



## Personal ties to Haiti inspires young area woman to organize fundraiser

Posted Feb 12, 2010  
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EMC Events - Mallory Shorten has seen Haiti up close. Last summer, she spent three months there volunteering her time with Mission of Hope.

So, when the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere was shaken to its core by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake Jan. 12, she knew she had to do something to try and help. But what, the Kinburn native wondered?

What she has decided to do is organize a fundraiser with all of the proceeds going to Mission of Hope - an organization which touches thousands of lives daily with its Church of Hope, School of Hope, the Hope House Orphanage, Feed A Child program and through medical teams in the Hospital of Hope.

She has organized an art fundraiser, which will take place Thursday, Feb. 25 at The Swan in Carp, located at 108 Falldown Lane from 6-9 p.m.

"Artists from Arnprior to Dunrobin, Fitzroy to Carp and in between have donated their works to be auctioned off. One hundred per cent of the proceeds raised will be going to Mission of Hope," Shorten tells the EMC.

As of press deadline, participating artists include Mette Baker - Dunrobin, Heather Moore - Carp, Catherine Gutsche - Kinburn, Margaret Ferraro - Kinburn, Charlie Gillan - Pakenham, Janice Johnston - Fitzroy Harbour, Tara Pocket - Arnprior, Kevin Dodds - Arnprior, Sue Ukkola - Carp, Marg Lamendeau - Arnprior, Gerald Smith - Stittsville, Amy St Denis - Fitzroy Harbour and Jodi Janoska - Fitzroy Harbour. There will be different mediums displayed by artists, including paintings, prints, woodworking and ceramics. While not an artist herself, this 21-year-old enjoys photography and said her father is a photographer and his creativity inspired her.

"I just thought this was the perfect opportunity for the artists to show their work and most importantly, raise some funds for Haiti," Shorten stated.

Reports indicate that more than 150,000 people were killed and buried later in mass graves as a result of the earthquake. Port-Au-Prince was one of the hardest areas struck as the Presidential palace, Parliament and many other important structures were destroyed, along with countless homes and businesses.

A Gerontology major at Laurentian University, Shorten found her way to Haiti last summer because she "felt like doing different stuff" for a placement, instead of working in a traditional seniors setting.

For the first month of her stay, she worked in construction where she ran a Bobcat (construction equipment) and helped build an orphanage. The next two months were spent on the medical side.

"We would stock up on medicine and supplies and drive into the mountains," Shorten recalled, adding it was such a good feeling to be able to help someone in need.

"I felt very fortunate to be there, to tell you the truth," she admitted. "I'm just grateful to have had the opportunity to be there when I was."

She said Haitians are "inviting, generous people" who, despite not having much, would give you the shirt off their back if you needed it.

The graduate of West Carleton Secondary School said after the quake hit Haiti, she thought about

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*Submitted*

Melanie Shorten is seen with local children during her three-month stay in Haiti during the summer of 2009. She was there as part of Mission of Hope. In light of the damage caused by the Jan. 12 earthquake, the Kinburn native is organizing a fundraiser for Feb. 25 in Carp.

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doing something to help but didn't know what.

"It was just of a passing thought and I mentioned it to my dad. He said 'go for it,'" she recalled. "The support that has come through has popped out of every corner. There is the same sense of community there that is here."

She said she is hopeful members of the West Carleton community and beyond will come out Feb. 25 and support this worthy cause.

"It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do something," Shorten said, recalling what Mission of Hope president and director Pastor Brad Johnson Mission of Hope told her when she left Haiti last summer.