

HAITIAN CONGRESS TO FORTIFY HAITI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Those of us at the Haitian Congress continue to extend our condolences to everyone affected by this tragic natural disaster. We also express our appreciation to concerned members of the Haitian-American community and to our friends and allies for their phone calls, e-mails, prayers and donations.

Since this earthquake, we have held two community meetings and one Town Hall meeting. On Friday, February 26 at 6:30 p.m., we will hold another community meeting at Mt. Zion Church, 2101 Dempster St., Evanston. We invite all Haitian organizations, church leaders and individuals to join a brain-storming session to determine how to move forward with ongoing assistance to Haiti.

SUMMARY

On January 12, 2010, a major earthquake hit Haiti devastating the capital, its surrounding areas and other major cities such as Léogane, Jacmel, Bainet, Petit-Goave, Grand-Goave, La Vallée and beyond. The quake has been characterized as the second deadliest anywhere in the world in the last 30 years. President René Prével stated that more than 300,000 people perished in the quake. Survivors have severe medical needs with thousands of amputees. Scores of people continue to need treatment for badly infected wounds, severe fractures and other medical issues. To that end, our ongoing efforts will focus on collecting and sending medical supplies.

As the region enters its rainy season, especially in the camps that are not tent ready, the concern is less about food and water and more about stable shelter. Sturdy tents large enough to accommodate families are a critical need.

Immediately following the quake, some people left Port-au-Prince (a city of two million) for the countryside. This exodus put a difficult burden on the rural areas, which have struggled with extreme poverty before this disaster. Now some are returning to the capital because the countryside is not equipped to handle the huge need for food, water and tents. It is estimated that the quake left more than 600,000 people homeless in the capital and that is why we will focus relief efforts on areas outside of Port-au-Prince.

More than six weeks after the earthquake, aftershocks continue to hit Haiti. One with a 4.5 magnitude struck on February 23, 2010.

Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti

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Response to the Earthquake

With your help, the Chicago office of the Haitian Congress, in collaboration with the Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad (AMHE) and other groups, will continue to assist survivors. In January 2010, working with AMHE headquarters in New York, the Haitian Congress flew a team of doctors and other health professionals to Haiti on United Airlines. The airline offered free space for doctors, and the Chicago area community provided one team with \$10,000 worth of medical equipment and supplies, including blood-pressure and blood-sugar monitors, crutches, nebulizers, bandages and sutures.

In recent weeks, working with partners and allies, more than \$1 million worth of medication donated by International Relief Teams to the General Hospital in Port-au-Prince (L'Hôpital de l'Université d'État d'Haïti) was shipped by cargo plane. This essential medicine arrived on February 11, 2010.

Alderman Lionel Jean-Baptiste, chairman of the Haitian Congress, traveled to Haiti February 6-12 and visited patients at General Hospital and at campsites in remote areas. Mr. Jean-Baptiste met with several ministers, civil society members and health professionals as well as Prime Minister Bellerive. Additionally, Haitian Congress board member Dr. Joel Augustin, spent two weeks in Haiti treating patients at General Hospital and in outlying areas. Djougine Desrosiers, Haitian Congress executive secretary, also spent two weeks in Haiti.

Since the earthquake hit, Haitian Congress members, staff and volunteers have worked with the media (print/radio/TV/Web) to get the word out, speaking at a concert and music marathon at the Old Town School of Music and appearing at fund-raising events. Local community groups such as the Democratic Party of Evanston (DPOE) and Evanston Community Foundation, Evanston Firefighters Association and American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) have added their support. Major businesses such as Home Depot, Jewel-Osco, Whole Foods, Dominick's-Safeway, Diamond Resorts International have donated needed supplies. We have formed alliances with universities such as Northwestern and DePaul; hospitals such as Evanston Hospital and Saint Francis Hospital; and sports franchises such as Chicago Wolves Hockey, Chicago Fire Soccer and the ABA's Chicago Steam Basketball. Additionally, Senator Dick Durbin and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky visited the offices of the Haitian Congress.

A second shipment of medical supplies will be sent in March 2010. Our plan is to get the supplies to the people in need, not only in Port-au-Prince, but also in areas where relief has been slow (Léogane, Jacmel, Baintet, Petit-Goave, Grand-Goave, La Vallée and other towns). These areas outside of the capital city, where fewer relief agencies are located, already suffer from extreme poverty and are where many residents of the capital have fled to and are settling.

See the following page for more information about items the Haitian Congress will continue to collect and for information on how you can help. Additional details are available on our Web site: www.haitiancongress.org.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donate by check

As we have during past disasters, such as during the 2008 hurricane crisis, the Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti will accept contributions into a separate 501(c)(3) fund that goes wholly to its relief operations. To contribute, please make checks payable to:

Haitian Crisis Relief Fund and mail them to:

Haitian Crisis Relief Fund
Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti
1227 Dodge Ave.
Evanston, IL 60202

Donate online

For online donations, please go to: www.haitiancongress.org

Donate Supplies

The Haitian Congress collects supplies at the addresses below.

Presently the greatest need is for medical supplies (first aid, antibiotics), medical equipment (dialysis machines, orthopedic supplies, etc.), cots, tents and plastic sheeting. A full list of needed materials is on our Web site: www.haitiancongress.org

NOTE: We are at capacity for used clothing and bottled water. We cannot accept any more of these items.

Supply drop-off locations

Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti
1227 Dodge Ave.
Evanston, IL 60202
847-475-5856

Hyde Park Self Storage
5155 S. Cottage Grove
Chicago, IL 60615
773-955-5500

Contacts: Barbara Minor
Chicago's west side
773-826-8115

Doris Lewis
Chicago's south side
773-624-1828

Evanston's five fire stations have agreed to serve as drop-off sites:

Fire Station #1
1332 Emerson St.
Evanston, IL 60201
847-866-5910

Fire Station #3
1105 Central St.
Evanston, IL 60201
847-866-5930

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Fire Station #2
702 Madison St.
Evanston, IL 60202
847-866-5920

Fire Station #4
1817 Washington St.
Evanston, IL 60202
847-866-5940

Fire Station #5
2830 Central St.
Evanston, IL 60201
847-866-5945

Volunteer with the Haitian Congress

We need people to do various tasks that are critical to the relief effort. Specifically, volunteers are needed who can give a few hours to:

- Pick up donations
- Sort donations
- Box up aid packages
- Answer phones
- Provide refreshments for other volunteers

If you are interested in helping, call or come to our main office weekdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In future months, people with various types of expertise will be needed. We are collecting the names of interested people. Visit www.haitiancongress.org for more information on volunteer opportunities.

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