

May 2015 News

Action Speaks Louder than Words - by Terri Whiteside

It was my first time in Haiti. I didn't know what to expect as we arrived in Port au Prince on February 20th 2014. My team hopped up in the back of an open bed passenger truck and traveled 2 hours to Bois Neuf where we would be staying. I noticed women carrying items on their heads, men driving scooters with 2 or 3 passengers, children dressed in uniforms, cows and goats roaming the streets and huts no bigger than one of my bathrooms. I was finally here.

When I arrived at my destination I was greeted by several young men and children. During my stay, I met a little boy. He was barefoot and too clean. His name was Greg and it all started with a smile, a sweet innocent smile. He gravitated to me as I did to him. I noticed he never said anything but he did smile. I was told that he was deaf and could not speak due to an illness when he was younger and he could not attend school because of this. I saw Greg every day.

I only knew a little sign language, but I decided to teach Greg how to sign "I Love You". Every time I saw him I would sign to him "I love you". By the end of our stay, Greg had caught on, he would sign "I Love you" back. I was not sure if he really understood what it meant, but it meant something to Greg and I.

My husband and I had gotten this opportunity through an organization called Hope for Haiti and when we learned we could sponsor children through them also, we knew that was something we wanted to do. As I was looking at the children needing sponsors, I came across Greg. He had not been on the list when I looked before we left for Haiti. A Hope for Haiti board member went to our church and I asked about this when I saw him the following Sunday. He stated Greg should not be on there since part of the sponsorship was for sending the child to school but he would double check.



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Later he contacted me and said yes he is on there and the money sent for him would go to help his family. My husband and I knew then that Greg was our child to sponsor and we did. I came home from work one day and the materials for sponsorship had arrived along with Greg's bio. I started reading it and I couldn't do anything but shout for joy. Greg and I had the same birthday; December 21st. God was letting us know; it had always been about a boy named Greg.

Even though Greg doesn't have much, he is always happy. He is content in what he does have. He may not have 3 meals a day, a big pretty house and a different outfit for every day, but he has genuine people who genuinely love him. Sometimes we get so caught up in materialistic things that we forget about being disciples of Jesus and loving our neighbors. Even if it is a little boy at the far end of the world.



Terri Whiteside was born in Chattanooga. After graduating, she joined the U.S. Army and has been a nurse for sixteen years. She has been married to Chris Whiteside for seventeen years and has six children and three grand boys. She attends Hamilton Life Church, where she is the nursery coordinator.