

## HHART NEWSLETTER #1

October 23, 2022

**HHART** is short for ***Hispaniola Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Team***. HHART missions are planned, organized, supported and led by Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Wasaga Beach (Rotary District 7010), Canada. The Team's mission is to improve the communities, and lives of disadvantaged and impoverished people (primarily of Haitian heritage) living near Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic by providing medical, dental and community development services. HHART 23 will be the 23<sup>rd</sup> deployment by HHART personnel since the Team formed in 2011.

### HHART LEADERSHIP



HHART Chief of Operations is **Steve Wallace** (photo left). Steve is responsible for planning this mission and for guiding the team safely through this service-trip-of-a-lifetime. Steve has organized and led all previous HHART missions and is very familiar with the people and villages we will be serving. His initial experience as a mission planner and team leader was obtained through 24 years of service in the Canadian Air Force. Professionally, Steve is a commercial airline pilot. He is also a Rotarian, a past-president of the Rotary Club of Wasaga Beach and also a past chairman of Rotary International District 7010's Service Projects Committee. You can contact Steve by phone at home at (705) 429-9870, by cell at (705) 444-4012, or by email at [Steve@HHART.org](mailto:Steve@HHART.org).

### CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE

HHART 23 will conduct operations between January 15 and Feb 4, 2023 from Sosua-by-the-Sea Boutique Resort in Sosua, Dominican Republic. As always, we are looking to attract service-minded persons who are good-spirited, humble and flexible. One does NOT need to be a Rotarian to join the team. Persons interested in joining HHART 23 should make haste to contact HHART Chief of Operations, Rotarian Steve Wallace, at [steve@HHART.org](mailto:steve@HHART.org) to discuss their participation.

Please note that it is highly desirable to have a robust dental services component within the HHART 23 team. Therefore, please use your network to help us recruit dentists, dental assistants, dental hygienists and dental technicians to the mission.

### HHART 23 CONDITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

Field operations will occur each day of the week. However, Sunday operations will be limited to half days. Team members will have the freedom to select the days on which they conduct service operations, which means they can also determine their days off. The theme is "max flex" this mission.

Team members must arrange their own flights into and out of Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. Arrivals and departures must occur on or between January 14 and February 5, 2023. West Jet and Air Transat are offering many reasonably priced flights with pretty good frequency during the travel window. Participants are free to select travel dates that suit their personal circumstances best. **IMPORTANT!!!** Please do not book your flights until your participation has been confirmed by HHART Chief of Operations, Steve Wallace.

Team members must reside at Sosua-By-The-Sea Boutique Resort (SBTS) in Sosua during their time on HHART 23. Although there is great flexibility in regards to arrival and departure dates at the Puerto Plata airport, a minimum 7-night stay at SBTS is mandatory. Reservations must be made through HHART Chief of Operations, Steve Wallace. Participants' stay at SBTS will be all-inclusive – which means cost of the room, meals, open bar, daily housekeeping, use of all resort facilities (pool and beach), taxes and a gratuity (distributed amongst all hired staff at SBTS) are included in HHART members' daily resort fee. Team members will pay their total resort fees directly to SBTS in US dollars, IN CASH at the end of their stay. Daily resort fees for HHART 2023 are fixed at \$69 USD for double or triple accommodation arrangements, and \$84 USD for single (private) accommodation. Payment can be made by credit card in lieu of cash – Increase the prices above by 3.5% if you plan to pay by credit card.

HHART 23 is self-funded. Therefore, every team member must contribute \$350 to the HHART operations fund. This fund will be used to purchase materials and pay indigenous workers required by the team to complete its projects. The fund will also pay team transportation expenses while in the Dominican Republic. The contribution can be paid in one lump sum or in installments. An initial payment of \$100 is due when your registration is approved. The balance is due on January 15, 2023. The preferred payment method is by INTERAC e-Transfer sent to [steve@HHART.org](mailto:steve@HHART.org). Make the e-Transfer security question: "Where HHART stays". Make the answer to the security question: **sosua** (all lowercase letters). If necessary, send cheques (payable to "HHART") to 145 Fernbrook Drive, Wasaga Beach, ON, L9Z 1G9. We are sorry that we cannot accept payment via credit card. And, since HHART is NOT a charitable organization, tax receipts CANNOT be issued for contributions to the HHART operations fund.

### **ABOUT OUR FRIENDS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND YOUR HHART SERVICE EXPERIENCE**

The Team will undertake projects to relieve poverty, promote education, improve health and wellness, and develop public facilities to make communities a better and safer place to live. Who are the people we serve? Why are they impoverished? How is it that they are disadvantaged? These are important questions that require a straight answer before one can fully appreciate the importance of HHART missions and your participation as a team member.



During most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the export of cane sugar was very important to the economy of the Dominican Republic (aka DR). Tending to the vast fields of cane grown all around the country required more workers than the domestic workforce could supply. Workers from neighbouring Haiti were, therefore, recruited to work in the fields in return for a small but adequate wage. Migrant workers were housed in sugar cane production company barracks adjacent to the cane fields. The companies held the identification documents (passports, etc.) of all workers during their term of employment. Before the end of the millennium the sugar beet surpassed sugar cane as the most economical way to produce raw sugar. Thus, most of the sugar cane companies rapidly went bankrupt and the cane fields were abandoned. Sadly, the workers were unable to recover

their identification papers. With no papers to prove their citizenship and a seemingly perpetual series of political, economic and natural disasters making a return to Haiti impossible or undesirable, the migrant workers decided to remain in the DR. However, these Haitians were simple, uneducated people. They did not know that they and their children would have no rights to government services such as health care and education.

With no ability or desire to return to Haiti and with no access to government services in the DR, the migrant cane workers and their now numerous offspring do whatever is necessary to survive. They are shunned as cast-offs and illegal immigrants by the current government and most citizens of the Dominican Republic. Today, more than 10,000 people representing four generations of people of Haitian descent are settled in the Puerto Plata and Sosua regions of the Dominican Republic. They are for all intents and purposes stateless. They are uneducated, unskilled and unable to find work (legally or otherwise) in a weakened Dominican economy. Several humanitarian aid groups have cared for these people in recent years. These NGOs are doing great work! They minister to the peoples' needs and raise awareness to their plight. Some NGO's have built planned communities to which many of the poor have relocated. Each of the planned communities has a school and most a medical clinic. Some vocational training is also occurring. However, many of our friends remain in the original bateyes and are living in squalid conditions and are of poor health. Children do not attend public school until they are 8 years old and many are malnourished.



As a member of HHART you will meet and witness the living conditions of these poor, disadvantaged people. You will visit and serve in the small bateyes (former sugar cane worker towns) that have grown from the original barracks into small shantytowns. Most have limited or no running water, no public school and no washroom facilities except for the river or a vacant former cane field nearby. You will observe cases of significant poverty and despair. You will also visit one of the planned communities to see how those lucky enough to be relocated are trying their best to get healthy and improve their lot in life. During our mission you will help feed the children; tend to the sick and elderly; improve decrepit homes in the bateyes; teach new vocational skills; and encourage and help facilitate community development. Most importantly, you will spend time with the people to acknowledge them as persons, to learn about

their culture, worries and dreams, and to provide them hope for a better future.

### **SERVICE PROJECTS**

The list that follows is a summary of the service activities planned. More project detail will be provided in future newsletters. Obviously, since our Teams are in large part self-funded, the actual number and type of projects completed will be determined by how much money we raise for the operations fund. Each project is intended to address one or more of the following areas of focus: Food and Water, Health and Wellness, Education and Literacy, Economic Enterprise and Employment, and Safety.

- ◆ Install or rehabilitate water, sanitation or hygiene systems in local schools and medical facilities
- ◆ Facilitate specialist medical appointments, and advanced medical tests and treatment for the sick
- ◆ Conduct dental clinic operations and door-to-door medical visits
- ◆ Upgrade electrical systems to mitigate fire and shock hazards in homes
- ◆ Provide eyeglasses to persons in need
- ◆ Apply oral fluoride treatments to the children
- ◆ Distribute school supplies and colouring books
- ◆ Rehabilitate metal roofing panels in private homes in the bateyes
- ◆ Promote happiness through play with the children
- ◆ Provide health services to inhabitants of Cristo Transforma men's shelter
- ◆ Provide personal skills training and assistance to the poor
- ◆ Promote literacy by facilitating children's reading and story-time sessions



### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

The following milestones will help you understand the planning process and what lies ahead. Note that on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month something is due from team members and on the 1<sup>st</sup> more information is dispensed via a newsletter.

- 1 Dec Release of Newsletter #2 (topics: roster update; accommodations info; travel documents; infectious diseases & immunizations; schedule & daily routines; projects review; medical & dental operations review; medical & travel insurance; fundraising update; about Sosua-by-the-Sea resort)
- 1 Jan Release of Newsletter #3 (topics: emergency contact info; registration of travel abroad; airport check-in; dress code; what and how to pack; personal baggage; R & R in the DR; resort house rules, and how to survive day 1 in the Dominican Republic)
- 15 Jan Balance of \$350 operations fund donation is due

FYI, we will NOT collect nor transport items to the Dominican Republic for distribution in the villages during these missions as in previous missions. This simplifies mission preparations and checked baggage plans.

### **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

A passport is a requirement for all HHART members. Your passport must not expire before August 2023. Passport applications can be obtained online at [www.ppt.gc.ca](http://www.ppt.gc.ca), the post office or at your local MP's office. If you need to obtain a passport, please apply right away because the process can be lengthy. Passport info is required in advance of departure for airline ticketing.

