

## Haiti Disaster Brief from Kids Alive Dominican Republic, 16 JAN 2010

Our **Dominican Republic Field Director, Vic Trautwein**, is spearheading our Haiti crisis response efforts from the DR side of the island. Here is a summary of the update received today from Vic:

- Our **Kids Alive ministry in the Dominican Republic** is uniquely situated to respond to the needs of the many Haitian children who have been made homeless, vulnerable and orphaned by the recent earthquake in Port au Prince:
  - We share the **same island** with Haiti.
  - We are very familiar with Haitian children since **20% of the children currently enrolled in our DR ministries are Haitian kids.**
  - We employ a number of **Haitian staff** on our DR team already, who will be resources for us as we continue to employ additional Haitian staff here in the DR.
  - Our local DR staff, our missionaries, and the children in our ministries are **very excited and relieved** that they will be able to respond and be of practical help to many of the suffering children who have come out of the rubble that was once Port au Prince.
  - We are **preparing 5 locations in the DR** to receive our first group of **50 displaced Haitian children** this coming week, as the DR government has told us to expect a call on Monday or Tuesday and probably to begin receiving kids by Wednesday. Our locations for caring for these children are: **Ark Jarabacoa, Ark Constanza, ANIJA, Monte Plata camp, and Caraballo/Villa Ascension.** The children will probably range from **4 to 11 years of age**, many without documents, who have made their way to one of the Haiti/DR border crossings but have no adult to care for them. We will not know much information about these children until they are in our care. Once systems, structures, and funding are in place, we will be open to receiving additional groups of displaced children.
  - The DR government has informed us that **customs regulations** at the DR/Haiti border are being **temporarily relaxed in order to allow disaster relief to cross the border into Haiti** (*we expect more information on this in the next few days*). This new policy will allow us to drive vehicles filled with much-needed supplies and resources across the northern Haiti border so we can **support our existing ministry location in Cap Haitien, Haiti.** The DR government's typical position following other disasters in Haiti has been to prohibit Haitian children from entering the DR, but because of the **massive scale** of this tragedy the DR officials are now thinking differently.
- We are **preparing our Kids Alive Haiti ministry location in Cap Haitien** (in the north of Haiti) **to receive our first group of 50 displaced Haitian children.** We are assessing what supplies will be needed to care for these additional kids, such as **shelter (possibly tents), beds, blankets, and a kitchen stocked with food** and water to feed these children. Our plan is to support this effort from the DR where supplies are available and we have support staff in place to assist in transporting these supplies. Once systems, structures, and funding are in place, we will be open to receiving additional groups of displaced children.
- Our Kids Alive **DR board chairman, Victor Herrera, has been invited to participate in some government meetings to help coordinate the Haiti relief efforts.** This is great news for us as it should advance our organizational relationship with the DR government and provide us a way to cut through the usual "red tape" that we might encounter.
- Even though Kids Alive DR is not a major player compared to the larger relief agencies involved in the Haiti rescue efforts, **we are trying our best to help by using the people, resources, locations and expertise that the Lord has made available to us.** We know that the **short-term and the long-term needs of many Haitian children will be immense**, so we hope to participate in the rebuilding of their lives in every way that we can.