

# Aquaboxes of hope are just what we need ... we lost so much to the earthquake

Derby Telegraph readers have helped raise more than £200,000 to pay for water purification kits which have been sent to earthquake-ravaged Haiti. Reporter **Claire Duffin** (pictured) flew to the Caribbean country's capital to see first-hand how the Aquaboxes are saving lives.



**VITAL AID:** Vice-president of the camp Mona Marck with her son, Dominic. Below, the Aquaboxes arrive and are distributed. Pictures: Claire Duffin

AS the first Aquabox was unloaded, a Haitian woman in a crowd of hundreds threw her hands in the air and started singing and dancing with delight.

Others around her, strangers drawn together in desperate need, chattered excitedly as they watched the aid arriving at their camp.

Since the earthquake destroyed their homes and killed their friends and relatives, they have been living in tents and makeshift shelters on a small piece of wasteland in an area of Port-au-Prince called Grasier.

The camp is one of hundreds that have sprung up all over the capital in the wake of the earthquake in January, which killed 200,000 and left a million homeless.

Camps in Port-au-Prince have elected leaders. In each one, ramshackle tents are pitched cheek by jowl. The majority of people here have lost family as well as homes. There are many orphans.

Mona Marck is vice-president at one of the camps in Grasier.

"We have all lost everything," said Mona, who lives at the camp with her husband and one-year-old son, Dominic.

"There were so many lives lost - adults, infants and whole families.

"And people don't want to rebuild their homes if there will be another earthquake. There are also no jobs to earn money - we have nothing."

But there was some hope for the community when they were given 70 Aquaboxes - paid

for with the help of Derby Telegraph readers.

The boxes are being distributed in Haiti by international charity Humanity First.

A truck was loaded with the Aquaboxes at 7am and was driven to the camp, along roads strewn with pot holes and dusty cracks left by the quake.

By the time the truck arrived at the camp, there was already a large crowd gathering.

The boxes were unloaded and brought to the middle of the camp, where Mona had put up a table in a sheltered area with a rope around to act as a barrier, keeping back the crowds.

As the first box was unloaded, the middle-aged woman in the crowd broke into spontaneous song and dance.

After an earlier problem at another camp - when a near-riot was caused as the contents of boxes were handed out - the distribution this time was superbly efficient.

They were unpacked, and candles, matches, washing powder, plates, bowls, tools, toys, plastic sheets and clothes were laid out on the tables.

Families waited patiently until Mona read out their names and they were invited up to the table and given some items from inside the boxes.

Most importantly, each box, containing a tap and water purification kit, was then given out for three families to share.

This would mean they would have access to clean, safe drinking water. Previously, the families had to fetch water from a dirty stream, a lengthy



## Everyday items that mean so much to those who have nothing



EACH Aquabox contains a water purification kit and a bucket and a selection of the following: toothpaste; four toothbrushes; three soaps; a packet of cotton wool; bandages; fabric dressings; razors; sanitary pads; kitchen roll; hairbrush; comb; antiseptic cream; safety pins; two tea towels; a drinking mug; baby cup; Vaseline; one cooking pot; four knives; four forks; four spoons; one serving spoon; four mugs; two bowls; four plates; scissors; can opener; food bags; torch and batteries; sewing thread; needles; tape measure; candles; matches; doll; Frisbee; skipping rope; football; football pump; cards; dominos; tennis balls; modelling clay; colour pencils; paper; rubble sacks; ball of string; insulation tape; reading glasses; clothes line; pegs; hammer; packs of nails; pliers; folding knife; garden wire; screwdriver; screws; brick trowel; hand trowel; tarpaulin; saw; shopping bag and clothing for babies and children.

trek away from the camp.

"This is just what we need," said Mona, wiping the sweat from her forehead as she lifted another box onto the table. "It is just great."

By now, the crowd had swelled in number as people swarmed around the tables, watching with excitement as more boxes were unloaded.

"This tragedy has hit Haiti

and it will take a long time to recover. We need a lot of help like this," said Mona.

The distribution went on until nightfall, by which time all the aid had been given out.

And although Mona said it was a great help to the struggling families, she said she was now concerned about finding better shelters for people, particularly with the rainy season

just around the corner.

They currently live in tents and temporary shacks made of sticks, bound together and covered with plastic tarpaulin and bed sheets.

"The babies and infants will get ill if they have to sleep outside in the rain," said Mona, 32.

"And we just don't know how long we are going to have to live

like this.

"We have been told there will be another earthquake but we don't know when it will come.

"We need tents and plastic sheets to protect the families from the rain. It will start raining soon and we have no proper shelter.

"Diseases will be rife and the youngsters will suffer."

Dr Aslam Daud, chairman of

Humanity First, said the value of the Aquaboxes to the people of Haiti was immeasurable.

He said: "The contents of the Aquaboxes are excellent. The people of Haiti love receiving them.

"But I think Haiti will need a lot more help for a long time."

To donate to Aquabox, call us on Derby 253053 or e-mail [cduffin@derbytelegraph.co.uk](mailto:cduffin@derbytelegraph.co.uk).

You can send money to NatWest, account number 53575113, sort code 60-14-15, call 01629 825 178, or post a donation to Aquabox, PO Box 5398, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4ZP, cheques payable to Aquabox.

**TOMORROW: HOW MARITZA BATTLES TO RECOVER FROM SURGERY TO SAVE HER INJURED ARMS**



## Illness forces BNP opponent Ken to leave the pulpit

A POPULAR Derbyshire clergyman, who spoke out against the BNP, has retired at the age of 60 because of ill-health.

The Rev Ken Horleston was vicar at St Clement's Church, Horsley, St Mary's, Denby, and St Susanna's, Horsley Woodhouse. He opposed the BNP holding its Red, White and Blue Festival in Derbyshire.

In 2008, he told the Derby Telegraph: "The Bible calls on people to 'love thy neighbour' but the BNP's views are in violation of this. A person cannot be a practising Christian and vote for the BNP."



**VOICE:** The Rev Ken Horleston, who spoke out against the BNP.

Mr Horleston spearheaded a successful campaign to raise £170,000 to repair the roof at the Horsley church, which is also due to get new central heating and disabled access toilets.

David Harris, reader at St Clement's, said: "The church under Ken's leadership has raised a considerable amount towards this scheme.

"Ken can feel proud he leaves behind a church in good heart and mind and good repair that is looking to the future."

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

A family wait with their Aquabox and the donations from inside. Above, reporter Claire Duffin with volunteer doctor Abdul Momin Khalifa and a Humanity First volunteer.

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