

# haiti community challenge itinerary



On Tuesday January 12, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti and devastated the lives of millions people across the country. The disaster left 222,570 people dead, more than 300,000 injured and 1.5 million people displaced.

Its epicentre lay just 10 miles to the west of the country's capital, Port au Prince. Already the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti's plight was further exacerbated by the widespread destruction caused by the earthquake.

Almost 5,000 schools were destroyed or seriously damaged leaving close to three million children without a safe place to attend school and learn. 87% of schools in Port-au-Prince and 96% of schools in Leogane (the epicentre of the earthquake) have been damaged or destroyed.

With over 80% of the country living below the poverty line, the Haitians are in dire need of both immediate and long term aid.

The need for help is very real. More than 1 in 9 children die before reaching the age of five. Nearly 20% of children suffer from

stunted growth due to poor nutrition. Nearly half of children do not go to primary school. 60% of rural communities suffer from chronic food insecurity and two thirds of the population does not have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

We are looking for volunteers to put their heart and 'sweat' into what we believe will be one of the most rewarding experiences we can offer - helping to ensure that the most vulnerable children from earthquake-affected families can return to school as soon as possible.

The children need a place to escape the routine of the IDP camps, to be children again, and of course to get an education. With over 50% of the population under 18, education is a major factor in the future of Haiti.

It is a physical and emotional experience, and volunteers often come away knowing a great deal more about themselves than they did beforehand.

All you need to take part in a community challenge is enthusiasm, motivation and a

desire to help make a difference. No other skills are required, as there will be local trades people on hand to show you what to do.



### Day 1: Saturday: International Departure, arrive Port au Prince

You will depart from London Heathrow to Port-au-Prince via JFK or Miami and arriving in Haiti later the same afternoon. Our representative will be at the airport to assist you with check-in and any last minute questions. Please remember that you will need to clear US immigration and recheck your luggage before boarding the USA to Haiti flight. The journey to the hotel will take you through the centre of the city, past some of the worst affected areas, including the shattered remains of the Presidential Palace. This evening your team leader will brief you on health & safety procedures.



### Day 2: Sunday: Rest Day

Today has been set aside to relax or explore the city, seeing for ourselves the devastation caused by the earthquake. There may also be an opportunity to visit a community project, where local artists have taken the initiative to turn recycled metal into quite unique works of art.



### Day 3-7: Monday to Friday: Rebuilding the community

Breakfast will be served in your hotel and we will depart shortly afterwards. The drive from the hotel to your building site will take approximately 30 minutes, depending upon traffic and road conditions. You will be fully briefed on site at the start of each working day, about the work and all safety and training aspects. Equally important is the introduction to the local crew with whom you will be working. This is a great opportunity to get acquainted with your new environment. There will be ample time to ask questions of the construction supervisor and to get to know your team over the coming days.

Every community challenge is different. Sometimes your team will arrive at the start of a project and will build from the ground up. In this case, you may be clearing rubble, digging foundations, chipping rocks, lifting and laying blocks or mixing cement.

On other challenges you will arrive to find the school partially built. In that case, your team might

concentrate on installing siding, windows, doors or roofing.

Once the exterior of the building nears completion, efforts focus on finishing the interior. Every building project is different.

Everything you do on a construction site, whether it is hauling water, sifting sand, removing or placing dirt, mixing cement by hand or passing buckets of mortar to another team member, is helping the community to realise its dream of a new start. It is an inspiring process to be involved in.

Often the work is very labour-intensive but you will never be asked to do anything outside of your physical capabilities and team work will be encouraged at all times. No volunteer should be made to feel they have to do something they are not happy or comfortable doing. There are many tasks on a building site so please be open and honest. If you do have any reservations about any job you are assigned, please do not hesitate to raise these with the construction supervisor.

Please accept that you don't always have to be productive to have a positive experience. Regardless of the work you perform, Charity Challenge teams inject enthusiasm and encourage the community by sharing the burden of the construction process. You do make a difference and are greatly appreciated.

You will need to be patient and flexible. There will be times when you will be waiting for someone to show up to make a decision or just to get started. On other occasions it may be for materials to arrive. Make the most of this time to share with the local community.

The days will be scheduled around the local working hours and appropriate temperatures throughout the day. Lunch, water & snacks will be provided on site and shared with all members of the building team. In the evenings you will have the

chance to eat and relax at the hotel or visit a local restaurant. There will also be an opportunity to enjoy local cultural activities. On your last night you will visit a restaurant for a celebration of your achievements.

### **Day 8: Saturday: Depart for UK.**

This morning you will check out of the hotel after a relaxing breakfast and head to the airport. The flight returns via Miami/JFK, where you will catch the onward flight to London

### **Day 9: Sunday: Arrive UK**

Arrive back at London Heathrow in the morning.

NB: All flight times are subject to availability and are to be confirmed.

The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print.