

A Sense of Relief Dollars

by vcmorris - Thursday, January 21, 2010

<http://thethinpinkline.com/2010/01/21/a-sense-of-relief-dollars/>

A nearly 5.9 *aftershock* in Haiti yesterday, nine days after the poorest nation in the western hemisphere was hit by a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake that the United Nations calls one of the deadliest on record. This disaster hit a country already barely functional and poses an infinitely tougher relief challenge because there is no infrastructure.

I searched for a sense - a measureable sense - of how America's businesses are responding to this global need called Haiti Relief. I came across this Wall Street Journal/BLOG. *BigLaw props for "stepping up to the plate and providing aid when major disasters strike." It's true: when it comes to disaster help — and charitable giving more generally — big law firms time and time again rise to the occasion. And in regard to the Haiti earthquake, it's no different.* <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2010/01/20/biglaw-stepping-up-on-haiti-aid/>. Big law firms are practicing aggregate donating. The list is growing. The effort's worthy. And that deserves mentioning.

The American Red Cross says that cash is best right now if you want to help Haiti. Donations of other items will be better known in the days and weeks to come. Right now distributing available water and food to survivors is what's needed – and finally is happening. Collect and store whatever you and your family, organization, or community might want to gather to send to Haiti. Relief workers there are putting together planned distributions throughout the island nation because dropping supplies from the air or distributing without security in place could cause riots and add to an already desperately fragile civil order. *"Trying to jump start the economy in Haiti, the United Nations Development Programme hired 400 Haitians, paying them cash to help deliver supplies. By the end of the week, the organization hopes to pay 700 more people to remove debris, repair roads and rehabilitate other infrastructure".* <http://www.miamiherald.com/1060/story/1435672.html>

In the midst of any calamity – there are always opportunists. Haiti is no different. In fact, Haiti could be the poster child for being a prime target of scammers. Three million people – a third of the country's population – need help. 50% of Haiti's population is under the age of 18. Those facts, those pictures remind us of Katrina and the Tsunami devastation and tug at our collective humanity. The world is responding with cash donations of unprecedented magnitude. Scammers are having a feeding frenzy.

Don't let the frenzy frighten you out of giving money. There are absolutely good and secure organizations and ways of doing this. One is through the advances in technology that allow instant giving via cell phone. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the American Red Cross *confirm* more than \$3.6 million has been raised through *text-giving* which automatically adds \$10 to your cell phone bill.

Text the word "HAITI" and send to 90999.

Less than 20 seconds later you'll receive Free Msg: *To confirm your \$10 donation to Red Cross Haiti*

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relief efforts reply with YES. Reply HELP for help or visit redcross.org. Text the word "YES" reply and less than 20 seconds later you'll receive Free Msg: Thanks! \$10 charged t your phone bill for Red Cross Haiti relief. Reply ELP for help or visit redcross.org Reply STOP to cancel.

If each of you reading this would consider reaching for your mobile phone right now – together we can make a difference – easily, yet nonetheless heartfelt. In my mind, what matters is that each of us chooses to do something financially – *now*. And if for whatever reason, you choose not to give to Haiti relief – give something to someone in need – but do it *now*. That allows us all to be included in a common moment of responding to our humanity through collective economic power. _

Here's to your health and sharing wealth.

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