.
- **Things You Should Know:** Details to know before heading out to Haiti this summer.
- **Partnerships in the Community:** Individuals and organizations that we partner with in the community extending our impact far beyond one week.
- **Long-term Involvement:** Ways for you to become and stay involved in this community before you arrive, and after you go home.
- **Resources:** Additional information to dig deeper into the community.

Understand that this packet reveals just a small glimpse of the complex culture that truly defines the people of Fond Blanc. Allow this information to create awareness: an awareness that in the midst of these seemingly hopeless statistics, there are individuals and organizations that are relentless, as they continue to reveal the potential that lies within this country.

We are on this journey with you and commit to consistent investment in growing our knowledge and involvement in this community. My goal as an Area Director is to focus not in simply aiding the community of Fond Blanc, but investing in them. We invite you into this process! We are grateful for your partnership with us, as well as the Haitian people this summer. God will work in huge ways through you as we come alongside this community. It is my goal to support you in any way I can as questions come up concerning Fond Blanc and the experience you will have this summer.

Blessings,

Alison Praisewater
Area Director
608-286-5015
alison.praisewater@nextstepministries.com

BY THE NUMBERS

HAITI

9.7 million	Population of Haiti
55%	Percent of population that is supplied by The World Food Program
42%	Percent of children less than 5 years of age suffering from stunted growth
90%	Unemployment rate
80%	Percent of Haitians living in abject poverty
400,000	Number of children in Haiti living without parents
1 of 5	Children will die before the age of five
70%	Percent of Haitians that do not have electricity
90%	Percent of Haitians that do not have running water
80%	Percent of Haitians that lack adequate sanitation
200,000	Number of estimated deaths from the 2010 earthquake
1.5 million	Number of people left homeless after the earthquake
\$5.2 billion	Amount of money spent on disaster relief after the 2010 earthquake (worldwide)
\$1.4 billion	Amount of money privately donated to Haiti from the U.S. after the 2010 earthquake
347,000	Number of people still displaced almost four years after the earthquake

BY THE NUMBERS

HAITI

- Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.
- Port Au Prince is ranked 213th out of 221 on the 2010 Mercer world cities livability index.
- The official languages of Haiti are: Creole and French.
- The major religions practiced are: Roman Catholic, Protestant and Voodoo.
- It is estimated that about half of the population practices Voodoo.
- The 2010 Earthquake was the strongest earthquake in 200 years.

FOND BLANC

- Fond Blanc is a mountain village located about 50km from Port au Prince.
- There are no medical facilities, police stations, or city government/leadership in Fond Blanc.
- The Fond Blanc Orphanage houses 53 children.
- Most of the children at the orphanage have living relatives and in some cases, parents.
- There are two churches in Fond Blanc. One of the churches is at the orphanage and is an Evangelic Church.
- There is one school on the orphanage grounds.
- Pastor Jean Claude's congregation built the orphanage after the original orphanage in Port au Prince collapsed.
- Pastor Jean Claude operates three orphanages.
- The primary language spoken in Fond Blanc is Creole.

BACKGROUND TO THE NUMBERS

- A majority of these statistics are not a result of the 2010 Earthquake. Though the earthquake brought great devastation to Haiti, the country was in distress long before the disaster.
- Haiti is no stranger to natural disasters. Hurricanes, tropical storms, and flooding are a regular occurrence. The effects of these disasters are more deeply felt due to a lack of infrastructure and proper city development. For instance, a storm that would barely slow traffic in Miami could claim lives in Haiti.
- The astounding unemployment rates and overwhelming levels of poverty are largely attributed to a lack of infrastructure and successful government reign. Haiti is ranked as one of the most corrupt nations. Troubled leadership and attempts to overthrow the government have held a common theme throughout Haiti's history.
- Our good friend and partner in ministry, Pastor Jean Claude characterizes Haiti as a place where, "truly we can say in Haiti we are not living, we are surviving."
- This packet reveals devastating statistics of life in Haiti and current conditions plaguing the country. Please don't overlook the importance of recognizing that Haiti has indeed grown leaps and bounds in the last three years. A well-known camp was built on Petionville golf course immediately after the earthquake. Initially, this camp was home to over 60,000 displaced Haitians. A short three years later, there were less than 7,000 people living at the camp, with plans to completely relocate and rebuild the camp. This is just one of many great successes Haitians have accomplished and continue to work towards in the rebuilding process.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Our friends in Haiti have taught us that in general, people do not like to talk about the earthquake.
- Most of the children in the orphanage are not orphans but rather living there for financial reasons. In the Fond Blanc Orphanage children receive food, clothing, and education. This is something most families cannot provide themselves. Because of this, please do not refer to the children as orphans.
- Haitians are very hospitable people. They will try and serve you each opportunity they get. Very proud of their country, the Haitian people will quickly try to make you feel at home.
- Although our Haitian friends may not appear to be overflowing with physical possessions from our perspective, the people of Fond Blanc feel richly blessed with everything they need.
- Leadership in Haiti is predominately male driven.
- There are many customs women will follow that we often feel are outdated, such as wearing skirts at all times. However, in Haiti, these are viewed as very respectable behaviors.
- We seek to communicate and show cultural respect while serving in Haiti. During your stay we encourage you to follow cultural norms (i.e.: female students wearing skirts to church and male students wearing collared shirts). We have developed a deep relationship with the people of Fond Blanc, as they also seek to respect our cultural norms. They understand that female staff members and students working on the worksite will be wearing pants.
- Though family is highly valued in Haitian culture, we have learned that survival is first and foremost. Many families split up and relocate to various places with more accessible resources.
- On the orphanage grounds, you will find adults and children rarely interacting in ways that we are used to. During your stay, do not be afraid to interact and spend time with the children, as they will love your attention.
- Haitians love Celine Dion. We haven't figured out why.
- It is vital to see Haiti in a new light, allowing this country shake the reputation of corrupt government and earthquake disaster. With investment rather than aid, we can work alongside the people of Fond Blanc to make a huge difference in daily life.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We have close working relationships with various individuals and organizations that serve in Fond Blanc on a full-time basis. We heavily rely on these people as a collaborative force to extend our impact beyond a weeklong project. Below describes each partner's involvement in the community on a year-round basis.

SURE FOUNDATIONS

We were first connected with the community of Fond Blanc through a connection to Sure Foundations. Paul Young founded Sure Foundations after the earthquake in Haiti with the goal of helping those in need. Through these efforts he met Pastor Jean Claude and traveled with him to Fond Blanc. Once he saw the orphanage and met the children, this became his primary focus. He began supporting Pastor Jean Claude's efforts in Fond Blanc, helping him complete the construction of the orphanage. In 2014, Next Step Ministries, Sure Foundations and Pastor Jean Claude launched the Fond Blanc Project, a collective effort to provide for the physical, educational and spiritual wellbeing of the children at the orphanage, and eventually the entire community.

PASTOR JEAN CLAUDE

Pastor Jean Claude grew up in Haiti with a real heart for the forgotten children. He currently runs four churches, two orphanages and one school. Next Step Ministries developed a partnership with Pastor Jean Claude in 2012 to help him build a new church in Fond Blanc. This church will be a central spiritual hub for the community and we couldn't be more excited to join him on this journey.

JACKY

We first met Jacky in 2013 when he joined his US host church on a mission trip to Fond Blanc. Jacky grew up in Haiti and won a prestigious scholarship to go to college in the US. After our first summer in Fond Blanc, Jacky jumped on board with Next Step Ministries part-time to handle all our Haitian-side logistics. Starting in June of 2014, Jacky is joining the Fond Blanc Project and will begin living in Fond Blanc fulltime to help take care of the children and build a solid foundation for our efforts.

LONG-TERM INVOLVEMENT

Below are a few practical ways that you and your group can be involved on a year round basis in the community, extending your service much beyond your one-week trip. Please contact your Area Director if you are interested in becoming involved in any way.

SUPPORT THE FOND BLANC PROJECT

In 2014 we launched the Fond Blanc Project, a collective effort between Next Step Ministries, Sure Foundations and our Haitian partners. Our goal is to provide for the physical, educational and spiritual wellbeing of the children at the orphanage and eventually the entire community of Fond Blanc. We have a ton of exciting ways your team can get involved with the Fond Blanc Project and make a real difference in these children's lives. Visit www.fondblanc.org and get involved today!

CREATE A PRAYER TEAM

No doubt you saw and experienced a multitude of things that can use the power of prayer during your time in Fond Blanc. Please consider creating a prayer team to pray at a specific time each day for specific prayer items within the community.

COME BACK AND VISIT!

We encourage you to build and grow the relationships that you establish during your time in Fond Blanc. The children experience great joy in seeing familiar faces come back to visit.

RESOURCES

If you are serious about being well informed before your time in Haiti, I strongly recommend two books that have been very influential and informative in my personal pursuit of gaining knowledge of Haiti. Both are extremely dense reads but very moving and educational.

Mountains Beyond Mountain by Tracy Kidder
The Big Truck That Went By by Johnathan Katz

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Mission of Hope Haiti Website:
<http://www.mohhaiti.org>

Embassy of Haiti Website:
<http://www.haiti.org>

US Geographical Survey Website:
<http://earthquake.usgs.gov>

JP/HRO (One of the largest relief organizations in Haiti)
<http://www.jphro.org>

Katz, Johnathan. (2013). *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind A Disaster*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Kidder, Tracy. (2004). *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. New York: Random House.

MISSION

MINDSET

OVERVIEW

Youth groups have been going on mission trips for hundreds of years. Although tremendous good has been done in the communities, and the lives of students have been radically changed, we are sometimes left with questions about our experience: Are we missing the mark? Did we truly make a difference in this community?

As Christ-followers, we have the responsibility to share the love of Jesus to all nations. With this responsibility comes a weight: a weight that exposes how impactful our words, actions, thoughts, and heart can truly be within the community we are immersed in this summer. You have stepped into a much larger picture...a picture that extends beyond one week and contributes to the overall sustainable development within a community. At Next Step, our heart is to see short-term missions collide with long-term community development, of *which you have now become a part*.

We want to be the first to say that Next Step has often struggled to find this balance on our trips. We have learned a few things over the years in our time serving within communities and hope to share those with you. This learning process is meant to be exciting, and we hope that you find this information uplifting! We will continue to share in this challenge as we wrestle with what it means to serve within the body of Christ.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

The content of the training is organized by four core values of what we believe characterizes a well-equipped individual serving within a community for a week-long mission trip. Each core value includes the following information to guide your preparation:

1. *Scripture*: This verse is the central idea and base of all other content that is shared for that particular core value.
2. *Focus Points*: These concepts should help guide the thoughts, actions, heart, and motivation behind your mission trip.
3. *Key Takeaway*: A short battle cry for your students to remember and bring with them on their trip.
4. *Discussion Questions*: This will help to promote discussion within your group in order to discover ways to apply these concepts during your trip.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

This packet is designed to help prepare and train your team of leaders and students. The last page of this packet is a one-page summary of each core value. This can be used as a handout to give to students and leaders in order to more easily internalize these concepts.

We recommend sharing this information in one of two easy ways!

1. Set aside one meeting to cover all contents of this packet.
2. Set up four separate group meetings, covering one core value at each meeting and diving into deeper study and discussion.

HUMBLE SERVANT

SCRIPTURE

“Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the *same attitude* that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave, and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross”.

- *Philippians 2:3-8 (The Voice, emphasis added)*

From this passage, we see the true essence of what it means to serve within the context of a community in which we have no experience: to enter as a *humble servant*. Humility and servant hood were attitudes that defined and characterized Christ in His time on earth. Beyond observing and admiring the attitude and humility of Christ, we are told that we must have this *same* attitude.

WHAT MAKES A HUMBLE SERVANT?

1. AVOID POVERTY TOURISM.

Humility is of utmost importance when becoming aware of the way that we perceive the community that we are entering and our purpose for being there. We are not on vacation, nor are we tourists of impoverished places. But instead we are motivated to enter a community as a *humble servant*, eager to come alongside the members of a particular community and join in the work that is being done to rebuild that community.

2. AVOID A SAVIOR MENTALITY.

Humility requires a deep understanding that there is already work being done in the communities that we enter. We are not the end all of hope for this community, instead a unique and important part of carrying that hope. We must understand that there are people, families, and organizations that already exist in a community working toward community goals. Our job is to support and partner with this community on our trip. Instead of carrying the attitude that we are going to save the community, we have the opportunity to carry the attitude of joy and humility in partnering with Christ’s mission of shalom in these neighborhoods that is already taking place.

3. THE GOAL OF THE TRIP IS NOT TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT OURSELVES, BUT IS INSTEAD TO SHARE CHRIST’S LOVE THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

Humility is about putting the needs of others before our own needs. Like we read in Philippians, we must be motivated as Jesus was when he came to this earth: out of love for others, as opposed to meeting a need inside ourselves to “help someone out who is poor”. Please come on your trip with this same motivation, eager to share the joy that comes with being in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

4. DON'T BE AN ELEPHANT: INTENTIONS VS. ACTIONS.

The following story was told to a missionary from her African Christian friend regarding her experience with American mission teams:

"Elephant and Mouse were best friends. One day Elephant said, "Mouse, let's have a party!" Animals gathered from far and near. They ate. They drank. They sang. And they danced. And nobody celebrated more and danced harder than Elephant. After the party was over, Elephant exclaimed, "Mouse, did you ever go to a better party? What a blast!" But Mouse did not answer. "Mouse, where are you?" Elephant called. He looked around for his friend, and then shrank back in horror. There at Elephant's feet lay Mouse. His little body was ground into the dirt. He had been smashed by the big feet of his exuberant friend, Elephant. "Sometimes, that is what it's like to do missions with you Americans," the African storyteller commented. "It is like dancing with an Elephant."

-[Excerpt from *When Helping Hurts* by Corbett & Fikkert]

Had the Elephant taken a humble step back, Elephant would have realized the harm that his actions and words were truly having on Mouse. The intentions of Elephant were good: he wanted to celebrate with Mouse. But the actual impact was harmful to Mouse. We learn about not only having humble intentions when interacting with a new community, but also how those intentions play out in our actions. Allow the needs of the community to come to the forefront of your mind. When interacting with community members, ask yourself if the actions and words you are choosing allow the voice and needs of the community member to be heard and met.

5. ACCEPT ALL PRAISE AND OFFER IT BACK TO HIM.

Many community members will be grateful for the work that you are doing in their home and in their community. Take every opportunity to glorify Christ in the process of receiving praise. When motivated by Him, we quickly offer that praise back to Him. Instead of taking ownership of the work that was done during your week of service, allow Christ to humbly move through you as a tool to progress His kingdom within that community.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Clothing ourselves with humility is of utmost importance when interacting and serving within a community. This humility not only lifts up the residents that you will be working with, but ultimately lifts up the name of Christ. Recognize with excitement, the opportunity that we have to be a small yet significant tool in His work of reconciliation and hope around the world!

As Humble Servants, we are eager to partake in the work of Christ. We are motivated to serve for Him. We are able to serve through Him. We are only effective with Him.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. What are specific parts of Christ's attitude that you desire to replicate during your mission trip? How can your group enter your week serving alongside a community as a *humble servant*?
2. Describe a time when it was difficult to be humble. How did you handle the situation? What would you do differently or the same?
3. In what situations do you foresee it being difficult to take on this humble attitude during your mission trip?
4. Think of a time when someone displayed humility towards you. What did it feel like to receive humility from that person?

FERVENT LISTENER

SCRIPTURE

"Listen, open your ears, harness your desire to speak, and be slow to anger my brothers and sisters."

-James 1: 19 (*The Voice*)

"Guard your words, mind what you say, and you will keep yourself out of trouble."

-Proverbs 21:23 (*The Voice*)

These passages reveal the value of listening. In order to be quick to listen, we must be slow to speak. Active listening is a way to show others that we care. You will have the opportunity to listen to some incredible stories while serving in a new community. Many community members are eager for someone to simply listen to what they have to say.

WHAT MAKES A FERVENT LISTENER?

1. LEARN THEIR NAME. LISTEN TO THEIR STORY. SHOW THAT INDIVIDUAL THAT YOU CARE, AND LOVE THEM.

You will have the opportunity to work with community members, whether that will be a specific family, an individual, an organization, or an entire neighborhood. With each interaction that you have on your trip, take the time to listen. Allow that person, and his or her personal story, to become the most important thing in that moment. Be consumed with and eager to hear the words coming out of that individual's mouth. Each person has something to offer and that is a story: a story about where that person comes from-- past experiences and struggles, joyful accomplishments, family identity, what he/she loves to do, etc. One of the greatest ways to show that you care is through listening.

2. ASK BEFORE YOU POSE.

In order to avoid any miscommunications, it is important to always ask organizations, families, or individuals if you can take pictures while on your trip. Whether you are taking a picture of the people themselves, or the work that you accomplished, it is respectful to ask a community member *first*, and listen to their response. Taking a picture of someone's home before it is renovated can take away a person's dignity. We don't want someone's home to become an image of poverty and poor living conditions. Instead, recognize what that home means to a particular family or individual. It is home for that family, even if it may not look like the home that you or I live in. Take time to ask the resident about their home: the memories they have there, the length of time they have lived in the home, or their favorite part of the home.

3. BE A STORY-GATHERER. ASK THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS.

One of the greatest blessings of a mission trip can come in the form of being able to hear the personal story of a community member. For some individuals, opening up to vulnerably share a part of one's life, is a big step. Be eager to hear. Above that, ask questions to

encourage that individual to continue sharing. These questions show interest in a person's life. When re-telling these stories to others, do so in a way that lifts up and encourages that individual.

4. BE A LEARNER!

Take every opportunity that you have to learn from each person that you come in contact with in the community. Being immersed in a new culture can be exhausting with so much new information to take in, but we encourage you to make that process an adventure! Ask community members about their history and what the culture is like from their perspective. Choose to be a learner on the trip. Consume each bit of information that you can, knowing that the effort put into learning is a way to show respect to a community. We also encourage you to be a learner during the time leading up to the trip: gain as much information as possible about the community with which you will be serving before arriving on site this summer. This will help you establish a more trusting relationship with the community from the get-go.

5. LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF THE CREATOR.

Above all, listen to God's voice as you prepare for your trip, and while on your trip. He will speak to you through others, scripture, music, nature, and personal testimony. Take the time to listen to the ways in which He is sharing His love, truth, and hope with you and the community. Without taking time to listen to the words of the Creator, we will have little to offer the families and communities that we are serving alongside.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Listening opens the door to long-lasting relationships. A *fervent listener* is one that cares about the community, and seeks to invest time and energy into educating oneself of the community at hand.

As Fervent Listeners, we commit to showing care and love to this community through listening and learning.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. What does it take to be an active and engaged listener?
2. Who is the best listener you know? What makes them good at listening?
3. What are some examples of times when you spoke before listening? What was the outcome? What may have been different had you taken the time to listen before speaking or formulating a response?
4. How does it make you feel when someone specifically asks you to share something about yourself? Do you feel valued? Loved? Important?
5. What are some good conversation starters with people that you are unfamiliar with? What are some questions that you could ask the community members with whom you are working, either about themselves or about their community?

ZEALOUS DEVELOPER

SCRIPTURE

"This is where God comes in. God has meticulously put this body together; He placed each part in the exact place to perform the exact function He wanted. If all members were a single part, where would the body be? So now, many members function within the one body. The eye cannot wail at the hand, "I have no need for you," nor could the head bellow at the feet, "I won't go one more step with you." It's actually the opposite. The members who seem to have the weaker functions are necessary to keep the body moving; the body parts that seem less important we treat as some of the most valuable; and those unfit, untamed, unpresentable members we treat with an even greater modesty. That's something the more presentable members don't need. But God designed the body in such a way that greater significance is given to the seemingly insignificant part. That way there should be no division in the body; instead, all the parts mutually depend on and care for one another. If one part is suffering, then all the members suffer alongside it. If one member is honored, then all the members celebrate alongside it."

-1 Corinthians 12:18-26 (The Voice, emphasis added)

What makes a Zealous Developer?

1. CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS.

While on your trip, it is important to understand that we can create buildings that are durable and have a solid foundation meeting a true need in the community, but our work must extend beyond physical buildings and reach into the lives and hearts of people. Our work is that of eternal matters, seeking to expand the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of all people. Construction is a platform that we use at Next Step to meet families within communities and to build relationships with those families. Take time during your workday to step back from construction and interact with community members. May we push ourselves to view each individual that we encounter on our mission trip as a part of the body of Christ: believing that each part is valuable to the overall function of the body. In that, we will inevitably build relationships that suffer alongside those suffering, and celebrate alongside those celebrating.

2. POTENTIAL VS. PLIGHT.

It is important to understand the deep need that exists within the community in which you will be working this summer. Many of these communities reveal statistics regarding poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, suicide, storm damage, homelessness, and disease that is rampant. These statistics reflect a reality that we must not ignore. But in that reality, it is even more important that we allow these communities and the individuals that live within these communities, to shake themselves free of the reputation they have developed as being impoverished, unemployed, or ruined from a storm. We must look beyond the statistics and define communities by their potential.

As human beings, we often step into the identity that others place on us. If others identify us as the class clown, we will often say words, tell jokes, or act in a way that supports that identity. It is the same within a community: we can indirectly continue a cycle of poverty or hopelessness by fixating on statistics that define a community as impoverished and hopeless. Our perspective on the condition of a community will impact the way that we interact and engage with the people within that community. Let's take a step beyond the statistics (although accurate) and interact with individuals and the community in a way that lifts them up as a significant part of the body of Christ.

3. EMPOWERMENT VS. DEPENDENCY.

Next Step Ministries believes that short-term missions done effectively can empower a community, as opposed to supply ongoing assistance to a community. We seek to build relationships that create confidence within a community, assuring that the community is able to function as a sustainable unit. We are all tools within the community to support and encourage that process. Our goal is to work ourselves into a new role within each community in which we help the community move from dependency to active participation in the process of rebuilding itself.

In that, we ask that you work *with* community members instead of *for* community members. Take the time during your trip to work alongside the family for which we are building for and teach them (or mutually learn) construction skills. Understand that offering someone five minutes of your time to teach is much more valuable and sustainable than giving away five dollars in cash.

4. DEVELOPMENT VS. RELIEF.

Relief within a community creates a provider-receiver relationship: one that discredits what a local individual may have to offer in the process of rebuilding and replaces it with what an outsider provides or gives to that individual. *Development* within a community is walking with people, being relational, taking time to listen, and creating opportunities for empowerment. Development is focusing on efforts that will extend your work beyond one week, and help to create sustainable change within the community. It is important that, with every word or action we take during our week, we promote active participants, as opposed to passive recipients. This can come in the simplest of forms. If a community member asks to help with a project, or move something in their home, we often times reject the offer. After all, we are in the community to serve, so we insist on doing it for the community member. Instead of rejecting that offer, we encourage you to invite each community member into the building and serving process. Collectively build, learn, and serve.

5. ASSET-BASED VS. NEEDS-BASED APPROACH.

We have the opportunity to approach our mission trip with either an asset-based approach or a needs-based approach. An example of a needs-based approach involves asking a community member, "What do you need?" This creates a dynamic between you and the community in which you must be the provider of the community's needs. It promotes a savior mentality and passive dependency. An asset-based approach instead takes the time to ask a community member what they already have and encourages the use of what already exists in the community. Be creative in finding ways to involve the community during your trip!

KEY TAKEAWAY

As the body of Christ, we have the opportunity to become *zealous developers* through the way that we interact with the community we are serving. Simply becoming aware of these concepts is a great start. You have the opportunity to be a part of empowering a community, and to extend your services beyond one week through pouring yourself into the people, resources, leadership, and skills that already exist in a community.

As Zealous Developers, we are compelled to serve in a way that empowers the community. We believe in the people of this community and view them as a valuable part within the body of Christ.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. How have you seen the Body of Christ evident in your own youth group? What different parts exist? What are some examples to show that all parts of the body really are necessary in order for the overall body to function effectively?
2. In past experiences with friends, family members, peers at school, or people in your neighborhood, how have you interacted with someone that is seemingly less significant than you, or maybe has less to offer? How could you interact with that person differently in order to communicate/show that you believe that person is valuable and has something to contribute?
3. Which of the above concepts seems most unfamiliar to you? How has your thinking changed? What are some questions you may still have about these ideas?

DISCONTENT AMBASSADOR

SCRIPTURE

Therefore, if anyone is united with the Anointed One, that person is a new creation. The old life is gone, and a new life has begun! All of this is *a gift* from *our Creator* God, who has *pursued us and* brought us into a restored *and healthy* relationship with Him through the Anointed (Jesus). And He has given us *the same mission*, the ministry of reconciliation, *to bring others back to Him*. *It is central to our good news that* God was in the Anointed making things right between Himself and the world. This means He does not hold their sins against them. But it also means He charges us to proclaim the message that heals and restores our broken relationships *with God and each other*. So we are now **ambassadors** of the Anointed One, *the Liberating King*; God has given us a charge to carry through our lives—urging all people on behalf of the Anointed to become reconciled to *the Creator* God. He orchestrated this: the *Anointed One*, who had never experienced sin, became sin for us so that in Him we might embody the very righteousness of God.

-2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (The Voice, emphasis added)

This passage reveals the joy that comes with being a proclaimer of God's Good News. We have been reconciled to God and, therefore, have the opportunity to invite others into this same relationship. We are ambassadors of Christ. We have been given a charge to urge all people –on behalf of Christ –to accept His love and grace in our lives. During your mission trip, it may be disheartening and difficult to trust that God is working in the community. The grim reality and conditions may leave you discouraged and unsure of where to even start when trying to help. The problems in the community may overwhelm you. We encourage you to become a discontent ambassador –to allow your frustrations or discouraging experiences in a community to propel you into action. Become a proclaimer of hope and truth in the midst of pain and suffering.

WHAT MAKES A DISCONTENT AMBASSADOR?

1. CHRIST-CENTERED.

While on your mission trip, community members will know that you are working with a Christian Organization. The community will closely observe how you act and what you say, whether to others in your church group, or to an individual you have never met before. Everything we do must be Christ-centered. As an ambassador of Christ, we represent His name and His kingdom in everything that we do. Take your responsibility as an ambassador seriously and with joy! We represent a living and loving God.

2. COMMIT TO PRAYER.

The most effective way to support a community long-term is to invest and commit to prayer for that community. As stated above, you will read some grim statistics while preparing for your trip. Even more, you may become discouraged by the reality that exists within the

community while on your mission trip. Allow those feelings to help you channel every ounce of energy into prayer for God's message of reconciliation and love to reach the community.

3. DON'T STOP.

Allow each experience, each encounter, and each story you hear, to propel you into action even after your mission trip has finished. Continue the story of the community and share it with eagerness. This eagerness can spread awareness of what has happened, but more importantly what is happening within the community. Pray for the families that you met after the trip and find ways to become involved in the community long-term. Move forward with momentum, allowing your feelings of discontent toward the present state of the community to inspire action and continued involvement.

KEY TAKEAWAY

We are ambassadors of Christ. On your weeklong trip, you will have the opportunity to share and represent Christ's love to a community- how incredible! In your preparation and experience, trust that God is actively working to bring hope to a community that may be experiencing depression, addiction, unemployment, destruction. Don't be disheartened, but instead become a *discontent ambassador* that is even more motivated to share the love and hope of Jesus!

As Discontent Ambassadors, we recognize that we hold a significant responsibility. Our responsibility is to carry Christ's name in a way that honors Him. His strength is our momentum to continue sharing love and hope, when situations are grim and hopeless.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be an ambassador? What specific words can you say, or actions can you take, to represent Christ in a way that honors Him during your mission trip?
2. Share a time when a feeling of frustration or discontent immobilized you. How could you have taken positive action to address these feelings, as opposed to having done nothing?
3. Do you think being discontent with a situation or experience can inspire positive action? Can this discontent motivate us further to share Christ's love?
4. What situations might you come across during your mission trip that will be difficult to see and experience? How can you encourage each other as a team?
5. How can you be praying for the community before arriving this summer?

RECOMMENDED SOURCES

It is an honor to serve alongside of these communities and partner with you in that process. God will use you in this journey in a very unique and specific way. Please be encouraged to dig deeper into these topics and become experts on the community in which you will be serving.

Here is a list of various sources you can explore in order to continue your learning:

Archive of various tools, trainings, and articles pertaining to Community Development
<http://communitiesfirstassociation.org/tools-archive/>

Toward Better Short-Term Missions by Darren Carlson. The Gospel Coalition
<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2012/06/27/toward-better-short-term-missions/>

The Passion of Christ and the Plight of Our Undocumented Neighbors by Noel Castellanos
<http://www.cdda.org/blog/12-blog/301-the-passion-of-christ-and-the-plight-of-our-undocumented-neighbors>

10 Paradigm Shifts by Wendy McCaig
<http://communitiesfirstassociation.org/10-paradigm-shifts-nuts-and-bolts-2/>

When Helping Hurts by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence by David A. Livermore

Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Together and Doing it Right by John M. Perkins

Anthropological Insights for Missionaries by Paul G. Hiebert

Toxic Charity by Robert Lupton

Beyond Charity: Call to Christian Community Development by John M. Perkins

Christian Community Development Association Website
www.cdda.org

Interview with Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, Authors of *When Helping Hurts*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzUKZajlojY>