

Aquabox aid: Orphans are so grateful as life-saving equipment reaches Haiti quake zone

Derby Telegraph readers have helped raise an amazing £200,000 to pay for water purification kits. Hundreds have now been flown out to earthquake-stricken Haiti. Reporter **Claire Duffin** was there when the life-saving Aquaboxes were handed out at an orphanage.



THIRTY children, sitting in rows at wooden desks, burst into song as the volunteers arrived at the orphanage with a truck full of aid.

The youngsters clapped along to the words, smiling and laughing.

The men in the village unloaded the Aquaboxes as an excited crowd gathered round. Within minutes, more than a hundred people were clamouring to get a glimpse of the much-needed aid.

The life-saving water purification kits, paid for with the help of Derby Telegraph readers, will be used to provide water for the children whose families were killed in the devastating earthquake.

The orphanage, which is also home to a community of about 200 people who now live in tents and makeshift shelters after their homes were destroyed.

The villagers, already desperately poor before the earthquake, are trying to rebuild their lives but now have even less than they had before.

The Aquaboxes were taken to the orphanage by volunteers from international charity Humanity First, which is distributing the vital aid on behalf of the Derbyshire charity.

They contain tools, cooking pots, washing powder and babies' bottles. But most importantly, inside each box are chlorine tablets and a carbon filter used to clean dirty water, making it safe to drink.

Dr Daud, chairman of Humanity First, then told one of the men to start fetching water

from the stream in a bucket, which he did.

It was poured into the Aquabox as the villagers looked on excitedly. A huge crowd had gathered, watching with interest the device which could save their lives.

The teacher collected up all the pens, pencils and children's toys from inside the

Previously, the villagers and orphans collected water from a nearby stream which Dr Rafael Pineda, a Humanity First volunteer, said could lead to potentially fatal stomach infections.

He said: "There is very little medical care in Haiti. They drink out of streams and rivers, anywhere they can get water.

"This can lead to gastroenteritis, an infection of the stomach and intestines, which can be nasty, especially in children.

"Symptoms include diarrhoea and vomiting which can make people dehydrate, which can be fatal. That is why the Aquaboxes are so vital."

At the village, each box was taken off the truck and the contents unpacked. Out came toothbrushes, toothpaste,

buckets, tools, cooking pots, string, candles, matches, plates, bowls, cups and children's clothes.

One little girl was handed a teddy bear from inside the box, which she gripped tightly.

"When you have so very little you are grateful of absolutely anything," said Dr Aslam Daud, as he helped to show people at the orphanage how to use the Aquabox to get clean, safe water to drink.

"I want you to set up five Aquaboxes in the school," he told the Haitian teacher.

"The priority must be water for the children at the school first, then women with babies."

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"People can't sleep, have headaches, stomach aches, diarrhoea – and often this is because of the trauma of the earthquake."



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Aquaboxes and said she was going to give them out as prizes to children who performed well at the school.

"These are very good, very nice for the children," she said.

Babies' bottles and clothes from inside the Aquabox were handed over to an expectant mother and the men rounded

up the tools, including saws, nails and hammers, to help them build more shelters.

There is very little food available to the people living in Sophie – only a few goats and donated rice. There is no medical care and only dirty water from the stream.

Despite this, when we visited, the whole village was dressed in their best clothes – the little girls with ribbons in their hair and wearing dresses pulled from the rubble of their homes.

The men were in suits and ties even though it was 80 degrees outside.

Humanity First, which specialises in sending doctors and nurses to disaster zones and runs a clinic in Haiti, is now hoping to donate some money to the orphanage and school so they can build more classrooms. Currently, children are taught in a crumbling building which is divided into two classrooms. Humanity

First arrived, the 30 children sitting at the desks inside the crumbling building began to sing.

Dr Daud said: "This is a very nice village – the people are friendly and happy despite what has happened to them. "I think the Aquaboxes will make a huge difference now that we have shown them how to use them properly to get clean water."

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First wants to build two new rooms and pay the wages of four new teachers. The charity also wants to extend the hours the children are taught.

Dr Daud said: "I think it will cost about \$5,000 and we would hope to have it completed in about six months. "At the moment, the children are not getting the education they need. We want to change that."

To donate to Aquabox, call us on Derby 253053 or e-mail 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, with cheques payable to Aquabox.



Duo 'planned to rob passenger on train'

POLICE are hunting two men in connection with the possession of an offensive weapon on board a train between Burton and Birmingham.

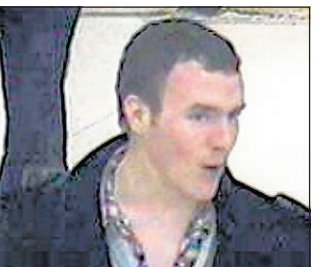
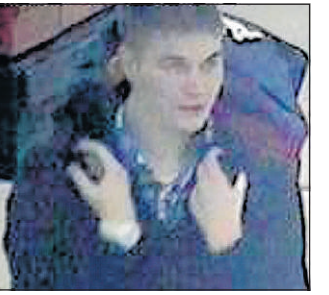
A passenger on the service between Nottingham and Birmingham New Street on Friday, January 29, feared two men who boarded at Burton were going to rob him of his iPod. The man told police he heard the two men discussing plans to steal his iPod and noticed that one of the men was holding a flick knife.

Fearing for his safety, the victim locked himself in a toilet on the train and reported the incident to police when he got off at Birmingham New Street at around 10pm.

British Transport Police has released CCTV images of two men they want to talk to in connection with the incident.

Both are described as white, in their early 20s, of proportionate build, about 5ft 9in and wearing track suits.

Both men were carrying holdalls and one was also carrying a snooker cue holder.



SUSPECTS: Do you know the identity of these men?

Anyone who recognises either man, or who knows their whereabouts, is being asked to contact British Transport Police on 0800 40 50 40, quoting incident number 610 of 29/01/2010.

lasting memories...

In my view, Lasting Tribute is very worthwhile. In our frantic world, it's good to see a site which pauses to reflect the loss of various talented individuals and provides space for others to pay tribute to them. I think it's a lovely concept.

Andy Brett

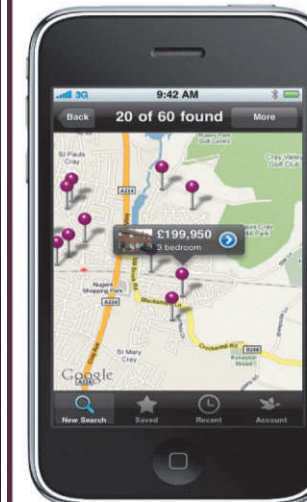
lasting tribute Celebrating life together **Derby Telegraph** www.thisisderbyshire.co.uk/lastingtribute

WARM WELCOME:

Schoolchildren and villagers in Sophie welcome the arrival of aid from Derby Telegraph readers. Volunteers from charity Humanity First help to unpack the

Aquaboxes, which include essential items such as tools, cooking utensils, and toiletries, and show villagers how to use the boxes and filters to obtain a clean water supply.

Pictures: Claire Duffin



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