



The Hope Community Project Story

In the words of our Founder & Board President, John Keane.

“Hope Community Project began after the devastating earthquake in 2010. I was given the opportunity to visit Haiti with a Kansas City based organization focused on orphan care. I left for Haiti open to the possibility of finding a place to focus the endeavors and resources of the charitable foundations connected with my company, The Keane Insurance Group. While sad and difficult, I loved my time in Haiti with the Global Orphan Project. Having seen the need, I signed up to partner Keane Charitable Group with Global Orphan and one of their Haitian pastors. Haiti Orphan Project was born, and for the next several years, Haiti Orphan Project led teams in and out of Haiti, built an orphanage, a school, and a clean water system. Talks began to unfold between the pastor and our leadership about the medical needs in the community and we began to bring medical teams several times a year. Eventually, it seemed clear that to truly meet these needs, a more permanent clinic was necessary, and in order to do that well, we needed to put people on the ground to help develop it.

Luke and Julie Brouwer moved to Haiti with their three children in 2014 to oversee the development of a clinic for the community. Julie, who had already been helping to lead trips and had helped to develop our mobile clinic mission, and Luke were ready for a new challenge, so they agreed to go. The first 6 months in Haiti were a time of discouragement and frustration. Our staff saw some of the typical problems in terms of accountability and financial reporting, which you would expect to arise when people from a first-world country begin working with native Haitians. But there were also signs of more concerning and sinister problems, and our staff began to dig.

We became aware of several issues that plague orphanages across Haiti. First, we realized that out of 25 children living in the orphanage, we could only establish with any confidence that two were in fact orphans. We realized that many of the children had homes nearby and even began to wonder if some of them had been recruited to come live at the orphanage. Secondly, we began to see that there was inconsistent supervision, and as such, there were abusive relationships between some of the children. By month seven or eight, it became clear that we could not in good conscience continue our partnership with Global and the Haitian pastor. Our attempts to expose these problems and promote solutions were continually being shut down by the pastor in charge.

Having our team on the ground had shed light on too many issues, not just with our own project, but with the orphanage situation across the nation. We learned that in many orphanages in Haiti the same issues we had encountered, both shocking and appalling, were in fact the norm. Knowing this truth placed us at a crossroad.

Over the next several months of meetings and planning, talking with the leadership team of our own organization and meetings with Global, we decided to hand over the reins of the orphanage entirely back to Global and to take a new direction. While we were committed to making sure the children in the orphanage were taken care of, we knew we could do better for the children and families of Haiti by focusing on the root cause of the problem.

We had come to see that Haiti's orphanages were in fact doing more to tear families apart than solve an orphan problem. Orphanages were actually creating orphans that did not otherwise exist.

There was no orphan crisis in Haiti, rather there was an economic crisis; many families could not afford to both feed and care for their children as well as pay for them to go to school, and orphanages had become the answer to this problem. We at Haiti Orphan Project and the church in the west were, with the best of intentions, part of the problem. We were the ones funding and building orphanages to take care of these kids all over Haiti. There had to be a better solution, and we wanted to be a part of it. Thus, Hope Community Project and its vision of orphan prevention through strengthening families and communities was born.

We have now established our threefold approach to strengthening families with the intention of stabilizing them to avoid the temptation to turn children over to institutional care. Through education provided by our scholarship program,

medical care provided by our Haitian staffed clinic, and job creation provided by our co-op program, we are seeing Haitian families strengthened and transformed.”