



Mission of Love



"You are not here to save the world, but are here to touch the hands that are within your reach."

Mission of Love helps Haiti

By JOE GORMAN Tribune Chronicle

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Jeremy Bower passes a piece of lumber Saturday to Seth Colbentz that will be taken to Haiti by the Mission of Love group for earthquake relief. They were among several volunteers loading supplies at the Mission of Love warehouse in Paris Township.

PARIS TOWNSHIP - Kathy Price knows her disasters.

From tsunamis to hurricanes, the founder and director of the Mission of Love Foundation in Austintown has seen her share of calamity over the last 20 years.

On Saturday, she and a group of volunteers braved the bitter cold to sort through donations to send to Haiti, which was ravaged by a massive earthquake Jan. 12.

Although bundled against the cold, Price said things could be worse: Temperatures were about 15 below zero in 2004 as the group gathered supplies to send to victims of the tsunami in Thailand.

"In a way we are kind of blessed," Price said.

She was blessed in another way as well. The group found someone with contacts on the island, which can help ensure that the aid they are sending gets to the people who need it.



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Zach Colbentz of Hartville owns a John Deere dealership there and wanted to get involved in relief efforts because he has a brother who lives in Haiti and he has visited the island several times.

Through his connections, Colbentz arranged for trucks in St. Marc, Haiti, to pick up supplies brought in on barges from Florida.

"We were going to go anyway, but with his help, it's a win-win scenario," Price said.

Colbentz said he was guided by a higher power when trying to work out the logistics and timing of his role in the effort.

"It was all God's will," he said.

Price had just returned from Guatemala when the earthquake struck and was making plans the next day to ship aid when Colbentz heard her plea for help through a friend's e-mail. Price said the earthquake is especially bad because the country did not have much to start with.

"How can you be any poorer when you're the poorest of the poor?" she asked.

Price has been collecting everything, from diapers to food to bottles of water to building materials. She even has collected walkers and crutches. She said the effort of those who want to help is awesome to see.

"This is from the community for the community of Haiti," Price said.

Helping people is nothing new for Price, who pitched in for tsunami relief as well as Hurricane Katrina, among others.

"For 20 years, this has been our life," she said.

Stu Hitchcock has been with Price since 2006 and said she deserves the credit for making sure aid gets to the people who need it.

"She gets a big outpouring no matter what," Hitchcock said. "I've never known anyone who can make so much happen with so little money."

jgorman@tribtoday.com