

FreddyLink Looking for people to go to Haiti in March 2016

By Lori Gallagher

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Trip offers an opportunity to see what World Vision does to help others around the world

Have you ever considered travelling to Haiti, to see what really happens on a World Vision project?

FreddyLink is putting together a team to go to Haiti in March 2016 and is looking for people who are interested in taking part to get in touch with them now to learn more about this opportunity.

"It's the chance to actually see the World Vision community development programs in action," says Bernie Zearth, the FreddyLink project co-ordinator.

FreddyLink is a local organization that links Frederictonians with children and families in need in villages in the area development programs in the central plateau region of Haiti through World Vision. The goal is to give the children of Haiti a sense of hope for the future, to help families break the cycle of poverty, and to help these communities become self-sufficient.

Zearth says just about anybody who is interested is welcome to be part of this upcoming trip.



Janet Johnson from World Vision gets to know some of the locals during a visit to a school In Haiti during a previous FreddyLink trip.

"We would welcome people from businesses; people who sponsor children, whether they're sponsoring children in Haiti or any part of the world and are curious how World Vision works; people who wonder if you make a donation to World Vision, where does your money go," he says. "It's a great chance to go and see exactly what World Vision does."

He believes that it's important for people to travel internationally, to get a firsthand look at what's happening in other part of the world, and to see what poverty really looks like.

"The message I think is really important is that it's not hopeless;" he says. "We can make a change, and we can make a tangible, practical change."

What World Vision does is they take whole communities from poverty to self-sufficiency, says Zearth, and you can be a part of that.

The 2016 trip will be his fifth visit to Haiti with FreddyLink.

"I've seen a lot of differences. I've seen differences in the country as a whole, I've seen differences in these communities and I get to see differences in the actual individual people," he says. "We see the community developing, becoming more stable. We see the youth, the skills they are developing. They're healthy and articulate, their leadership skills are evolving. It's a wonderful thing to see!"



Matt and Emma Hansen meet their sponsored child during a visit to Haiti with FreddyLink and World Vision in March 2015.

FreddyLink and the work its doing is close to Zearth's heart.

"A number of years ago, my wife and I had a discussion about when we get to the end of our life and we look back, what do we want to be able to say that we've accomplished," he says. "We've done some other important things, but for me this is one of the things I'll look back on and say, "I made a difference in Haiti!"

Thanks to FreddyLink, more than 450 children are sponsored in Haiti through World Vision by people in Fredericton. "For me to be a part of that? That's what life's all about," he says.

To learn more about what's planned for the trip to Haiti in 2016, visit FreddyLink.com or call Zearth at (506) 261-4414.

"On the website, there is a big button for people who are interested. Click the button and it will take you to the

information. There is something called an expression of interest and in there it has guidelines about the cost, it's about \$2,500, it's a one-week trip, and things about your passport and vaccinations," he says.

During the trip, there will be an opportunity to visit one or more area development program, to see the various projects underway, and to meet with members of the community. Individuals who sponsor children in the program can in most cases meet with their sponsored children during the visit.

Though the trip isn't taking place until March 2016, the planning is underway now so people need to let organizers know if they are interested. Though the deadline for this is listed as Saturday, Nov. 21, Zearth says there is a little bit of leeway there. Due to logistical considerations, only a limited number of individuals can participate in any FreddyLink trip.