

## Hometown Hair helping children of Haiti

*By Gillian Christie*

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Oromocto's Hometown Hair was recently presented with a special plaque of recognition for the owner and staff's dedication to World Vision Canada.

Karen Slaunwhite, owner of Hometown Hair, said her decision to sponsor a child through World Vision was simple.

"I believe you give back," she said. "When you have more than you need yourself, you share that. You just do it."

Looking at the photo of the child she sponsors, she said, "how can you look at that and not [want to help]? I've raised three children and am expecting my first grandchild. Children - that's who we do everything for."

To be able to help one child in one of the most impoverished nations in the world is a privilege, she said.

### **Haiti:** Sponsors see how they help

"People can come in and they can make their donation - it's a community effort," he said. "We're becoming a member of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce to try, again, to connect with more businesses."

Zebarth made his first trip with Freddylink to Haiti in January, 2010. They landed there the day of the devastating earthquake.

"We had already planned to do this," Zebarth said. "We had gone down to do our first visit to Haiti and we arrived the day of the earthquake so we couldn't do anything. That was the message that this is what I should be doing so I've been doing it ever since."

Bernie Zebarth is the project co-ordinator for Freddylink, a Fredericton-based program linking caring individuals and businesses with children and families in need in the villages in the Cobocol Area Development Program in Haiti through World Vision. This program allows the sponsors to have a better look at and idea of how their sponsor dollars are being spent.

"Most of the children are sponsored through individuals," Zebarth said. "We have a few companies [on board]. In the next year, we're going to be focusing on that effort."

Hometown Hair is the first Fredericton-area business that has placed a World Vision donation box on the checkout counter and hopefully, Zebarth said, others will soon follow suit.

At that time, four children were sponsored through Freddylink's connection with World Vision. A year later, when they could get back to Haiti and make their first official visit again, they had 50 children sponsored.

"We had a big celebration and all the children were there," Zebarth said. "What we had done then was to anyone who sponsored, we gave them an envelope and they filled it with gifts we brought all the gifts down and gave them to the children."

Today, there are 250 children who receive sponsorships through Freddylink.

"Now, we'll be going back down in February but I don't think we can bring all



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT:** Morose Evenel, with World Vision Haiti, and Bernie Zebarth, Freddylink's project co-ordinator, recently presented Hometown Hair owner Karen Slaunwhite with a plaque of appreciation for her participation, as a business owner, in the Freddylink World Vision program.

those envelopes," Zebarth said. "We're really excited about that."

He said to be able to see first-hand the good work that is going on through World Vision is exciting, encouraging and comforting.

"I'm so impressed with the program," Zebarth said. "World Vision Haiti, they're just wonderful people. It's so impressive, the work they do."

Zebarth said on top of seeing how individual sponsored children are benefiting from this program, they also get to see how other World Vision programs are working.

"For example, with the gift catalogue, we got to see people who received something," Zebarth said. "And what I didn't

realize is it's actually the community who decides who gets the goat. It's all community-driven. They form a committee and they make a community decision. Everything is based on a community involvement. They come up with their plan, they decide what their needs are and they make it happen."

"People want to give and they want to know that they're making a difference. They want to know that their money is well spent and they want to see a lasting change," Zebarth said. "Well, I can say yes - I've seen it."

Slaunwhite says this makes her feel even better about her decision to sponsor a child.

She said seeing the ads on television are one thing - we all have the option to change the channel and forget about it - but when you're shown how people, other human beings, are reaping the benefits of something you're doing to help, it's a great boost.

Morose Evenel, who is with World Vision Haiti, visited Hometown Hair last Saturday to make the special plaque presentation to Slaunwhite. He is personally very grateful for the donation of funds and the support.

"It's working," he said. "It's very important to connect Canadian people with Haitian people. We're creating hope. It's people like Zearth and each one of the Canadian people who give to the program who make a big difference - a difference in our culture, our people, education, especially education."

"Together - from far, we can be - we can make a difference in my country," Evenel said to Slaunwhite. "And we both appreciate what you're doing."