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Tzu Chi reminds public that suffering is not over in Haiti

PHILIPSBURG--The four volunteers of Tzu Chi Foundation St. Maarten who visited Haiti recently as part of a relief mission to victims of the January 12 earthquake that devastated the country shared their experience in aiding the 3,000 to 5,000 destitute people.

Tzu Chi Foundation Commissioner Rolex Cheung, Gromyko Wilson, Antoine Bonhomme and Peter De Zela joined Tzu Chi volunteers from the US and Canada in the distribution of basic essentials to the victims who had made Sylvio Cator Football Stadium in Port-au-Prince their home.

Of his experience in Haiti, Cheung said it had been an eye-opener and a realisation of the paradise St. Maarten was in comparison to the devastation in Haiti. "The devastation has rocked the whole country and although you see it on TV, once you are there it's a whole different experience meeting the victims," he noted.

Cheung said the presence of the UN troops at first had made him feel threatened and afraid, but he had soon discovered that the Haitians were loving people and not to be feared despite their desperation.

He noted from interaction with the Haitian people the feeling was there that the people were ready and strong to build back the country. "With the help of the Tzu Chi volunteers, the Haitian people learnt it is

about love and respect and not just the distribution efforts," said Cheung.

Wilson, a freelance photographer who was approached by Tzu Chi Foundation to make the mission, said witnessing the devastation had been sad and painful, especially seeing that the country had already been poverty-ridden.

"In 53 seconds, the entire Netherlands Antilles population was wiped out in Haiti," Wilson said, comparing the two nations' populations, adding that more than 200,000 people had died in 53 seconds on that day in January.

Wilson said that when he arrived in Haiti, tears had come to his eyes when he first things he saw were tents and shacks made from sheets and curtains lining the airport road in Port-au-Prince. "What came to mind was that if it rained they would be soaked," said Wilson.

Moreover, he said, in 10 days the victims had become like family, calling the volunteers by their names. Wilson was assigned to take photos of operations in the makeshift medical centres. He said certain instances had been shocking, in particular witnessing a mother bringing in her dehydrated baby for assistance.

Wilson said the Haitian government badly needed to step up to the plate to clear the rubble, enhance the nation's hygiene and rebuild the country. "Haiti-



From left: Tzu Chi Foundation St. Maarten volunteers Peter De Zela, Antoine Bonhomme, Gromyko Wilson, Foundation Commissioner Rolex Cheung and an emotional Sandra Cheung during Sunday's tea party, where the volunteers described their experiences during the relief mission to Haiti they made in late March.

tians have to rebuild Haiti," he said.

Volunteer Antoine Bonhomme, originally of Haiti, shared Wilson's sentiments, saying, "We Haitians we must rebuild this country." He said despite the willingness of all Haitians to rebuild their home, decision-making was left in the hands of the Haitian government.

Bonhomme noted concern for the Haitian people, as the rainy season was causing additional turmoil. "With the rainy season now in Haiti, tents and tarpaulins cannot hold off the water, so they are being washed out. It is a heartbreaking situation and I encourage more help for the nation," he said.

De Zela said the volunteers' mission should be noted as ground-breaking, considering they had represented St. Maarten in Haiti.

He said they had been able to accomplish the mission through a team effort and help from other visiting volunteers and the Haitian people themselves.

He pointed out the destruction in Haiti, where children's wards, laboratories, etc., had been set

up outdoors and the refugees staying in the stadium had been evicted recently. "Now additional refugees have no place to stay," that is another problem," said De Zela.

He noted that no reconstruction work had been observed throughout their

stay in Haiti. "They want the tools and materials. They want to start building and cleaning, but there is no money and it seems many have conveniently forgotten about the tragedy there," De Zela noted.

Sandra Cheung of Tzu Chi Foundation St. Maarten said US \$22,400 had been collected since the devastation, through the 350 donation boxes the foundation had placed at various establishments on the island. The foundation distributed the donation boxes days after the news of the earthquake.

She said that while the public was of the opinion that the tragedy was over in Haiti, it was not. She noted that Tzu Chi had a solid rebuilding plan through which it intended to build a "Love Village" to cater to 3,000 to 5,000 families.

Porto Cupecoy to offer real estate promotion

CUPECOY--To celebrate a much anticipated spring and the end of high season on the beautiful island of St. Maarten, Porto Cupecoy announces an end of season real estate sale event unlike any other. From April 15 through May 15, the 184-residence luxury seaside village will offer home buyers savings of up to US \$125,000 or free HOA fees for two years on select residences.

Porto Cupecoy is enjoying unprecedented sales success, with phases one to four now 75 per cent sold.

Homeowners are already moving into the waterfront community and enjoying their new homes. In addition to their residences, Porto Cupecoy homeowners enjoy a wide range of on-site amenities such as tennis courts, swimming pools, high-end shopping, several dining options, con-

spierge access and "white glove" marina services.

Porto Cupecoy is developed by Orient Express Hotels Ltd. The architectural inspiration for the property is a Mediterranean seaside village such as Portofino, and the community is similarly anchored around a marina, the most exclusive and upscale on the island, which is capable of accommodating both mega yachts and pleasure craft.



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DAILY GAMES		
	PICK 3	PICK 4
MIDDAY	DRAW # 8042	DRAW # 7913
PRIZE: 1	9-5-2	7-2-6-5
2	1-5-8	5-4-3-6
3	9-5-2	5-3-6-6
SUNSET	DRAW # 8043	DRAW # 7914
PRIZE: 1	9-3-1	0-8-6-2
2	4-3-9	2-1-5-5
3	6-7-1	5-8-2-1
EVENING	DRAW # 8044	DRAW # 7915
PRIZE: 1	5-5-8	9-1-4-6
2	1-7-8	9-6-1-1
3	7-0-7	3-6-1-5



DRAW # 525

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06 18

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01 24

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