

Summer 2023



many hands

Quarterly

Boldly Moving Forward

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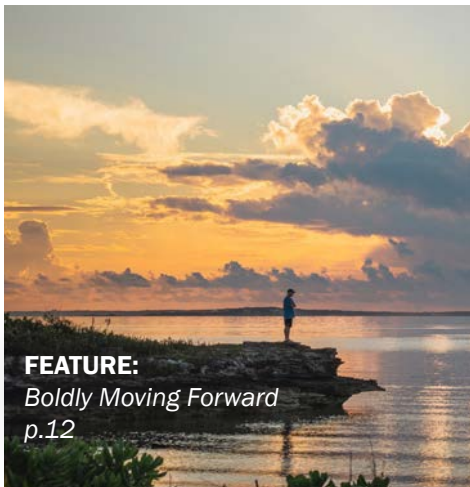
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Board of Directors

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Vice President..... Tim Van Maanen
Secretary..... Kate Guess
Treasurer..... Greg Ebeling
Director..... Kendra Meyer
Director..... Jenny Sorheim

“

These are hard times in Haiti. It never used to be this hard. But we see God and what He provides.

- Letwa
Bible Study participant

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COVER IMAGE: Sunrise over Abaco

NEW FACES

Many Hands is excited to announce the addition of three new members to its staff. Melissa Nelson, Carla Weed, and Ricardo Mervil started their positions in the spring of 2023.



Melissa Nelson

Volunteer Program Manager

As the Volunteer Program Manager, Melissa's objective is to build the Volunteer Ministry Program. She is excited to explore ways to deepen Many Hands' relationships in the communities that our thrift stores serve. She aims to create partnerships with organizations, groups, and individuals and provide opportunities for spiritual growth. "We have the privilege and responsibility to share the love of Jesus and impact the lives of our brothers and sisters both locally and globally," Melissa states. "This is love in action. Many Hands has taken seriously the assignment created for us and is committed to faithfully completing it. I am humbled and blessed to be a part of this team!"

After twelve years in a finance and retail banking career, Melissa was able to develop her leadership skills and mentor young women. Then, God called her to ministry. "God nurtures our spiritual gifts by placing people and opportunities in our lives," Melissa says. "God is challenging me to grow in my faith with this new role - to be faithful in my prayer life and study His word."



Carla Weed

Indianola Store Manager

After five years of experience as a store manager raising funds for Animal Lifeline of Iowa thrift and donation center, Carla Weed is joining Many Hands as the store manager for the new Many Hands Thrift Indianola location. "I'm excited to be working in my hometown raising funds for international missions and local community efforts, all while providing an upscale thrift experience," Carla says.

The Indianola location will be opening this summer and will serve those living south of the Des Moines metro. "I'm hoping our location will be a melting pot of different backgrounds and experiences pulling together people to further a common good in our community and the world," Carla states. "Many Hands Thrift Market is the revolution of thrift shopping with clean and accessible stores, an uplifting atmosphere, and a spirit of generosity shown in the true dedication of its volunteers, staff, patrons, and donors."



Ricardo Mervil

First 1,000 Days Secretary

Ricardo Mervil is our first secretary for the First 1,000 Days program (PMJ) in Haiti. The First 1,000 Days staff now serves 242 caregivers and their babies at three centers. We have 10 faithful PMJ assistants, three nurses, three Spiritual Mothers, and 14 cooks at three centers that all serve daily with hearts full of hospitality. A full-time secretary was necessary to keep the communication, reports, and supplies organized.

Ricardo has served as a secretary with other local ministries and teaches Math and Science at a High School in his community of San Rafael. He is currently going to school to complete a degree in Pastoral Leadership. He is anointed with a passion for sharing Christ, the knowledge of God's word, and serving others. We are blessed to have him join our staff in a much-needed position as we grow to serve like Jesus to the caregivers and babies in the Pignon community.



Staff and volunteers at the Metro Volunteer Appreciation

BEACONS OF LIGHT IN OUR STORES

Many Hands Celebrates Its Volunteers

By Melissa Nelson, Volunteer Manager

This year, Many Hands celebrated their thrift volunteers with two appreciation events.

On Wednesday, April 19, the annual Spencer Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon celebrated volunteers with an event held at the store. The theme for the event was JOY – Jesus, Others, and Yourself. Karmen Brown, Spencer Store Manager, shared her thankfulness for everything volunteers do.

“It is beyond words to explain how much we appreciate and love each of our amazing volunteers here. We are very aware that we would not be where we are today without each one of them. They truly share their God-given talents and time to serve this ministry - to help others locally and globally!”

On Sunday, April 30, the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner hosted nearly seventy-five volunteers and staff who gathered to recognize the service of volunteers from all three Des Moines metro locations. This year’s theme was STARS. Stars are God made; not one is like another. When one is visible at night, it is still dark, but when they are shining together on a clear night, they light up the sky! Daniel 12:3 says, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, shine like the stars forever and ever.” God says we will shine forever like the stars, and God is transforming lives through our service together.

District Manager Steve Lucas shared a story of a volunteer, Wayne, who shone his light, going above and beyond. When receiving a well-loved and perhaps vintage



Staff and volunteers at the Spencer Volunteer Appreciation



Tammy and Tammie receive awards for their hours served

light fixture, Wayne had to explain that we were not able to accept it. Wayne gave a kind explanation of our policy, providing an alternative plan and thanking them for their support. This donor was so pleased that he phoned the district manager, who happened to be his son, to report the excellent experience!

Tyler Kamerman, Chief Development Officer, shared stories from his Abaco trip in February and updated us on the Development Team projects. Rob Van Beek, Marketing Director, gave an update on accomplishments in Haiti and the development of programming in Abaco, tying our efforts here in Iowa directly to God’s work globally.

MAKING PROGRESS IN INDIANOLA

Store to open its doors to the public on June 14

This June, Many Hands’ fifth thrift store will open its doors in Indianola. The store is a culmination of more than a year of planning, building, volunteering, and prayer, with the buildout nearing completion. The store will open on June 14, 2023, with a Grand Opening event planned for June 17, 2023.

Jeff Thomas, Special Projects Manager, has been involved with opening our last two thrift stores, making Indianola his third. He and a team of staff and volunteers have been working to give the store a distinct look and feel that customers have come to expect.

“By putting our Many Hands together, we got a lot done! Traveling many miles, we even spread what our organization does on a daily basis in Haiti and Iowa with those who will listen,” shared Thomas. “Many thanks go out to our team and organization. I am proud of what you all do in order for us to grow as we do.”

Carla Weed is the new store manager for Indianola. Indianola is her hometown, and she has been promoting the store in the community, hiring new staff, and managing donation intake.

“Our Indianola location will further a common good in our community and the world,” Carla shared. “Generosity from this community will create a chain reaction that can be felt globally!”

When open, the store will help provide needed operational support for our work in Haiti, particularly our Love-in-Action Centers. Tim Brand shared his thoughts on how these stores ignite generosity on a global scale.

“It truly is a blessing to see these go together. We will be opening the next Love-in-Action Center this year in Mè Bel Mè. It is very close to the opening of this store! Our thrift model can support these centers, providing around 150 families access to nutritional, medical, spiritual, and community needs. We are excited to see both opening together for God’s glory!”

Many Hands Thrift Market in Indianola is located at 1801 West 2nd Avenue. You can follow the latest updates for the store at www.manyhandsthift.com.



Cindy unloads a donation at the Indianola location



Build out of the Home department almost complete



Interior of the store with the future Accessories and Clothing departments



A church in the One Body Project (courtesy of Haiti Lifeline)

MANY HANDS TO PARTNER WITH HAITI LIFELINE MINISTRIES

Many Hands is thrilled to announce its latest partnership with Haiti Lifeline Ministries. The organizations share an aligned purpose and believe strongly in creating meaningful impact on both a local and global scale. The partnership will enable the organizations to work as one collective force in specific areas of need, dedicated to transforming together, to be love in action, in a broken world.

Haiti Lifeline Ministries seeks to empower, equip, and encourage the work of Christ in Haiti through the Lifeline Center for Children, The Oasis Project, and The One Body Project. They provide comprehensive support for abandoned and orphaned children, equip youth who age out of the orphan care system to positively impact their families and communities, and advance the gospel of Christ through pastor training, church building, and the

construction of wells. Based in Topeka, Kansas, this is Haiti Lifeline Ministries' 26th year doing ministry in Haiti.

The partnership between Many Hands and Haiti Lifeline will focus on Haiti's Central Plateau. The initial joint focus will be establishing another Love-in-Action Center, an integral part of Many Hands' strategies in development work.

Many Hands' Love-in-Action Centers serve as a tool for transformation and the hub of their Love-in-Action programming. These centers facilitate feedings for mothers and infant children, training and equipping of parents, preventive health care checks, marriages for families in the community, and Bible studies. Families are empowered to walk a new path of hope through the power of



Both organizations are thrilled about seeing the impact their partnership will have and look forward to building strong foundations for families in the Central Plateau.

being physically present in the community. Currently, Many Hands has three established centers, with a fourth under construction set to open later this year.

Through this planned fifth Love-in-Action Center, the organizations aim to combine their experience and resources to strengthen the spiritual and physical situation—and the economic opportunities—of pregnant women and young mothers. Long-term, this partnership will bring the strengths of both organizations together to fulfill their shared goal of transforming the lives of infants, mothers, and families.

Both organizations are thrilled about seeing the impact their partnership will have and look forward to building strong foundations for families in the Central Plateau.



Many Hands' Love-in-Action Center in Malialette

PMJ HEALTH CLASS



Nurse Lerosane introduces Dr. Esther to caregivers

Recently, Many Hands invited a local doctor to give a presentation to the caregivers participating in the First 1,000 Days program. Dr. Esther spoke to the group about preventive measures for illnesses like Typhoid or H-pylori.

After having a few nurses visit the group regularly to teach basic health practices, having Dr. Esther speak was a way to cement the information, providing a different voice for caregivers. This proved to be very effective. One of the women that heard Dr. Esther's presentation said directly, "We have heard this, but with a different voice we hear it again. This information will help us keep our families healthy."

SOCCER AND BIBLE STUDY



Jean Rubert leading the Sunday Bible study group

Jean Rubert Philisma, PET evangelist and theology school student, is taking the initiative to impact the lives of young people from the Sylvain area. As a soccer fan, Jean Rubert has been working with some area teams, encouraging evangelism efforts among the soccer players. "Soccer is a great tool...it uses something that the young people are interested in to get them in a place to hear the precious word of God," Jean Rubert says.

He also began holding his own Bible study groups on Sunday afternoons after receiving a gift of 24 French Bibles from a fellow pastor. Those Bibles, along with some notebooks, pens, and a refreshment each Sunday afternoon, are all it takes! These youth are hungry to learn. Praise be to God.

GLOBAL NEWS



MÈ BEL MÈ PROGRESS

By Christi Gabhart, U.S. Lead Ministry & Benevolence

Many Hands' fourth Love-in-Action Center in Mè Bel Mè is nearly complete. Construction has moved quickly, with a desire to finish before the rainy season is really underway. The concrete floor has been poured, with benches next to be installed. The kitchen, charcoal storage depot, nurse's room, and bathroom are also almost complete.

Mè Bel Mè is an impoverished area. Not only will the Love-in-Action Center provide nutrition and resources, but it also provides an economic boost to the area. The building of this center brings construction jobs to an area where there were previously no jobs available. Interviews for jobs in our First 1,000 Days program have begun, with programming planned to start this fall.

Our current staff has been assisting in the application and interview process.

The community support in this area has been strong, with many applicants and people who want to support Many Hands' efforts. Kethlin Vilbon, the First 1,000 Days Program Manager, is excited about the opening of this center. "[The community] want people around them; they love people. But the situation in their lives is very bad," shared Vilbon. "So they need hope. They need someone to tell them more about Jesus and even their life. So Mè Bel Mè, like all zones, is waiting for someone representing Jesus to come there."

EDUCATION NEWS

SUMMER SCHOOL BEGINS



The real fun will begin after school is officially over for the year on July 14! For the third year in a row, the Fundamental School plans to have a summer school class for its first to fourth-grade students.

Last year, they hired a local artisan to teach them basic art skills, which is not a subject that Haitian students get to enjoy. During this class, they learned the basic principles of art and then were shown how to create their own jewelry.

According to Principal Micul, they plan to have the same teacher again this summer to continue teaching the students various skills, and they will get a chance to use their creative side. The kids love getting their hands dirty using glue, sanding wood, or painting and are looking forward to this class.

PRESCHOOL GRADUATION



For the fifth year, the School of Light will hold its preschool graduation on the Many Hands campus. Eleven boys and eleven girls will graduate to first grade next school year. We will honor their accomplishments by holding a ceremony and all-school assembly. Their teachers, Juna Jean, and Patricia Souverain, prepare the students for the big day by teaching them verses, skits, and songs to memorize, as well as a dance to perform.

Since the school year was delayed in the fall, the date for this year's event will be Friday, July 14. This is also the last day of school for everyone, so the graduation ceremony will also include performances by the rest of the classes in PS1 to fourth-grade. Each class will do a skit, memorize a poem, sing a song or perform a dialogue in French or English. It is traditionally a well-done assembly that the students and teachers work hard to make perfect for the parents in attendance. Stay tuned for pictures of this in the next quarterly newsletter!

NEW LITERACY CLASS



Besides planning a graduation program, teachers Juna and Patricia have also been busy teaching an adult literacy class designed for parents of students in the School of Light. Thanks to their dedication and diligence, twenty-two parents now have the opportunity to learn to read and write in their native language, Haitian Creole. Twenty women and two men are in the class that began on March 21.

Every Tuesday and Friday, these parents meet for an hour to learn to read and write, with the goal that they will be able to better help their own children with their schoolwork someday. They have enjoyed the class so far and are excited to be able to write their names. One parent said, "With the help of God, I will be able to read and write in Creole. I want to help my children in school."

GLOBAL NEWS

LIZ CLARKE-ALDONZA ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE FROM MANY HANDS

Many Hands for Haiti (MH4H) sadly announces the resignation of Liz Clarke-Aldonza from her role as Community Advocate in Haiti.

Liz and her husband, Odelin, decided to leave Haiti after an extraordinary visa opportunity opened up for them. "On March 14, the US government approved Odelin for a special humanitarian parole opportunity," shared Liz. "That means he got a chance to travel to the US, without a visa, for up to two years. Upon learning the news, we felt strongly that God was opening a door for us and our two young children."

Liz finished her last day of work with Many Hands on April 15. Liz has been a critical part of the Many Hands team in many ways. Joining Many Hands in 2013, she started as Manager for the Mango Tree frozen yogurt shop, opening up two ministry-driven stores. She tran-

sitioned to Haiti in 2015, where over the next seven years, she coordinated the installation of 787 cement floors, managed 250 daily meals for kids and their caretakers, established programs in Malierette, and talked with thousands of Haitians in their homes, at church, or on the street, showing the love of Jesus.

"Many Hands for Haiti stands on the shoulders of Liz Clarke, who, through her vulnerability, loves people and points them to Christ," shared Tim Brand, Many Hands CEO. "Liz has been a tremendous friend to me. I'm a better person today because of Liz being in my life. Liz touches lives wherever she is placed."

Liz leaves Many Hands stronger, establishing programs, processes, and teams that have expanded over the years. "I love Many Hands for Haiti and am so proud of the amazing work we have accomplished together."

UPDATE FROM THE DENTS

By Denise Dent, Child Sponsorship Administrator

Tom and I have been missionaries in Haiti with Many Hands for the past two years. We made a two-year commitment to stay in Haiti in March of 2021. Well, this March was the end of that covenant, and we decided not to renew it and have returned to Iowa to live and work.

It was a difficult decision to make because we loved working in Haiti as the Education and Ag Leads, respectively. As things got more dangerous and unpredictable in Haiti, coupled with the fact that Tom needed to concentrate more on his farming operation in the States, we decided we needed to leave Haiti and return home.

We feel good about our decision to leave because we have left behind competent and capable managers to carry on and implement the ideas and programs that we have started there. We have started some good things that we know will continue. We will miss working with the Haitian staff, and we wish them continued success.

Although we have left Haiti, we have not left Many Hands entirely and plan to continue consulting for them as needed. In the meantime, I have taken on the role of the Child Sponsorship Administrator for Many Hands, where I will be handling various aspects of our Child Sponsorship Program. This will allow me to travel to Haiti to gather some of the information we need as well as make contact with the school. I'm just praying the political climate can change soon so that it will be possible. Not seeing the students every day will be the hardest part about leaving Haiti for me.

Lastly, we would like to thank Many Hands for the opportunity to have served in Haiti for the time we did. We loved the staff there and their heart for the mission, and we will miss serving with them. Also, we want to thank those of you who knew us or met us while on a mission trip to Haiti. Thank you for your prayers and support while we were there. It was a blessing knowing each of you.

Orevwa, Ayiti cheri! (Good-bye, dear Haiti)



CELEBRATING GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

April 15 marked a special date as 19 couples came together to unite as man and wife.

As always, Many Hands wanted to offer a special celebration. We provided each couple with a special gown, shoes, suits, ties, rings, and food.

Many Hands staff were so willing to be a part of the work. Pastor Ronel was the lead counselor for couples. He and the other Spiritual Shepherd ministered to these couples leading up to the big day. Pastor Ronel also conducted the ceremony, praying and leading vows for each husband and wife. Staff helped set up and clean up, diligently being examples of love in action for these newly married couples.

With many in Haiti going through the most challenging times in the history of the country, it makes celebrating God's faithfulness through these marriages all the more important. Our team often shares their widespread hope and desire for this ministry. 2023 is the first year we are planning two wedding ceremonies, with a second scheduled for December 16. We look forward to seeing how God continues to bless the work of this ministry.



BOLDLY MOVING FORWARD

By Tim Brand, CEO and Founder of Many Hands

Sitting nervously on American Airlines flight 4057, a small evaluation team consisting of Eric Recker, Laura Nicholson, and myself touched down in Marsh Harbour, Abaco Island, Bahamas, a little over a year ago today.

Never having traveled to this location before, we knew very little, but we had a couple of contacts and a heart to serve the Lord wherever He called. At the end of this 72-hour evaluation, Laura noted in her evaluation form, “I truly believe God confirmed this is a location with people we need to walk in relationship with. God knew all along if we put our trust and plans at His feet, there was work for us to do here.”

A year after this initial evaluation, we look back at how far we have come in such a short time. Being a relational ministry, our first focus is on the right relationships and partnerships in place, as this will require many hands for long-term transformation. As of right now, we have four full-time missionaries serving with us in Abaco: Sam and Lisa Berg, Laura Nicholson, and Andrew Brigner, with a few others to be named in the near future. We also have developed local relationships with Bahamian leaders, pastors, and government officials. Pastor Ryan Forbes has joined our team as Project Consultant, providing local knowledge and operational excellence that would have taken years to learn. Glen and Tracy Kelly of Driftwood Farms partnered with us to expand agricultural work

and produce more locally-grown food. Pastor Barrett and Carrie Hendrickson of Bahamian Youth Network have been so gracious, allowing us to partner with their youth group called G2 and providing transportation for our IMPACT teams. Parliament Secretary Kirk Cornish has made it a point to meet with us on multiple occasions, encouraging, guiding, and praying for us in our first steps in Abaco. Derek Dawkins, Murphy Town Community District Chairman, welcomed us to help rebuild the community center and run our Love in Action programs from this building. These are just a sampling of all the real relationships we’ve established within the past year to do the work God has led us to do.

Project-wise, we have been focusing on laying foundations to build upon for future growth. First, we established a legal Bahamian Non-Profit organization called Many Hands for Abaco on February 27, 2023. Then, we signed a long-term lease with the Assemblies of God for the use of Camp Abaco for our home base and IMPACT teams. Next, we established partnerships to rebuild the Murphy Town Community Center, as this will be our Love-in-Action Center for our outreach into

the community. MFI, Crisis Relief, A+ Roofing, and Sol Relief have provided financial resources and personnel support to finish the community center by the end of June. At the same time, we also developed a long-term relationship with the Central Abaco Primary School, the largest elementary school on the island, providing academic recovery programs for struggling students. And finally, we’ve been building trust through short-term projects such as small-scale construction for churches, schools, and homeowners, prayer walks through different communities, food distributions for at-risk families, and youth sports programs.

We believe we are only scratching the surface of the calling on our work in Abaco and the greater Caribbean. God has gone before us to prepare the way, and He has met us each time we’ve stepped out in faith. We are encouraged for the future of this region, as our past gives us confidence to boldly move forward!



(L-R) Eric, Tim, and Laura discovering Camp Abaco in 2022



The Central Valley Christian School team helps local students at a reading camp



The Excel Electric team from Michigan stands in front of the newly installed Camp Abaco solar panels



Coaches teach a group of local athletes volleyball skills

SPORTS CAMP IN ABACO

By Laura Nicholson, Director of IMPACT

An IMPACT Team out of Pella, IA had the opportunity to host Many Hands' first Sports Camp in Marsh Harbour. Various coaches and athletes joined together to offer volleyball and basketball camps for local boys and girls ages 12 – 18. The team was able to participate in building something greater for Marsh Harbour and connecting Many Hands to the community through the love of sports and Jesus.

One hundred and twenty-four young athletes came from surrounding towns across Abaco to participate in the camps. A young player who attended the volleyball camp shared, "Although not the easiest sport to play, volleyball can be enjoyable when played with friends and with purpose. The camp was all about challenging what's possible, and those who attended sure did accept that challenge [through the various new drills and skills]".

Each camp session was paired with a devotional written previously by a team member, exploring the theme of "Challenge What's Possible." When asked about

the impact of these Sports Camps, Sam Berg (Ministry & Benevolence) said, "The IMPACT Team sowed many seeds with their many hands, and it was great to see. God is sovereign good, and working in Marsh Harbour; we are so glad to see this inaugural Sports Camp be such a huge success. We are eager to see the long-term impact these Sports Camps have on the surrounding areas of Marsh Harbour and look forward to bringing more talented coaches and players to assist in future camps."

We are eager to see the long-term impact these Sports Camps have on the surrounding areas of Marsh Harbour and look forward to bringing more talented coaches and players to assist in future camps.

-Sam Berg
Ministry & Benevolence



Michigan Crew, MI
February 28 - March 7 | People: 11



Joel Vos Roofing, Sully, IA
March 14-21 | People: 4



Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines, IA
April 14-21 | People: 13



Kairos, Ames, IA
May 19-26 | People: 22



Third Family Trip, Pella, IA
March 12-17 | People: 21



Central Valley Christian, Ceres, CA
April 1-8 | People: 23



Excel Electric, Grandville, MI
May 12-20 | People: 7



Are you interested in being a part of IMPACT?

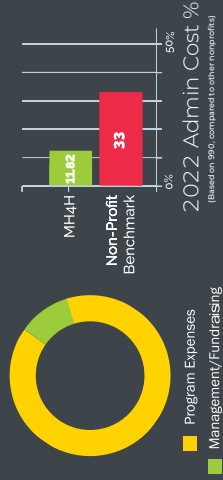
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