

The

FESTIVAL BRIEF



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FESTIVAL OF SHARING...February, 2009

The Festival of Sharing
3009 David Drive
Columbia, MO 65202

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Sending Hope & Justice to a hurting world.

In 2008 the Festival of Sharing Coordinating committee chose to highlight the needs of two different countries from two different hemispheres, Haiti and Uganda.

A look into the life and history of the Haitian People

Facts about Haiti

Capital: Port-au-Prince

Major languages: Creole, French

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 59 years (men), 63 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 gourde = 100 centimes

Main exports: Light manufactures, coffee, oils, mangoes

Republic of Haiti, in the West Indies, occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. About the size of Massachusetts, Haiti is two-thirds mountainous, with the rest of the country marked by great valleys, extensive plateaus, and small plains. Due to deforestation much of the land floods easily in this mountainous, hurricane prone land. Haiti is a country in the midst of recovery from two devastating hurricanes in August and September of 2008. Her people number 9.8 million, who find themselves in "survival" mode following storms both natural and man made. Haiti is one of the oldest modern nations and the oldest black republic in the world.

Haiti is a beautiful country with a sad history. In 1804, Haiti became the only country in the western hemisphere to have a successful slave revolution. However, internal problems and poor relations with the European powers, especially France from whom they revolted, led to much of the Haiti we know today. Because of these problems, Haiti's economy lagged behind other Caribbean nations. Like many of these other countries, much of Haiti's economy depended on tourism. However the Duvalier Dictatorships from father to son (1957-1986) and the AIDS epidemic of the 1980's have all but ended foreign tourism. Today Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, known for international reports of disease and starvation. In recent times with the work of NGO's like Church World Service things have been improving. A United Nations intervention has stabilized the country enough that progress can now be made.

The Haitian people have a deep faith in God that helps them survive the conditions of their lives. 80% of the population is Catholic and 16% is Protestant. Singing, drumming and dancing are woven into their ways of offering thanks to the God who has not forgotten them

The 2009 Festival of Sharing has chosen the Republic of Haiti to be one of the recipients of our study, prayers and CWS Kits and donations.

Republic of Uganda

Capital: Kampala

Major Language: English, Swahili

Major Religion: Christian, indigenous beliefs, Muslim

Life expectancy: 45.3 years and the median age is 15

Monetary Unit: Ugandan Shilling

Uganda. Perhaps that name is familiar to you because it is the birth place of Beatrice Biira, the young girl featured in the children's book, "Beatrice's Goat" and also in the video called, "The Promise." You may remember the lush vegetation pictured in both the book and the video but there is more to know about this country.

Uganda which is about the size of Oregon is bordered by Kenya on the east, Sudan on the north, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on the west, by Rwanda on the southwest and by Tanzania on the south. Eighty-percent of the 31 million people make their living by agriculture in some way. For many this means subsistence living and every day the primary objective is to find food for that day.

The country is rich in resources such as copper, cobalt, limestone and oil but years of political upheaval have prevented the development of infrastructure sufficient to develop resources or to deal with the issues of hunger and poverty. One of the most memorable of Uganda's leaders was Idi Amin who was responsible for over 300,000 deaths during 1971 – 1979.

Instability continued and government led murders continued until Yoweri Museveni took control in 1985. Serious irregularities have continued in the elections but Museveni remains in power.

Meanwhile in the northern part of the country, the 23-year civil war between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government army continued, killing tens of thousands and displacing nearly 2 million people and forcing them into camps. The abduction of children by the LRA for use as child soldiers resulted in the nightly march of the *Invisible Children* who fled their homes each night to hide from their abductors.

The last two years have brought relative calm but there are still one million living in camps. A drought in the northern part of the country has added to the challenge and now thousands of refugees fleeing from the DRC have arrived. Both have aggravated the food and water shortage and there are legitimate concerns about the possibility of a cholera outbreak.

The challenges are great but the people, like Beatrice have persevered and are willing to work hard to improve their lives. The goats we will be funding through the Heifer International 2009 project will provide nourishing milk and food. Also, the valuable gifts of hope, as families are able to have joy and dignity as they "pass on the gift."

Festival of Sharing Garden Seed Ministry

Ending poverty and hunger takes many different avenues. One of the more unique programs is the Festival of Sharing's garden seed projects. Each year at the festival as garden seeds are dropped off at the fairgrounds we have a busy group of volunteers helping to sort count and label the garden seeds and prepare them for winter storage. The seeds are from the end of season surplus. Many find that stores are willing to donate or give them to the church at a reduced cost.

As part of the sorting and counting process the seeds are sealed in air tight zip-lock bags and stored in a cool location at the Festival of Sharing warehouse in Columbia MO. Each spring we contact the community gardens on our list and ask if they would like seeds again this year. The community gardens are developed in many ways some provide a central location for people to grow their own produce others provide the seeds and help with planting instructions there is yet a third type where churches will take the seeds grow the produce then donate the crops to the local food pantry.



Last year we added a new community garden location and yet another way the garden seeds are helping a community. The Municipal Correctional Institution in St. Joseph, Missouri. Nancy Leazer helped to oversee the new project, "I cannot tell you how much we appreciated your contribution."

"The garden was a great success. The women at the institution were so buoyed by the garden. They just loved working outdoors and the bouquets adorned a very dreary atmosphere inside the dormitory all summer." Since this was first year for the correctional institution they requested mostly flowers. The garden added volunteers who now come on a regular basis to the facility. The seeds donated to the Festival of Sharing improve the lives of many through out the year. Remember to bring the unused seeds to the Festival of Sharing next October!

Photos provided by Nancy Leazer.

Hunger Grants support food pantries in Missouri

Each spring the Festival of Sharing Coordinating Committee assesses the funds available to provide hunger grants to food pantries across the state of Missouri. Last year each food pantry on the Coordinating Committee's list received \$125 to be used as needed to feed the needy in their community. . Approximately 65 to 100 food pantries are selected each year for these grants. This year looks as though the grants will be \$100 each. This year the Festival of Sharing Coordinating Committee set up a sub committee to analyze the needs and the best way for funds to reach the most venerable.



Thank you to the South East Missouri community for their dedication to raising funds to purchase bulk rice. Southern Missouri has many farmers that have rice crops. This community also has some of the highest poverty and hunger rates in the south eastern counties. Because of the commitment of ;the following businesses, churches and individuals we were able to purchase nearly 20,000 pounds of bulk rice for distribution across the state of Missouri. If you would like to contribute to the rice and bean fund or need additional information please contact Terri Williams at the Festival of sharing office,573-474-7155, in Columbia MO.

Gary & Judy Crump
Ellington Insurance Ag., Mr. Mark Gibbons
Joseph Hunter Farms
Woods Lumber Company, John Spence
Marvin & Margaret Childers
Cooter Cotton Gin Co.
First Baptist Church
Darrel & Toni Pyle
Charles & Pam Kruse

Butler Drugstore, Mr. Trey Rome
County Wide Insurance Ag., Mr. Alan Hedrick
Michael Bernard
Harold & Mabel Snider
Bill & Judy Perkins
First Midwest Bank, Mr. Ron Cooper
First State Bank & Trust, Mr. Rodney Green
Dudley Church of God
Robert Mayer

United Methodist Church, Dexter
Missouri Rice Council, Anna McGowan
Martin Rice Farm, Mr. Mike Martin
University of Missouri, Delta Research Center
James & Yvonne Hall
Christian Church, Dexter
David & Billy Mulcahy

Also, many thanks to Larry Reed for taking the time to contact and request donations for rice on behalf of the festival of Sharing!

The *Festival Brief* is published in November, February, May and August. If you have questions about the Festival of Sharing please contact Terri Williams, Coordinator by calling 573-474-3332 or email at festival@socket.net.

Missouri Pack Highlight Backpacks of Love and Youth Hygiene Kits

This year through working with the Department of Social Services, Children's Division in the state of Missouri we have modified the Backpacks of Love and added another pack for the older youth that are in state custody. Please note that changes are many for the backpacks of love. We **NO longer include** a toy because of liability issues and are trying to be more specific on clothing sizes to help make the backpacks more consistent and easier for the Children's Division (CD) offices to know their inventory. The Backpacks of love also designate that either a spiral notebook and pencil be included or if the clothing size is for a younger child instead include a coloring book and crayons.

The CD offices also place older youth that need to know that the wider community loves them. Often times youth ages 12 to 18 are placed in group homes and need hygiene items. So this year the DFS has helped us create a Youth Hygiene pack that will be given to these older youth in state care.

The division of Social Services is working in local communities to strengthen faith based support. Check with your local CD office to see if your church can help by providing healthy snacks or activities for supervised visits. Each county will have different needs so direct contact with your local DFS office will be able to help partner with you your congregation. It is easiest to go to the Missouri Department of Social Services website, locate the Children's Division link, then the link to "Local Offices." The offices are listed by county.

Backpacks of Love - Pack Value \$40.00	Youth Hygiene Pack - Pack Value \$40.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 small backpack or small duffel (NO backpacks with wheels) 1 small stuffed animal 1 t-shirt (Child Medium, Child Large or Adult Small) 1 pkg. - 3 pair underpants 1 pair socks 1 narrow tooth comb 1 youth toothbrush (soft and in unopened, original package) 1 tube child flavored toothpaste, 6 oz. or more 1 coloring book (for age 4-7) or 1 notebook (for age 8-11) 1 box crayons (for age 4-7) or 1 pencil (for age 8-11) 1 travel pillow <p>A small quilt or blanket already donated will be added to the kit. <i>Please pack all items in the backpack and label the box "Backpacks"</i>. These kits are used by children between the ages of 4 to 11 who have experienced a crisis and are being placed in foster care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 3 oz bottle hand sanitizer 1 small permanent marker (for personalization of bag) 1 Calendar / address book 1 travel pillow 1 washcloth 1 travel size toothpaste 1 each travel size shampoo & conditioner 1 travel size hair gel / hair spray (non aerosol) 1 travel size lotion 1 pocket pack of tissue 1 box medicated facial cleansing pads (such as Stridex) 1 men's body spray OR 1 small package of feminine pads or tampons <p>Put all the items in a drawstring bag approximately 15" X 22". Please use solid color fabric to allow the teen to personalize the bag. All items should be placed inside the bag with the draw string pulled. Place kits in a box and label "Youth Pack" and the number of packs in the box. These kits are used by children between the ages of 12 to 18 who have experienced a crisis and are being placed in state care.</p>

General Store for the Family Food Box



Last year Midway Locust Grove opened a general store for the Festival of Sharing Family food box. The children of the church, with the assistance of the Mission committee set up a store stocked with the contents needed to make a Family Food Box pack. The items are purchased from a local grocery store that offers the congregation a discount on the foods.

During the worship service the children's time is dedicated to explaining to the children and the congregation how they can purchase part of all of a family food box. The children are given a dollar to spend at the store that is temporarily set up in the sanctuary for the children to buy items for a food box.



After the service everyone has the opportunity to shop at the store in the fellowship hall. The church sets a goal each year for the number of food boxes they hope to send to the Festival of Sharing.

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OFFICE OF CREATIVE MINISTRIES
3009 DAVID DRIVE
COLUMBIA, MO 65202

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Columbia, MO 65202
Permit No. 48

Return Service Requested

DATED MATERIAL PLEASE DELIVER BY MARCH 3RD, 2009

Church World Service Kit needs for 2009 is the Health Kit

As your church is making decisions about which kits to collect for 2009 please consider making CWS Health kits. CWS has sent 240 health kits to Kentucky in response to the winter ice storms and 180 health kits to Iowa for continued support from the 2008 flooding.

HEALTH KIT

In the face of natural disasters, violence, or poverty, these kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for family members.

\$12 value

1 hand towel
1 washcloth
1 toothbrush (in original packaging)

1 sturdy comb
6 Band-Aids

Shipping—\$2/kit

1 metal nail file or nail clipper with file
1 bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)

Seal all items in a one-gallon plastic bag with zipper closure. Toothpaste will be added by Church World Service.

It is not too late to request future Festival Brief's by E-mail!

By choosing to receive Festival of Sharing information in electronic form you help reduce the budget for printing and mailing. Those funds can be used to help those in need. Send an email to Terri at Festival@socket.net letting her know that you are "opting in" for future copies to be sent via email.

Address Changing? Please help us keep down our postage costs by letting us know your new address, contact us at the address on the front page of this newsletter.