The Next Step in Helping Haitian Employees
Associate’s Journey Provides Insight for Effective Relief Strategy

By Kristen Burnie Young
Director of Communications

Ocean Reef Club is moving forward with a plan for providing relief directly to the families of its Haitian employees, thanks in part to the efforts of one courageous Associate.

On Wednesday, Jan. 20, Ocean Reef Chief Steward Max Sanon boarded a plane owned and piloted by member Rick Link, bound for the Dominican Republic. With him were four members of the non-profit organization Hands On Disaster Response, a small supply of food and a list of names and addresses of his co-workers’ families.

After landing, Max and the Hands On crew drove to the Dominican-Haitian border, where they spent the night before crossing into Haiti as part of a United Nations convoy — the only safe way to travel into the devastated country on account of an outbreak of looting.

For the ten days that followed, Max made it his personal mission to reach as many Associate family members as possible, connecting those in Haiti with loved ones in Florida and gathering critical information that would help Ocean Reef leaders determine the best method of distributing aid.

Max said the journey to his native country brought an onslaught of emotions.

"It was sad, but it was joyful," he said of his arrival in Port Au Prince. "It's hard to see the conditions they were living in. People were living outside, using sheets to set up camping tents.

See **HAITI**, page 2

Photos by Max Sanon
Family members of Ocean Reef Associate Elise Bruno attempt repairs on their home. The two were forced to stop their work due to potentially unsafe conditions inside the building.
Haiti

Continued from page 1

Some were setting up tents in the middle of the streets, literally. Sometimes they would even set up barricades in the middle of the roads so these people in their tents wouldn't be run over. The magnitude of the destruction is so astronomical, it's almost as if you're watching a horror movie."

Even amid the chaos, Max managed to travel throughout Port Au Prince and the surrounding areas, successfully locating the family members of more than 50 Ocean Reef Associates. Their reaction upon meeting Max was one of surprise and gratitude.

"They were shocked," he said. "They couldn't believe that a company that their family members are working for outside of Haiti cared enough to send somebody to look after them. It was surreal for them. It was almost unbelievable."

Although the satellite phone he had packed was not working, Max was able to connect with many Associates with their loved ones using his Ocean Reef issued cellular phone.

"I put quite a few of them on the phone," he said. "For some of them, it was the first time that they were able to speak with their loved ones back here since the earthquake." When he asked those in need how Ocean Reef could help, most requested food, clothing and tents. He often saw firsthand, however, that without a well developed strategy, distributing aid could be nearly impossible.

"It's too much pushing and shoving," Max said of the lines at many relief distribution centers. "The strong men get most of it. Small kids and women are not able to get anything."

Although difficult to hear, such observations have helped Ocean Reef Club to develop a plan for distributing relief items directly to employee families in need.

**Administrating Relief**

To date, more than $165,000 in member donations, including a $10,000 match from the Ocean Reef Foundation, has been raised.

On Tuesday, Feb. 2, Max met with Club President Paul Astbury, Anglers Club Manager Chris Everhart and several members of the Club's senior management team to finalize a plan for using these funds to provide direct relief to Associates families. The plan was announced on the morning of Wednesday, Feb. 3.

Together with the Great Commission Alliance (GCA), a non-profit organization based in Weston, Fla., Ocean Reef will use member donations to purchase containers full of food and supplies, which GCA will ship to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, beginning tomorrow, Feb. 6. From there, containers will be trucked to a warehouse about two hours outside of Port Au Prince, where they will be broken down into family kits containing rice, beans, cornmeal, canned meats, canned fruits and oil. The kits will be delivered to Max's large, gated home, which remains in good condition on the outskirts of Port Au Prince. Max and a team of three additional Associates, who are slated to travel to Haiti within the next week, will then deliver the kits directly to the family members of employees at Ocean Reef, Anglers Club, Card Sound Golf Club and Valley Crest.

Rev. Brian Kelso, The Reef's primary contact at GCA, has stressed that Ocean Reef can also fill a container with addi-
Haiti
Continued from page 2

national items – such as generators, blankets, clothing and other supplies - that will be delivered to Max’s house. The estimated cost of filling and shipping each container totals about $15,000.

In addition to these relief efforts, Ocean Reef members and Associates continue to donate food, water and supplies to the Human Resources Office, which accepts such donations from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Monday - Friday.

Ocean Reef Club has also given a $500 tax free donation directly to each employee affected by the quake.

A Long Road Ahead
Of Ocean Reef’s 150 Haitian Associates, many have lost family members and most have lost their homes. Although Max is optimistic about the Reef’s ability to help, he also knows there is a lot of work to be done before conditions in Haiti improve.

“What struck me the most was the passion, the willingness on the part of the members to reach out, not only to Haitian relief, but to the specific people who work here,” he said. “The Haitian community is very, very appreciative of their collaborative efforts and we can’t thank them enough. Also, we’re going to need their help because this is a very long process. We’re not taking anything they’re doing for granted. They’re doing this out of good faith.”

Ocean Reef Club and the Ocean Reef Foundation have set a goal of reaching $300,000 in donations for the OR Haiti Relief Fund.

Those who wish to donate through the Foundation can do so through their Donor Advised Accounts or by writing a check to the Ocean Reef Foundation, with “Haiti Relief” in the memo.

Donations can be dropped off at the Cultural Center Office or mailed to 200 Anchor Drive, Key Largo, FL 33037.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to Foundation Administrator Yurianna Mikolay at 305-4707.

health & tennis club
ocean reef

NEW AT HEALTH & TENNIS
DID YOU KNOW?

Health & Tennis Club is offering to all Ocean Reef Club Social members a NEW membership category. This membership will give you full unlimited use of all HTC facilities for the times you are on the Reef.