

Humanitarian Link aids people in poorer countries

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The name of the organization: Humanitarian Link. The primary objective: to help families serve those in need in a personal setting.

"We want to create a place where people can come with resources, time, talents and money, and we can help them find somewhere to serve," said BYU graduate Todd Manwaring of Orem, speaking of the new non-profit organization he and his wife founded.

"Our hope is to become a resource, to provide internships in foreign countries and to give people the opportunity to bless others and themselves. It is a life-changing experience to help another person one on one. As members we don't do this enough," Todd Manwaring said.

Manwaring's wife, Kristine, who is also a BYU graduate, agreed with her husband that it is the relationship between the person giving the service and the receiver that often means the most.

She recently went to Mali, Africa, with the Ouelessebougou-Utah Alliance along with BYU professor Warner Woodworth and others to observe the serious poverty situation there.

In Mali, 20 percent of the babies die within one year of birth and 40 percent of those remaining never reach adolescence.

There was a lot of illness and suffering but also much laughter and music. Mrs. Manwaring said she began to see her own culture in a different light.

What will Humanitarian Link do to help the people in these devastatingly poor countries? Provide opportunities at long-term employment and find new ways to create jobs. How will the organization do this? By creating Microcredit banks and offering small loans to individuals there in the country that could not otherwise provide a living for their families.

Humanitarian Link is currently involved in helping several different projects. One is in the planning for July of this year, to give much-needed economic aid to people in Kenya, Africa.

Joseph and Celia Grenny, of Orem, and their five children are involved in the project. They are on the Board of Directors for Humanitarian Link and are a major support of Enterprise Mentors, another non-profit organization.

The Grenny family became involved because Celia's parents are serving an LDS mission to Kenya

and often write home about the 70 percent unemployment and its terrible effects on the society there.

Woodworth and Manwaring have planned a data-gathering trip to Kenya in February to begin the project.

Mr. Grenny said, "My field is training and organizational development, and I want to use these skills to do what is known as a large-group problem solving plan. That means to get all the community together and create a relationship where they begin to find solutions to their problems."

Humanitarian Link is also offering help to another project headed by Woodworth designed specifically to aid those communities hit recently by Hurricane Mitch.

Woodworth now teaches two sections of a graduate class here at BYU where students will raise money to set up these Micro-enterprise banks. The banks will give loans as small as an equivalent of \$20 to help local citizens. Students will also raise funds to pay their expenses for trips this summer in either Honduras, Nicaragua or El Salvador.

Because Humanitarian Link is a non-profit organization, all donations are tax-deductible.

Mrs. Manwaring expressed her feelings about her experiences helping others thus far, saying, "We are all children of our Heavenly Father and we all have gifts that we need to come in contact with each other to share."