What Should I Do?

The human desire to help in times of crisis is as amazing as it is strong. People want to volunteer in Haiti; People want to donate money, others supplies; People want to drop everything and create a charity to help those in need. But for most people, what is the BEST thing to do? The best thing to do is to donate money to, and hold fundraisers for, reputable, established, and experienced aid organizations.

But surely they need volunteers in Haiti to help assist with the relief effort! I don't have the money to donate, but I can donate supplies!

Although traveling to an area to assist in the relief effort and/or donating supplies directly may be appealing, the common problems inherent in disaster relief mean that your well-intended assistance may exacerbate an already difficult and confusing situation. In the chaos after the earthquake in Haiti, relief efforts need to be coordinated. Monetary donations to reputable organizations (discussed below) can be best used and most easily distributed to where they are needed.

How do I find a reputable organization so I can assist them in their efforts in Haiti?

It is important to do your research! Donate to organizations with an established presence in Haiti. The ability to charter helicopters, buy tarps, and distribute water is eased considerably if the organization has cash in hand. On the back of this flyer you can find a list of suggested charities that are addressing the problem in Haiti.

How should I donate?

It may be simplest to donate via TEXT, however, even though wireless carriers are working to speed up delivery of those donations, that money may take up to a MONTH to be disbursed to your selected charity. Donating directly via the charity's website is the quickest way to ensure that your donation gets to those that need it ASAP.

How can I make sure that my donation ACTUALLY goes to those suffering in Haiti?

This is a very legitimate concern! After all, according to an Associated Press article, there were over 400 new internet addresses registered regarding Haiti by the 15th of January. One wouldn’t want to believe it, but fraudulent aid collection does happen. Make sure to donate only to reputable charities and to research ANY charity you are considering donating to, even if it is one suggested by a friend! More tips can be found at:  http://bucks.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/01/15/tips-for-safe-and-efficient-giving-to-help-haiti/

But what MORE can I do! I want to do more than DONATE!

Awesome. The world needs people like you. You’ve already donated, what next? Help organize a fundraiser! Student Development and Campus Activities and the Center for Community Action and Research will be planning events around Haiti this semester. We tentatively have a training for individuals interested in becoming a disaster response volunteer with the American Red Cross scheduled for February.

Most importantly, stay tuned to the situation in Haiti. Soon enough the public eye will shift away from a disaster that will take YEARS to recover from. Donations, both monetary and of supplies, will be needed as donors look away from the effort in Haiti. Volunteer opportunities may arise. People will need to be kept aware of the continuing need for aid in Haiti after the television crews and reporters leave. Stay engaged in the plight of Haiti as they go through the long rebuilding process. With your help, it is possible that a nation already troubled prior to the earthquake can recover and be better than ever.
Suggested Reputable Organizations (from pace.edu):

1. **Direct Relief International**: An organization that provides medical assistance to improve the quality of life for people affected by poverty, disaster, and civil unrest at home and throughout the world.

   *Online*: Go to http://www.directrelief.org/EmergencyResponse/2010/EarthquakeHaiti.aspx to read about their relief efforts in Haiti and/or click the "Donate" tab on the left side. You can specifically choose Haiti to benefit from your donation.

2. **International Medical Corps**: A global, humanitarian, nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training and relief and development programs.

   *Online*: Go to website at http://www.imcworldwide.org to donate.

3. **American Red Cross**:

   *Online*: Donations to their International Response Fund can be made at http://american.redcross.org/

   If you would like to be sure that it goes to Haiti...

   *Mail*: Send donations to American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013 or to your local American Red Cross chapter, which you can find here http://www.redcross.org/aboutus/ at the right hand corner of the page.

   *Using Your Phone*: You can text the word 'Haiti' to 90999 to donate just $10. Your donation will be added to your phone bill.

4. **Partners in Health**:

   The organization that Paul Farmer founded (in the freshman reading of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*) is doing reputable relief work. Learn more at http://www.standwithhaiti.org/haiti.

**There are MANY reputable organizations in Haiti, these are but a few. Others include CARE, MercyCorps, Save the Children, UNICEF, etc. As always research your charities prior to donating**

A Blog for Those Who Want to Help in HAITI

Here is an interesting blog written by Saundra Schimmelpfennig, a leading expert on the recovery efforts after the Asian Tsunami of 2004. If you really want to help Haiti now, and in the future, I would recommend reading this blog. It can be found at: http://informationincontext.typepad.com/good_intentions_are_not_e/articles entitled “Choosing Organizations to Donate to After the Haiti Earthquake”, “The DO’s and DON’T of Disaster Donations” and many more in-depth articles. Though Saundra is an expert, it is, as always, important for you to critically analyze and cross reference information.

A note on the controversy surrounding Yele and Wyclef Jean

You may have heard about the controversy surrounding Wyclef Jean’s Haitian charity, Yele. Google the topic, read articles from reputable news sources, and make your own decision if you are contemplating donating to Yele, whether it be online or via phone. Make sure to consult the “How can I ACTUALLY....” section on choosing an organization to donate to on the reverse side of this flyer.