

Humanitarian service helps and heals

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A new non-profit organization is creating a place where people can come with their resources, time, talents and money to find a place to serve.

Todd Manwaring, a BYU graduate from Orem, along with his wife, Kristine, also a BYU graduate, is the co-founder of the organization, Humanitarian Link.

The primary objective of Humanitarian Link is to help families serve those in need in a personal setting.

"Our hope is to become a resource, to provide internships in foreign countries, 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 (of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), we don't do this enough," Todd said.

Kristine agreed with her husband, who said that it is the relationship between the person giving the service and the receiver that often serves the most.

Kristine 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.

Although there was a lot of illness and suffering, much laughter and music was also observed. Kristine 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 who could not otherwise provide a living for their families.

Humanitarian Link is currently involved in helping several different projects. One, planned for July, is to give much-needed economic aid to people in Kenya, Africa. Involved in this project are Joseph and Celia Grenny and their five children, of Orem. 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 said they became involved because Celia's parents are serving a mission for The

LDS Church in Kenya and often write home about the 70 percent unemployment rate and its terrible effects on the society there.

A data-gathering trip is planned by Woodworth and Manwaring to Kenya in February to begin the project. Joseph 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."

Another project offered by Humanitarian Link, headed by Woodworth, is designed specifically to aid those communities hit recently by Hurricane Mitch. Woodworth is currently teaching two sections of a graduate class here at BYU in which students will fund raise money to set up Micro-enterprise banks. The banks will give loans as small as the equivalent of \$20 to help local citizens.

Students will also raise funds to help pay for their travel and stay this summer in either Honduras, Nicaragua or El Salvador.

As Humanitarian Link is a non-profit organization, all donations are tax-deductible. Kristine Manwaring expressed her feelings about her experiences helping others thus far.

"We are all children of our Heavenly Father and we all have gifts which we need to come in contact with each other in order to share," she said.