

LSF Report

EMST Petionville Ste. Jacques Church February 21-25 2011

Port au Prince airport was an experience. Absolute chaos. I learned soccer balls and a little tip (we can't call them bribes) can move things through customs quickly. Our driver "big" (a big man with a big presence) met us at the airport and made sure we got all our boxes on the truck and ran interference for us through the gauntlet of helpful Haitian drivers waiting to take our money. I loved every minute

Our second day in Haiti we went to the largest tent city with over 70,000 people. Two new Haitian friends walked me around and explained the living situation. the tent city used to be a golf course. I thought this was bad until we went to "the ravine" with a medical team. Words are inadequate. I had so much fun with the kids in "the ravine". They enjoyed teaching me Creole and would laugh at my mistakes. They loved having their pictures taken. Then seeing themselves on the screen would howl with laughter. Everyone was friendly and wants to hold your hand. We had to cross a running cesspool. As each person crossed a huge cheer went up from the large Haitian audience. A few people fell in and they thought this hilarious (Carol kept her sense of humor). Having so much fun with kids made me totally forget where they live.

Monday I spent most of the day driving around port au prince trying to get to Holy Trinity's two locations. we went to the original sight of the school next to the cathedral. the cathedral is a ruin and the entire school was flattened killing 200 students. They managed to get the rubble cleared out and now have temporary classrooms set up. School is running again. I love these Haitian kids. They all want to hug you and hold your hand as you walk. The Taubl's gave a great concert for the kids. I finally arrived at the workshop 5:30PM

Tuesday. This morning we cleaned and organized the shop and put the work benches together. We unpacked all the goodies and tried to find places for everything. After another fabulous Haitian lunch we worked on fitting sound posts. It is really exhausting trying to be understood across a language barrier. Alland is my hero/translator. What a blessing he is. Now that I've learned how to post pictures I'll try to show some tomorrow

Today we fit a cello bridge on one of the nicer cellos in Haiti. Many of the tools here are dull (they don't have a grinder, or adequate sharpening stones) so we had to spend some time sharpening. I brought a hand grinder and they went to work. The electricity randomly goes out so we have to resort to hand tools. They love the band saw I brought, but we can only use it when the juice is flowing. We spent most of the morning working on a cello bridge and making templates. I love these guys. They are clever and resourceful because they can't just run down to the home depot. Their enjoyment of the work and each other is refreshing. They are sponges for information. I wish I could get them all the tools they need, but that will take time. The school only allows them one meal a day (I get two) but they don't complain. Kathy packed me A bunch of extra food and I'm happy to share with them. I told them it was from madam Wilke and they said in English "we love your wife". I showed them a picture and they said "she's beautiful. You have a good woman". I totally agree. In the afternoon Ben visited with Carol Taubl. They needed a bunch of violins set up for workshops at some orphanages. The men

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went to work and had most of them set up in 30 min. Ben looked good and was looking forward to the beach on Thursday. For dinner the men went out and got milk and cornflakes. I don't know if they like them or they thought I did. There is a young missionary upstairs who let me use her phone. It was a real treat to talk to Kathy. I came down with a cold so I'm going to bed

I got an early morning wake up call from my friend Frank Williams one of the world vision team working on sustainability projects. He came to drop off an instrument and see how the work is going. He is very interested in the school and what they're doing with music and vocational training. He was one of the main driving forces getting me down here. His wife and children were here during the earthquake and survived, although his wife was injured. The whole family traveled here with us and it was a very emotional homecoming for them. I woke feeling awful. My voice was gone and I was coughing constantly. When Alland woke he was sick as well. After a nap in the afternoon we both felt a little better. At least I don't have malaria, cholera, or diarrhea. It could always be worse! I spent a good part of the morning talking with Janet Anthony. She is a cello professor from Lawrence university who spends a lot of time in Haiti teaching and organizing festivals. She was my main contact while planning this training. Without her help it would have been chaos. We discussed some long Term ideas for working in Haiti. I showed the men how I make and fit a cello sound post. The rest of the morning we worked on odd projects that needed to get done. The afternoon was spent taking an inventory of all the tools and parts that were brought down. All extras were divided up so the men could take them to their home shops. I am amazed at what they can do with very little. You could see the longing in their eyes when we talked about the tools they needed. It leaves you with a nagging sadness when you realize "if I'd only brought one more of this or two more of that".

Friday we woke up feeling a little better, although Alland didn't look so good. One of the cello teachers has a great old cello and the worst junk bow I've ever seen. I found a nice bow lying around the shop and restored it for her. I showed the men how To camber a bow and How i do a rehair. We took the top off a violin and fixed a long crack. After this Tchoupy and Alland had to leave. I went over rehairing with Ruby and then he had leave. After lunch I packed up my stuff and am waiting to be picked up by our team.

I tried To use creole today and was rewarded with many compliments, and encouragement. It's nice to know my brain hasn't completely shut down. I know the names of most tools and parts. A few more weeks and I could probably get around ok. While waiting to be picked up I played dominoes with Michelet. After a few rounds I finally picked up most of the rules. Dominoes is a national pastime here.