

FERHA's first issue of L'Éclaireur featured the story of Never Enough Shoes (NES). FERHA once again is honored to share the follow-up story of NES's journey. For the complete story of NES, please see our June 2011 issue.

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I recall the ending of an episode of the Travel Channel's Anthony Bourdain's No Reservations, where he stated, "travel changes you...it leaves its mark." And indeed, it does! In November of 2010 I made my first voyage to Haiti to help facilitate the drilling of a well in a remote village in the Central Plateau, called Bassin Zim. I returned home with a deep love for Haiti and a desire to help. It is a land of both richness and poverty that is difficult to describe to others. But once you go, you understand and you want to go back. I returned and started a "little shoe project". Within a few months and with the help from friends and family, it quickly blossomed into a full blown non-profit organization that collected and distributed a little over 7000 pairs of shoes in 10 months. On September 11,

2011, the first Never Enough Shoes team traveled from Atlanta, GA to Port-au-Prince. That same day, we left Port-au-Prince and drove about 3 hours and a half to the coastal town of Miragoâne where we had to pick up our shoe shipment. On September 12th, we headed back to Port-au-Prince and on the 13th, our official distribution started. Our first stop was at Maison des Enfants de Dieu (Children of the House of God), run by a lovely young American teacher named April, where we fitted our first 80 children, ages one and one half to ten and 20 of their teachers. Considering the fact that none of us had ever done anything like this before, it went remarkably smooth. The kids were an absolute delight! We met Dr. Nancy Férailléur, of FERHA, who coordinated all of our distributions in Port-au-Prince. She provided a wonderful lunch for us at the orphanage. Then off to our second distribution at the "Family of the Childhood" run by Alix Jean Charles; there we met 18 wonderful kids that are well cared for by Alix and his wife Sherlie Laurent Charles.

On September 14th, we began our second distribution. Off to the mountains of Kenscoff. This leg of the



trip was our biggest challenge. We ventured off where few would ever dare go! The roads were steep, rocky, and difficult to maneuver. After an hour and a half, or so, we pulled off the side of the road and determined that it was too dangerous and virtually impossible for the box truck to go any further. We unpacked all the children's shoes from the box truck, put them in the back of our pick up truck to continue our ascent. We continued up the mountain to "Un Coeur pour les Enfants",

located in the village of Godet, in Kenscoff, until we were quite literally, in the clouds. And in those clouds, we found angels! Eighteen of the most angelic children I have ever laid my eyes on. They were precious, and patient, and grateful. One of the things we did during the distribution was to wash the recipient's feet with cool water and a soft sponge. Washing the feet of these little ones was sacred. It took place in a very small church in front of the orphanage and when we were all done, the little angels sang to us! They sang their little hearts out and we stood right in the middle of them! It was truly a slice of heaven right here on earth. It was then that I really understood the term, the Living Word of God. Each one of us was called by name to be the hands and feet of Christ. We were given the opportunity to LIVE the WORD! What a blessing to all of us. We did a second larger distribution that day, at a school further back down the mountain, called "Centre de Formation Communautaire de la Réserve".

On September 15th, NES headed to Bassin Zim, in the Plateau Central. The place where it all started. We arrived there just in time for an early dinner and time for some good rest. On the 16th, as usual, the day starts early at Notre Dame de Fatima (Our Lady of Fatima) in Bassin Zim, with the ringing of the bell at 5 AM, and mass at 5:30. Sure, it's early, but the roosters are up long before 5, so you may as well get up and pray. After taking time to visit and catch up with Father Méres of Our Lady of Fatima, we proceeded to do our first distribution where Never Enough Shoes had started with a boy named Woodzy, 11 months earlier. We fitted kids, teachers and neighbors of the area. It was such a delight. Everyone was happy, and grateful. On the 17th, we took time to rest a bit. Then we proceeded with another shoe distribution for the men of the area. The men of course, were much easier to please and less picky, therefore the distribution went quite smoothly. Our evening ended with a splendid meal full of protein and cheese. It was good indeed. So was the wine! All and all, it was one enchanted evening.

On Sunday, the 18th, we managed to sleep in! Mass is not until 9:00. Church was full, and as always the music was great. The people of Bassin Zim sing their hearts out! And the drums are the coolest! Everyone wears their Sunday best and you can feel the Holy Spirit in the room. You can even hear the brush of angels wings...if you listen. It was my last opportunity to be an altar server, and I had the distinct pleasure of serving with Deacon Bill. What a gift! I will never forget the dance of peace when we were all joined together hand and hand around the altar swaying back and forth to the music. After Mass, we ate, visited the community once more, packed up and headed back to Port-au-Prince.

On September 19th, we departed in plenty of time to relax at the airport and head back home to Atlanta, safely and fulfilled.



Our journey was a spiritual one, a mystical one. It is a chapter in the book of life that will never be written again. We came together for a common cause and I believe that those who came were chosen. It is the team that started it all...a few brave souls that were willing to leave the comforts of home to provide a basic need to those less fortunate. I am reminded of the words

from Hebrews 10:36: "You need endurance to do the will of God and receive what He has promised." The work we did wasn't easy. As a matter of fact, it was quite exhausting! I totally underestimated what it would take to do a distribution. While being physically and emotionally draining, I must say that it was spiritually enriching. It was all worth it! It was worth it to see the smile on the face of a small boy that just got a great pair of red and black high tops. And it was worth it to see the smile on the face of a young teenage girl that just got a pair of pink shoes with bling-bling that made her feel pretty. And it was worth it to see the smile on the face of all the teachers who got a pair of shoes to begin the new school year, or the adult male who got a pair of work boots or shoes for church. In retrospect, it was the closest to God I have ever been. I finally understand Matthew 25:40 "Amen, I say to you, that which you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me." Yes, it was all worth it! Cinderella was right. One shoe can change your life!