Final Action Plan Progress Report

Helping Haiti: A report on my ongoing Haiti Shoe Drive and fundraising efforts

Sarah Heberlig
Leadership and Global Health
March 26, 2010
What does my action plan address?

- Raise awareness for and fundraise for the towns of Milo and Cap-Haitien in Haiti

- Revolutionize my community’s perception – effortlessly donating a pair of shoes could prevent a Haitian child from becoming infected with Soil-Transmitted Helminthes (STH), intestinal worms that are found in seventy-five percent of school children in Haiti

- Encourage involvement—Donating change (such as one or two dollars), is enough to provide a single Haitian enough food for one day, as sixty percent of the population lives on one dollar a day, and eighty percent on two dollars a day
Milo, Haiti

A snapshot of living conditions in Milo, Haiti. This is the town that my shoe drive is benefitting.
Strategies I have Used

- **Sharing**: Having been to Haiti I have been able to share my experiences with my peers. Taking a personal approach to my cause has made my peers more responsive and interested in my cause.

- **Networking**: Highly involved in community service and in the community service club at my school, I presented my plan to like-minded students to generate a firm foundation of support.

- **Presence**: In order to advocate for my shoe drive, I made announcements, printed flyers, and sent emails. I also set up a table at school events to which both students and parents attended in order to bolster involvement and awareness.

- **Persuasion**: WIFM—What’s In It For Me? I appealed to what my community wanted to get what I wanted. Because my school has a dress code, I initiated a $5 jeans day with all profits benefitting Haiti.
Steps I have taken
In order to gain administrative support for my plan, I presented my plan to two faculty members that I traveled to Haiti with.

From here, I aimed to establish a “core support system.” I did this by appealing to my peers who had traveled to Haiti with me.

Having established a tight-knit support group, I announced my plan to the larger student body through emails, flyers, and announcements.
I established goals for my plan. Because I intended to return to Haiti this March, I had a time limit to finish all fundraisers and shoe drives by March.

I notified the student body of my plan and my time constraints.

I then made boxes with signs advertising my shoe drive and placed them throughout the campus in accessible locations.
3rd Step: Appeal To The Entire Community

- Having established my shoe drive within the school community, I took advantage of my school’s various functions to garner parental support

- I organized and ran a Haiti Table at Parent’s Weekend and raised over $300 selling Haitian paintings and hand-made stationary

- Because my school has a dress code, I initiated a $5 Jeans Day in benefit of Haiti. I used a common desire—casual dress—to raise funds
Because of the devastating earthquake, my mission trip to Haiti was postponed three months, to June.

I made it clear to my community that my fundraising and shoe drive was still in effect, and that at this time aid was needed more than ever.

My persistence paid off and I received an increase in shoe donations. Because of my shoe drive, over 200 pounds of shoes were collected and shipped to Haiti in February.

Because of the earthquake, I was able to persuade my community service director to ship my shoes to Haiti in early March, despite not being able to personally deliver them.
I have been working closely with two faculty members that traveled to Haiti with me last year, as well as the community service club, of which I am a member.

I have undertaken all of the busy work—such as making announcements, printing flyers, organizing and supervising a Haiti table, and finding boxes for shoes.

I have relied on my peers to spread the word and encourage their friends in all grades to donate shoes—I have accepted all help and have found that talking about my personal experiences in Haiti is very effective in generating support for my cause.

I have worked with the community service club in organizing a jeans day.

My collaboration with the two faculty members has been invaluable, as they have encouraged faculty to donate shoes as well.

In shipping the shoes to Haiti, I was faced with a dilemma, as the trip was cancelled and I could not personally deliver the shoes. I worked with the community service coordinator and we were able to arrange a shipping route to Haiti right after the earthquake.

Collaborating with the community service coordinator was very helpful, as she ensured Haiti received the 200 pounds of collected shoes in their greatest need.
Orphanage

Me with a baby that I met at the orphanage
Personal Effects

- While in Haiti last March, working in the hospitals, orphanages, clinics, disability centers, and organizing a feeding program for street children, not only allowed me to closely interact with the Haitian people, but it allowed me to observe the Haitian culture—a culture that I quickly fell in love with. I realized that I did not simply want to be a fleeting companion that helped the Haitians seven days out of each year—but additionally I wanted to be an active advocate for their cause; someone who could do more by educating others about Haiti throughout the entire year. I have accomplished this goal with the successful completion of my action plan.

- Because of my efforts, Haiti holds a special place in my heart and I will be returning in June 2010.

- My action plan has given me a taste of fighting for a cause that is meaningful to me. Because I have enjoyed being able to help Haiti throughout the year, I am considering a career with an organization like Doctors Without Borders.

- My action plan has had the greatest effect on me because I have found something that I love and would like to pursue as a career—I have found a purpose in life.

- I value learning for the opportunity to make a difference in society—I did this with my Leadership and Global Health course, and would now like to do this with my college education.
Richie

Richie, an orphan and street boy that I met in Milo.
Effects on Others

- My shoe drive and fundraising efforts have encouraged my peers to be more open-minded and optimistic.

- Before my shoe drive, some of my peers were under the impression that helping Haiti was such a tremendous task that should be left to professional organizations.

- However, I believe that I have made my peers realize that helping Haiti does not have to be an overwhelming task—help is needed in all forms, big and small.
A Haitian “Tap Tap”

“The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.”
My Key to Motivation

- My main key to motivation was the fact that I had volunteered in Haiti and had fallen in love with the Haitian people and culture.

- Having witnessed the poverty and distress firsthand, I understood the need for something as minor as shoes.

- Each time that I would get discouraged with my plan I would think about the children that I met in Haiti running around barefoot.

- When I think of the devastation there, I do not generalize it; I have faces and memories of children that I met which make it all too real.

- The recent earthquake in Haiti was also a motivating factor.

- I noticed after the earthquake my peers were more willing to help and donate.

- Although I believe that it was unfortunate that the world began to pay attention to Haiti after such a catastrophic event, this event was also advantageous in generating support and aid.

- The earthquake was definitely a motivating factor that both expedited and intensified my efforts.

- The earthquake also made me realize how grateful I was to have started my efforts in September—ongoing aid is what Haiti needs. I would like to contribute to an organization that will provide this ongoing aid.
Nutrition Center

A smiling child at the nutrition center. The children love to have their pictures taken so that they can see what they look like on the digital camera screens.
The Effects of the Symposium

- The symposium was extremely helpful in recharging my motivation.

- Overwhelmed with school and college applications, it was a godsend to be back in an environment in which there were so many likeminded individuals that were trying to make a difference in society.

- Being able to discuss my plan with my peers helped me “test run” ideas and determine if they would work in my school community.

- The symposium was also extremely helpful because I was able to meet with my professor once again.

- While at Summer@Brown, I bonded with my professor because she was a fellow Haiti volunteer.

- Having dedicated her life to helping Haiti through Partners in Health, I discussed my progress and ideas with her. She shared her experiences with me and gave me personalized advice that inspired me further.
“Piti, piti, wazofenichli”

“Little by little the bird builds its nest.”-A Haitian Proverb