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**Word**<sup>TM</sup>

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**REACHING OUT TO THE  
HANDICAPPED IN HAITI**



Since before Haiti's devastating earthquake, The Red Thread Promise has been building long-term relationships and serving children in this small Caribbean country. Our work has varied greatly in scope, taking us from the heart of Port-au-Prince to coastal areas and remote mountain villages only accessible by foot. It is the beautiful children with their huge brown eyes and warm hugs that continue to draw us there, tugging on that [silken red thread of destiny](#).

Through our various programs, we support ill and physically challenged children, providing critical treatment they might otherwise not receive. The Red Thread Promise funds medical care, hospitalizations and surgeries; supports mobility solutions for non-ambulatory children; supplies clinics and orphanages with medical equipment, medication and other necessities; and supports clean water and food initiatives, as well as many other things.

Every decision we make starts with one foundational question: **HOW CAN WE HELP IMPROVE THIS YOUNG PERSON'S STATE OF HEALTH SO HE OR SHE CAN GROW UP AS WELL AS POSSIBLE IN SPITE OF LIVING IN THE POOREST COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE?**

## HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK IN HAITI COMPLETED

- [Delivering, assembling and distributing over 100 brand new all-terrain wheelchairs](#) to youth and children with handicaps in Port-au-Prince
- Planning and establishing [Camp Jake](#), an annual camp for disabled children
- Financially supporting the treatment of orphans with various diseases, birth defects and disabilities (including hospitalizations, follow-up care, doctors' visits, medications, vitamins and nutrition)
- Working in urban hospitals and rural medical clinics, providing much-needed medical care, pre- and post-earthquake
- Donating medical supplies to rural and urban clinics and orphanages
- Supplying diapers, formula, baby food, pharmaceuticals and everyday necessities, as well as well-baby/child checkups for orphans
- Purchasing, coordinating and delivering equipment for blind and deaf schools

## ONGOING

We are currently engaged in a broad spectrum of activities, including:

- Setting up a fully stocked, centrally-located hearing aid clinic in Port-au-Prince, including Haitian-trained staff, state-of-the-art evaluation equipment and a two-year supply of digital hearing aids
- Offering a full camp experience to handicapped children in Port-au-Prince through [Camp Jake](#)
- Conducting an ongoing food drive for St. Vincent's Center for Handicapped Children to feed 185+ special-needs students and staff at least two nutritious meals each day
- Financially supporting the purchase and installation of a water treatment system at St. Vincent's
- Sending medical personnel to work at clinics in Port-au-Prince
- Connecting adoptive parents with children in need of permanent, loving home

The opportunities to help in Haiti are vast, from hand-on trips, to conducting fund and supply drives, to financially supporting our programs. [Donate now](#) or [find out how you can help](#).

HELP

BLOG

VIDEO

THE RED THREAD PROMISE IS BEST EXPLAINED FROM THIS PAGE FOUND ON THEIR WEB SITE. [www.redthreadpromise.org](http://www.redthreadpromise.org)

# AIDING THE HANDICAPPED IN HAITI

BY  
PETERA REINE

In January of 2012, I was granted a unique opportunity to be a part of the first annual Camp Jake experience for students of St. Vincent's Center for Handicapped Children in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The Camp was hosted by TRTP who had forged a relationship with St. Vincent's Center for Handicapped Children.

Handicapped individuals in Haiti are often mistreated and abandoned. St. Vincent's welcome these children and provide them with education, living quarters, and daily sustenance. Once TRTP heard of the humbling work St. Vincent's partaking in, they immediately began to galvanize in efforts to aid the center in their mission.

Before arriving to Haiti I was unsure of what to expect. I was wondering about the recovery... if people were still living in the "tent city"... and the mental state of the citizens after experiencing a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake. After sharing my thoughts with my best friend, Lisa-Marie Pierre who is Haitian, she told me not to arrive in Haiti with the mind-set of a social science researcher, but to arrive with a heart of warmth to do the job I was being sent to do. And that job was camp counselor.

This first Camp Jake was held in January 2012 with 36 campers from St. Vincent's- all ranging in ages from 6 months to some in their 50s. The nature of the camp was to bring some of the residents of St. Vincent's to Kaliko Beach for a week to participate in health and wellness

activities (eg art therapy and aqua aerobics), relaxation, and expose them to something different outside of their everyday lives. All the campers had never before seen the ocean!

The campers arrived in the evening. As they unloaded from the bus, counselors ushered a group of campers- wheelchair bound, hearing and vision impaired, and some with missing limbs- to the ocean



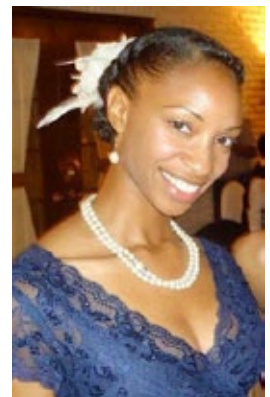
front where I and other counselors stood waiting to greet them. One vision impaired young man being led by another camper, stopped walking, and listened. Moments later he said, I never heard a sound like that before. That sound he heard was the tide rolling in on the shore. It was at that very instant, I knew this was going to be an experience I would never forget.

The next several days was spent in either the art room, the pool, on the beach, or in the dining area of Kaliko beach. Every morning, before the orders of fresh watermelon juice, I was greeted by the campers with a phrase "Bonjour! Kouman ou ye?" It was apparent that my 7 years of French was not going to be useful, and learning a few key kreyol phrases was necessary. And these campers jumped to the opportunity to help me communicate with them more efficiently. Everyday consisted of language lessons, whether that language was English, kreyol, or sign. By the end of that week, my kreyol and sign improved significantly.

The covalent bond created between the campers and I was one I could have never fathom. We connected beyond the superficial. Older campers shared stories of personal accounts during the earthquake and their spiritual relationship with God. One gentleman stated in reference to the earthquake, "That's life. You have ups and downs. It's how you get up when you are down." Wise words shared by the gentleman in the sunglasses and grey shirt in the picture to the right.

The time spent with my new friends in Haiti was unforgettable. Months later, I still email and text them just to see how their day going. They remind me every day that through it all, God is so good and so merciful to us.

*Petera Reine is an altruistic spirit, born and raised in New Orleans. She is an active member of St. Maria Goretti church in New Orleans. She completed a Masters of Public Health with a concentration in Community Health and Health Education a student at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Petera has worked with a number of organizations with a focus on improving wellness and access to care for marginalized populations. Her passion has taken her abroad to study the health care system of Taiwan and the country's approach to managing communicable diseases. Petera plans to fulfill her innate calling of service to the global community. As a fervent volunteer, these experiences have offered her the opportunity to develop skills that highlight her passion for community development, strengthening cultural competence, and health education.*



Petera Reine



## in a word or two



The Rev. Michael P. Jacques, S.S.E., 64, unexpectedly died on June 7, 2013.

An extremely dynamic priest Father Jacques, son of Prudent and Leontine Jacques, was born on April 26, 1949, in Caribou, Maine. He was a professed member of the Society of Saint Edmund for 44 years, and an Edmundite priest for 31 years.

Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb ordained Father Jacques on May 29, 1982. Following ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Jacques served as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Mobile, Ala., from 1982-84, and served as pastor of St. Peter Claver Parish in New Orleans, LA., from 1985 until his death.

The death of Father Jacques stunned the parishioners of St. Peter Claver Church. The unexpected loss of a pastor who was held in high esteem sent shockwaves throughout the community. The Archbishop of New Orleans, Gregory Aymond, said Father Jacques was a dynamic pastor. "He was an extraordinary priest and his commitment to the people of the archdiocese of New Orleans and to the people of St. Peter Claver was unwavering," Archbishop Aymond said. "He was a leader not only in his parish but also in the civic community."

Mr. Peter Finney, Jr., editor of the Clarion Herald paper for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, wrote insightful articles about the dynamism of this pastor. ([www.clarionherald.org](http://www.clarionherald.org)) In one article Mr. Finney wrote the following....

*"It is one thing for a Catholic priest to hear and understand the social teaching of the Catholic Church. It is quite another, as Father Jacques did, to give that teaching flesh as if the Christian life itself demanded it. Because it did. And that was the genius of Michael Jacques, who died far too young on June 7, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of complications from emergency heart surgery. He was 64 and had served at St. Peter Claver Church for 29 years.*

*Yes, Father Jacques was a community organizer – that job description carries with it negative connotations these days when viewed from a purely political perspective – but at his heart he was a faith-based organizer, seeing the Gospel as a mandate for the baptized, the elect of God, to unleash their latent power."*

St. Peter Claver will miss Father Michael Jacques. Yet, his spirit lives on in the hearts and souls of the parishioners. The torch that was lit with his extraordinary life will no doubt continue to burn. Father Michael will make sure of that as he looks down on the people he loved.

The mission of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP) is to educate on the scourge of human trafficking as an offense against fundamental dignity of the human person; to advocate for an end to modern day slavery; and to provide training and technical assistance on this issue.



Each year, an estimated 17,000 vulnerable men, women and children are trafficked across our borders and then forced into slavery. Many are fleeing terrible situations in their home countries, and come to the United States to find a better life. Unfortunately, the nightmare often begins when they reach our shores. For over a decade, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has been a national leader in advocacy and education to eradicate sex and labor trafficking. For six years, USCCB and partners provided intensive case management services to victims of human trafficking, assisting more than 2,232 survivors of trafficking and over 500 of their family members. Currently, they are concentrating on training and technical assistance so that victims can be identified, brought into safety, and ultimately we can help eradicate the horrible crime of modern day slavery.

For more information on what the Church is doing and what you yourself can do in local communities go to [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

World Youth Day will be held in Rio de Janeiro, July 23-28, 2013.

There will be a special Welcome Center for English-Speaking Pilgrims. The Center will serve as a hub of activities during World Youth Day, which revolves around prayer and meetings with Pope Francis, catechetical sessions and liturgies with bishops from around the world.

On Wednesday, July 24, the United States will hold a special gathering for U.S. pilgrims in the evening hours. The Center also will include a "Vocations Festival," where English-speaking pilgrims can connect with bishops, priests and religious brothers and sisters from around the world to address questions and concerns about pursuing their vocational call.

Pope John Paul II initiated World Youth Day in 1986 as a way to reach out to young Catholics. Internationally it is celebrated in different cities around the world every two or three years.

**Divine Word Missionaries** is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>