

12 years ago, I answered the calling
Present Hope Ministry, Inc.

February 13, 2013, was the day I said goodbye to my family, my native country, and all the comforts of home as I knew it. I didn't know where God was leading or what He would have me do. I simply knew I had to obey, to go, no matter what the cost. I embarked on a journey with Jesus to serve Him, by serving the most vulnerable in Ouanaminthe, Haiti.

There were "sisters" and leaders from my home church who called me out, calling me to the alter before the church. They said "God will never protect you. You will no longer be under the umbrella of God's care if you leave your daughter behind. This is not your calling. God will not use you as you think." The words continued as others who have been used by God in mighty ways, began to try to BE God. Friends, know your Shepherd's voice personally. You must discern His voice from the crowd's. Yes, even those who mean well, who love God, who love you. Know, listen, obey, trust. Don't get me wrong. I didn't and don't have all the answers. I didn't know HOW or WHY He would call me away from MY young daughter to care for other children. I did know Him. I did know what He was asking of me. The ask became not quite so gentle as I lost peace the longer I stayed where I was. I give Him all the glory and honor for anything and everything I have been able to do here in Haiti in these 12 years. I hope and strive to point to Christ in all I do day in and day out. Less of me, more of Him. Let them, you, see HIM in me. I am just a gal from north Georgia who was burdened to move here full time, against the counsel of many. We have weathered the storms together, my Father and me, many storms. We have also rejoiced and celebrated many victories over these years.

I have seen and experienced God in personal, intimate ways over these years. Jehovah Jireh has provided for the Haitian people, for me, time and time again. Needs are brought to me daily. Through God's goodness and your giving, I have been able to respond to innumerable needs over these 12 years. I have overseen building houses for families in need. We have provided healthcare for children, widows, orphans, and many others. We have ministered in prisons, providing meals, water, the word and hope through Him through salvation. We provide biblical teaching and academic training for ages 3 and up, currently reaching 500 students and families with quality care and education. We have provided groceries and basic provisions for orphans and widows in their times of need. Each year through different campaigns, we provide shoes, schoolbooks and supplies, a wonderful Christmas gift, aside from the hope in our Saviour. We are grateful to provide clean drinking water to our students and nearby families. Hosting many visitors that have come over the years has brought me, the children, staff and community great joy! Each visitor brings a smile, a hug, hope and His love in tangible, beautiful ways. He has provided for me in my darkest hours here. We have hosted prayer meetings; evangelical movie nights followed by prayer and decisions to accept and follow Him. We have held Bible seminars, theology classes, worship services, alter calls, and ministered in countless ways. God has given us a beautiful infrastructure to educate and feed these children, to employ over 40 local Haitians; a place for me to call home as well as house four foster children who are with me full time now. Two of them are orphans, all four were displaced and a reminder of why I do what I do. Their resilience, the people of Haiti, is humbling. Their stories stay with me long after the

day's work is done. Not only has He given me what I need, but He has blessed me with desires of my heart! I have had time with family, friends, times of rest (maybe not enough) and diversion. He has provided a husband, a true helpmeet, who loves, protects, and brings me joy each day. Through child sponsors or ministry partners, I receive words of encouragement that truly motivate me to continue this path He has laid before me. He has used many of you to minister to me in quiet, gentle ways. This, in turn, allows me to continue to pour into others! It has been a very difficult, challenging, seemingly impossible mission over these 12 years.

The darkness that falls over Ouanaminthe, Haiti, at night is like none other. I have had personal moments just as dark as the Haitian nights. I have wondered if I am all alone. The needs are so great. My abilities to respond to them all are simply not sufficient. Why? How? Where? When? Does God see me? Does anyone truly know the suffering that surrounds me and envelops my thoughts and emotions? El Roi. He does see ME. He DOES see them! In the darkness, in the valleys and on the mountains, El Roi, El Shaddai sees. He provides. He uplifts, carries me through, and blesses me each day.

There are thousands of photos from the last twelve years, and from the six years of mission trips that led up to that pivotal decision and day on February 13, 2013. Each photo holds a little piece of the story - snapshots of moments that, together, paint a picture of overflowing activity, connection, and purpose. There have been countless hours of prayer, logistics, ministry work, putting out fires, benevolence, and HARD work. All of which have been a powerful reminder of God's faithfulness. So many goals and milestones have been reached over the years. None would have been possible without your selfless gifts and dedication to this mission, His mission. OUR mission together. Many of you have personally brought your expertise, skill, and vision to us here in Haiti. Your selfless service has been an incredible gift to me and to others. Thank you. Some have suggested I write a book. It would be too lengthy as each day seems it could fill a chapter of its own, filled with big milestones, quiet conversations, quiet prayers and those scream out-loud prayers, as well as unexpected moments of joy. Each season has also held moments of deep challenge - trips to the hospital with sick children, borders closed, the president assassinated leading to gangs controlling the nation, Voo-do threats to me, my staff. The tough stuff stretches you in ways you don't expect. God prevails. His will prevails. Each day is layered with stories, faces, and lessons. Each season is a season of doing, but also a season of being. BEING present, BEING stretched, and BEING reminded of what truly matters.

As I move forward into the next chapter, the next year or however long God sees fit to have me here in Haiti, I carry each moment and season with me. I am grateful for the journey, even in its exhaustion. Thank you for being part of this journey. I invite you to continue walking with us as we walk with Him. Walk with us by sponsoring a child, building additional classrooms, give for food for the un-sponsored children, sponsor a staff member, contribute to prison or street ministry. Pray. Pray! Send words of encouragement as you are led. Walk with us.

Remaining Under His wings, under His umbrella & in His care,
your missionary and friend,
Dedra