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Bringing hope to Haiti

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Friday, March 30, 2007 6:25 PM EDT

Most people go through life wondering if they are really making a difference in the world.

Volunteers at Hope for Haiti don't need to wonder. All they have to do is look at a few photographs and the question is quickly answered.

Last year, a medical team for the locally based non-profit group arrived in the remote mountain village of Zorange, Haiti.

Among the more than 1,000 people treated was an elderly woman with her young granddaughter, who was malnourished and suffering from worms. A photo taken at the clinic shows the sad woman holding a very sick baby.

Two months ago, 128 volunteers once again traveled to Zorange for a three-day medical clinic at which more than 1,500 Haitians were treated.

A photo from that trip shows the same woman smiling and holding her very healthy looking granddaughter.

Such results are certainly not unique. Since 2000, Hope for Haiti has been providing vitamins, medicine and basic education on nutrition and health care.

As the photos show, a great deal of progress has been made.

"These people can't go to the corner store for something," said volunteer Cean Grinnell of Apex. "I live on Olive Chapel and if I need something I just go up the street and have two drug stores right there.

"These people in Haiti have no way to treat a simple cut, which can lead to a serious infection. There are still areas with no electricity, water and roads. It just boggles my mind that such a place still exists in our modern world."

Hope for Haiti began seven years ago with just a few volunteers from Hope Community Church in Raleigh.

Since that time, the non-profit group has grown considerably and boasts volunteers from across the nation.

Locally, several churches are also very active, including Acts United Methodist Church in Apex.

Besides bringing basic medical and health necessities to the impoverished nation, volunteers have also built several schools, dug wells, recently opened a medical clinic, and are planning to begin construction on a hospital.

"In Wake County we hear all the complaints about mandatory year-round schools," said Grinnell. "They don't even have schools in this place. There is no public education and no way for them to learn how to read.

"There is also no water in this village. They have to walk to the river and scoop it with containers. We are so accustomed to just turning on the faucet. It reminds you how wealthy we are in this country and it makes me feel spoiled."

For more information visit www.hopeforhaitifoundation.com.

