

Health kits to Haiti program a success

Shortly after the earthquake in Haiti, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), a non-profit global humanitarian aid organization of the United Methodist Church requested donations of health kits for distribution in the earthquake-devastated country.

Grace United Methodist Church in Hopkinton answered that call and extended the invitation to participate to the local community.

There was no shortage of support. Health kits and financial donations came from a variety of sources, including the Hopkinton Senior Center, Modernista (a Boston corporation), local Brownie troops, CCD classes, birthday parties (children opted for kits rather than gifts), the United Way of Tri County (Framingham, MA) and many anonymous donors, both corporate and individual.

The Hopkinton Senior Center also graciously offered to serve as a secondary drop off loca-

tion. Leigh Dry, the pastor at Grace UMC said, "It was heartwarming to see how the community responded."

The kits, valued at \$12 apiece, contain items such as towels, bandages, and soap. Grace UMC used financial donations to cover the additional \$2 per kit required for toothpaste and shipping and handling.

UMCOR officials state there's no way they will receive more health kits than can be put to good use.

On January 21, UMCOR shipped 23,000 kits to Haiti, completely emptying out one of their two warehouses.

Three more containers of kits were scheduled to be shipped to Haiti in late February, most likely to areas outside of Port-au-Prince.

"Packing and verifying the health kits made me feel connected to the people in Haiti in a way that simply writing a check would not have," said Dawn Puliafico, a member at Grace

United Methodist who volunteered to verify contents of the donated kits.

More than 350 health kits were collected, verified, packed into boxes and sent on to UMCOR's Louisiana warehouse.

One hundred percent of donations to UMCOR is spent on their programs.

Local congregations of the United Methodist Church assure this through an annual offering that underwrites UMCOR's general administrative expenses.

Anyone who would like to donate to this annual offering, may send a check to Grace UMC, 61 Wood Street, Hopkinton, by March 14 and include "One Great Hour of Sharing" on the memo line.

Grace UMC extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in the health kit collection.

For more information on UMCOR, visit www.umcor.org.