



The official packing party – stuffed with critical items.



Port-au-Prince Airport – you can't see what's waiting!



Yes, bunkbeds. The top bunks are cooler but, a climb.



Resort style living with tarantulas, rats, roaches & mangos.



Fancy outdoor showers, one temp. setting.



Haitian Fitness Center – barbells are actually car parts!



First Day on project – OLTCH orphanage, repair work.



200 gal. water tank removed, now rebuilding wood base.



Pastor Scott hanging out with the kids.



Rich trying not to fall off of the ladder!



Next project, outdoor 4-stall restroom at orphanage.



Brick & mortar isn't my specialty but, found my place.

What you don't see – the lack of electric power, restroom facilities, fresh-water source, shade, and the right tools for the project. You quickly learn to adapt in a country like Haiti, you must have a fluid schedule and be willing to do what can be done. There isn't any big home improvement stores located right around the corner. Supplies are usually quadruple or more than the U.S. prices – that's if they even have it in stock. A quick run to get supplies can easily take most of a day! The working and living conditions can be very tough. You are in a strange land, you don't sleep well, it is hot and dirty, you don't eat as much, and it is tough to stay hydrated. It is a shock to the system but, the rewards are life-changing!



Working, sweating, working, sweating...You get the point!



Finished with a pile of brick left – very, very tiring work.



The kids make projects out of anything – even crocheting.



These were my helpers throughout the week.



Our team minus Dave who left Haiti early.

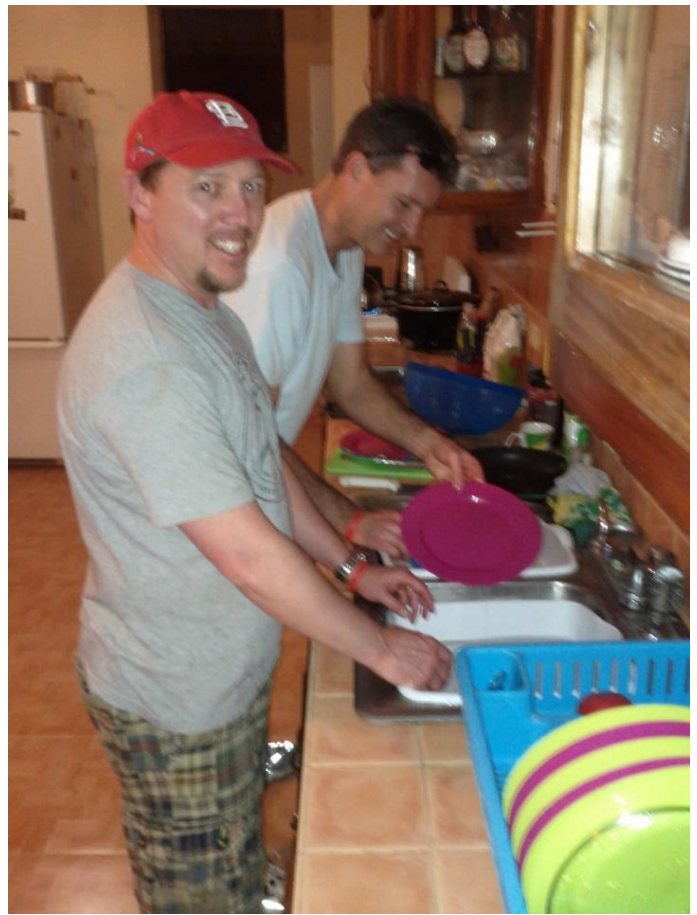


Coloring with the school kids, then on to soccer.

I found that the greatest part of our trip involved the village walks. One evening we walked three miles up to a higher elevation view in which we could see Port-Au-Prince and all surrounding villages and the Caribbean Sea – it was spectacular! We walked through a couple of local villages and met many people that were very friendly as they could see the work we were doing. We met Zeeko's family (2nd from the left above – a very good man!) and many of his friends. We were able to attend a couple of schools and interact with the students during English lessons. I was chosen to teach for a short period and I had a blast with that. Whether it's kicking a soccer ball, coloring, or teaching, it is truly rewarding.



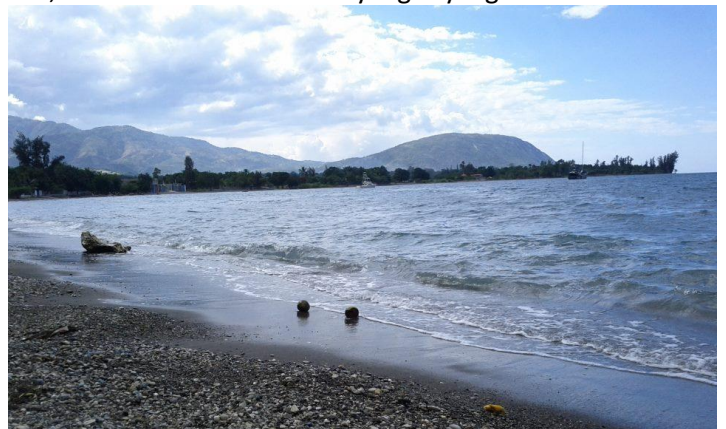
Our gathering spot for dinner, dominos, & cards.



Yes, we had to trade dish duty nightly – good conversation.



The very common tent cities are everywhere.



The opposing beauty of the clear Caribbean Sea.



Haitian Food market across from the clinic .



Haitian sports bar. You can see the TV in the tree!



The water cooler became our best friend – hydration!



One of our walks between villages – the views were great!

In summary – Haiti is tough. It is a country that represents ‘man-fallen’. The chaos is apparent upon landing and exiting the airport. This was my second trip and it was still overwhelming to the senses as there is no similarity to travel and life in the U.S. What the pictures do not reveal is the mishap that me, Scott, and Len experienced after being in Haiti for only an hour. We were in the center of Port-au-Prince en-route to our mission house. It was gridlock traffic in both directions and hundreds of people moving between cars, selling to each car, going about their ‘normal’ day. Our non-English speaking driver suddenly becomes nervous, begins looking around and pointing, reaches over Pastor Scott to unlock his door, Lens door opens next to me, Scotts door opens up front and then I hear a frightening ‘CRACK’! I turned to my window and I was staring down the barrel of a 22mm pistol held by a Haitian man with no emotion or any care for human life. There was nowhere to run, hide, no one to call, or even ask what was happening. We were being robbed at gunpoint. Yes, my life did flash but, I managed to cooperate and handed over my iPhone as I tried to comprehend what was unfolding and try to understand what else they wanted. As I looked over to hand my iPhone to the other perpetrator, the guy at my door disappears and the next sound was – BANG, BANG, BANG, BANG, at least 12 -15 shots fired. They began shooting at some ‘officials’ vehicle behind us that turned on their blue emergency lights in an attempt to stop what was happening to us. Once they were being shot at, then they returned fire on the guys robbing us. I sunk down in my seat, smelling gun powder and hearing the gunfight thinking it was aimed at us. NOW TERRIFIED! We couldn’t move, we had no idea if they were coming back for us, or if the crowd would mob us. I prayed that I wanted to see my family at least one more time but, I understood God’s sovereign plan and that if this was ‘IT’, then I’m ok with that (faith). The traffic jam only allowed us to move another 3 blocks in 30 minutes, still in shock & feeling like something was going to happen. No officials, U.N., or police offered to help. This car ride seemingly took forever! Our driver stopped at several places and we panicked each time because we couldn’t understand what he was doing (he works for one of the local gov’t offices and was trying to report the robbery along with his stolen wallet & drivers license since he is a driver by trade!). We arrived at the Haitian Queen and told our story. Disbelief covered the faces of everyone as they quickly helped us get connected to shut off our phones and anything else we needed to handle. I was happy – I felt as if I had just one day as I had asked. Time to change things up in case there’s no tomorrow! The rest of the week my head was clear, focused on mission work, and thanking God for allowing me another day.

Finally, driving home in a snowstorm, I walked in to see my family again – success! Even if only for a day!!!