



Rotary Club of Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills

Meeting of January 18, 2010

Good turn out, with eleven of our stalwarts, including Allan M returning to the fold. Great to have you back with us, Allan...and great that you are taking on the vacant Program Chair position.

We also had our ranks swelled by a guest, Jerry Hoogheim from Beckwith, and our program speaker, Jeff Mills, from Almonte.

President Mike opened the meeting with a moment of silence in remembrance and respect for the victims of the Haiti earthquake disaster. He then invited a motion from the Donations Committee to the effect of the Club purchasing a Shelter Box to be sent to Haiti as part of Rotary Internationals Emergency Relief activities. Rotarian David Mc. informed us that due to the rising value of the Canadian dollar, that the price to us is now \$1,000.00 Cdn.,,a couple of hundred dollars less than what the last shelter box we bought cost us. The motion passed unanimously, and a shelter box will soon be on its way from us to do a small bit of helping out in this near-unimaginable tragedy.

Staying with the theme of Haiti and its current tragedy, our program for the evening was Jeff Mills bringing us up-to-date on the situation there from perspective of what had happened in St. Marc, the town where our Club had contributed to putting a roof on a school, just last summer. Although Jeff readily accepted the invitation to speak to us

about the St. Mark situation, he found it a *very difficult* task to actually carry out. For starters, he had several days of deep concern for the well-being of Dieudonne Batrville, the Haitian-born resident of Almonte who works for a Canadian NGO doing sustainable development work in Haiti.

Dieudonne had arrived in Haiti just hours before the quake...having flown in on the popular Tuesday flight directly from Montreal to Port-Au-Prince (Haiti's capital). With the infrastructure laid to waste, it was several days before she was able to contact Jeff and let him know that she was all right...even though some of her close relatives, and many friends and colleagues, were not.

It turns out that the city of St. Mark received much less devastation than those areas more to the South on the island. The school building that we have helped out with was undamaged. It is now being used as a shelter for homeless people flooding North from the heavily ravaged areas just South of St. Mark.

Although his heart is tugging to get back to Haiti as soon as he can, Jeff realizes that this time of immediate crisis is not where he has skills to contribute on the ground. Instead, he is immersed in raising awareness of the dire situation, and providing aid in whatever way possible. In line with this, he and colleagues in Almonte have arranged a community fund raiser to be held this Friday evening, in the Almonte Town Hall. Jeff distributed a flyer about the event and encouraged our members to attend if possible.

Next meeting: Regular meeting at the Inn. Program to be announced.

