



On Jan. 25, Janine Cuthbertson (center), Kellie Smith (center left) and a crew of about 40 other volunteers were organizing donations bound for an orphanage in Haiti. Photo by Jane Bachrach

## Help for Haiti

*Local mothers and others dispatch aid to Haitian orphans*

By Terray Sylvester  
The Sopris Sun

On Monday night, Jan. 25, the entryway of the Carbondale Recreation and Community Center was aglow with activity. Forty volunteers, most of them local mothers, had gathered to organize and ship off about 14 pickup truck loads of donations to an orphanage outside of Port-au-Prince, the capitol of earthquake-stricken Haiti. "It started from one email and it turned into hundreds of people," said Janine Cuthbertson, who spearheaded the effort. "It just shows what the [community] network can do here, and the power of that network."

The effort started with a single email a little over a week earlier when reports of the magnitude 7.0 earthquake began to filter in through the media.

Cuthbertson said that after hearing about

the quake she was comforting her own 11 month-old daughter, and her thoughts turned toward Haiti.

"I was so grateful for the warm, safe house over my head, available food and the knowledge that her cries were solely from a new tooth and not because she was injured, buried under the rubble, starving or lost," Cuthbertson stated in a press release.

She explained that she felt "an overwhelming sadness" for the mothers in Haiti who were, "at the same moment, dealing with unspeakable hardship."

She decided that she would find an organization that would accept donated goods, not just money.

The next day she contacted the American Red Cross, UNICEF, the Church of Latter Day Saints and other major aid organizations, but found they would take only monetary contributions.

Then an Internet search led her to God's Littlest Angels, an orphanage in the hills

above Port-au-Prince with offices in Colorado Springs.

"I thought, 'Great, I can drive a truck down there,'" she said.

The orphanage, home to about 150 children before the earthquake, survived the tremor with its building intact and all of its charges unharmed. It made national news last week when about half of those orphans — dubbed the "Haiti 80" — were adopted into the United States.

But when Cuthbertson found the orphanage it had not yet begun stealing headlines. When she learned it would accept material goods she sent out an email to the Roaring Fork Moms, an Internet forum with approximately 45 members.

"I knew our moms group had baby supplies, things that a mother would need," she said.

From there the message was picked up by a similar group of mothers in Basalt, forwarded to church mailing lists, posted on the social net-

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working site, Facebook, and spread by word of mouth. The next day, Cuthbertson's back porch began filling with donations. Twelve collection points were established around the valley and they began filling too.

"I couldn't even keep my phone charged this week, it was just ringing off the hook," she said.

She had tapped a need, given people a way to help when they didn't know how to do so. On Monday night, volunteers were telling her, "Thank you for giving us an opportunity to feel good about ourselves."

Donations ranged from powdered baby formula, infant Tylenol and children's vitamins to blankets, toothpaste and second-hand clothing. Fifteen pricey portable cribs were donated, and shoes – an especially sought-after item – were collected as well.

Local businesses chipped in. Dos Gringos, Eco-Goddess Edibles, Mi Casita, Peppino's, Uncle Pizza and White House Pizza donated

food to the 12-hour effort at the recreation center Monday evening. Four Seasons Property Management in Aspen donated a pickup truck, a driver, and a trailer; and John Maas with Koru Building donated a trailer as well. And the local chapter of the international group, Mothers Acting Up, paid for the gas for the drive to Colorado Springs and back.

The truckloads of donations were slated to roll off toward the Front Range before sunrise on Wednesday, Jan. 27, after The Sopris Sun's press deadline. From there they would be loaded onto chartered planes and flown to Haiti.

Cuthbertson herself was planning to drive one of the trucks, but on Monday night she was still trying to wrap her mind around how big the effort had become – and how quickly. She had originally set out just to fill the back of her Dodge Dakota pickup.

"That was my huge goal. I thought that was a big deal," she said.

And she was wishing she could have done more.

"I want to get on the plane and hand deliver it. I would go in a heartbeat," Cuthbertson said, and added that she's not alone. "I can tell you if these moms got on a plane and

went we would bring home a community of Haitian babies for sure."

"I don't know where the journey ends," she said on Monday. "It's been such an exciting week that I think it'll be a really sad drive home. It'll be a bittersweet ending."

## How to help

**God's Littlest Angels:** Financial donations can be sent to God's Littlest Angels, 2085 Crystal River Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80915. Or send them via the Internet at [glahaiti.org](http://glahaiti.org). The Web site also includes a list of goods needed by the orphanage in Haiti. For more information, contact Holli Bickel: [holl@glahaiti.org](mailto:holl@glahaiti.org).

**Methodist Church:** The Carbondale Community Methodist Church is asking for people to compile inexpensive care packages of specific personal hygiene items. For more information and guidelines on compiling a care package, call 963-4461. Drop them off at 385 S. Second Street.

**The food co-op:** On Friday, Feb. 5, The Carbondale Community Food Co-op will donate 20 percent of sales to the Aspen-based Mercy and Sharing Foundation, helping the children of Haiti.

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the groundwork and now all I need to do is make it happen on race day. I'm at the point in my career where it's do or die. I need to produce some great results or I'll be looking for a real job."

And make it happen he did. With a 25th place finish in the giant slalom at Beaver Creek on Dec. 6, 2009, and a 27th place giant slalom finish in Val d'Isere on Dec. 13, he earned the points he needed to be named as

one of the 12 men on the team.

Zamansky could not be reached before press deadline Tuesday evening. But on Jan. 20, when it was beginning to look like he would make the team, he posted the following on his blog at [jakezamansky.blogspot.com](http://jakezamansky.blogspot.com):

"The Olympic GS will be held on Feb. 21. This is ... something I've been working for my whole life. I'm going to go to Vancouver

and ski my ass off and win a medal!"

This season was McKennis' first on the World Cup circuit, but she placed steadily in event after event. Her strongest results include a 10th place finish in the downhill at Lake Louise, Canada, on Dec. 12, 2009, and a 22nd place finish in the Super-G at Val d'Isere, France, on Dec. 20.

For the men's team, two giant slaloms and a slalom race are set for Kranjska Gora,

Slovenia, before the team moves into a pre-Olympic camp in Park City, Utah. They will arrive in Vancouver Feb. 9 in time for the first downhill training run on Feb. 10.

Following a series of three World Cup speed races next weekend in St. Moritz, Switzerland, the women's team will train at their European base at Zell am See-Kaprun, Austria, until Feb. 5. They'll arrive in Vancouver on Feb. 9 as well.



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