

GROUPS SEEK FUNDING FOR HAITI RELIEF

Eugeneans can do their part to help victims of the recent earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, at a fundraiser at Pizza Research Institute on Saturday, Jan. 23. Eugene's Haitian Sustainable Development Foundation (HSDF) has been working to help Haitian communities since founder and president Michael Schapiro returned from his Peace Corps work in Haiti in 2001.

Schapiro says in one way the recent earthquake is "almost like weird blessing in disguise" in that the disaster "is finally getting Haiti the help that it has needed."

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and critics of U.S. foreign policy have questioned why the government has spent billions on "nation building" in the Middle East but not on a country less than 700 miles from Florida. Haiti's 7.0 earthquake is currently estimated to have killed 70,000 people, and many thousands more are missing. By contrast a 7.1 quake in California in 1989 killed 63 people. One factor in the disparity in deaths, experts say, is Haiti's poverty and weak infrastructure.

Schapiro says the local based HSDF as a sustainable development organization has been working with Haitian community groups on projects like education, libraries, biodiesel and permaculture. Now the group is working with their contacts in Haiti to provide on the ground relief to areas of Haiti that have not received help from larger NGOs. After the quake HSDF will work on infrastructure, rebuilding and technical assistance and training in Haitian communities.

One of the group's board members, Amber Munger is in Haiti right now, and keeping them apprised of developments. "We're gathering and sharing information and coordinating with on the ground response teams," Schapiro says. "A lot of things change every minute," he says. The group is working to provide water, food, medical supplies and fuel, he says.

One of HSDF's volunteers, Alicia Swaringen, is focusing her efforts on Saturday's fundraiser to distract her from worrying about Sthainder, the 4-year-old boy she has been in the process of adopting from Haiti through Eugene-based Holt International.

She says the paperwork is almost complete, and she had planned to bring her adopted son home to Eugene in May. She needs one signature, a passport and a visa, but she says now she doesn't know if the Haitian officials working on the paperwork are still alive or if the buildings are still standing, though Holt International has copies of all the paperwork.

Swaringen says she knows that Sthainder is safe. Holt's Fontana Village, where the 21 children in the process of being adopted are housed, 30 miles outside Port-au-Prince, is relatively unscathed, though according to a press release from Holt at least three staff members were killed.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told CNN she was "personally directing that we do everything we can to try to find and identify those children who are already adoptable ... and to try to expedite all the paperwork." Swaringen says Holt's adoption process is extremely thorough, "Any family that is adopting through Holt has jumped through all the hoops before the Haitian government even sees the application."

"I think the kids should be expedited," she says, "and free up the beds for other children."

She says she was inspired to adopt from Haiti after meeting and talking to Schapiro about the country.

Schapiro and other members of the HSDF will be at the fundraiser on Jan. 23 to answer questions. He hopes that board member Kathy McCallister will come down from Seattle with her husband Bidex Desruisseau, who was in Haiti and survived the quake in a building where everyone else was killed. McCallister is hoping to bring her husband home from Haiti as soon as possible, but Schapiro says communication with the island is still sporadic.

For those who have been worried about various scams that have arisen around the recent Haitian disaster, Schapiro says he and others will be available to answer questions about where the money is going. He says he hopes this will also lead to ongoing fundraising for sustainable projects in Haiti.

The fundraiser, Ayiti! Benefit for Haiti, starts at 5:30 pm Saturday, and will have a silent auction, music by The Beat Crunchers and Won Tan Nara and an information table. PRI is donating the space and a percentage of the proceeds from food sales. The event is free from 5:30-9:30 pm. At 9:30 when the music starts, tickets are \$10 - \$1000, sliding scale. For more information, go to www.sustainablehaiti.org or call (541) 915-5541. See more Haiti events and websites on next page. — *Camilla Mortensen*



news Briefs



LYLLIAN BREITENSTEIN

NUTRIA KILLS NECESSARY?

EWEB's eradication program for nutria is still raising hackles among Eugeneans concerned not only about the affect of the lethal trapping on the water-living rodents, but upon the possible damage to native species as well as people and pets.

According to Lyllian Breitenstein who first drew attention to the lethal traps at Walterville pond, "There is no way to ensure that the only thing that is caught in these traps are nutria."

She says not only are the traps "inhumane and cruel," but she is troubled by the fact that they are indiscriminate in what they catch and she is "concerned about people, especially kids, as well as pets and wildlife including otter, fox, bobcat, deer,

coot, geese and other wildlife who frequent the pond."

Joe Harwood, external communications coordinator for EWEB, says the nutria eradication, which has been through archery as well as lethal and live trapping, is necessary because the utility was ordered by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to repair damage done by the rodents and prevent future damage after an inspection noted burrowing tunnels in the banks of the power canals.

Rodent burrows were blamed for the 2008 failure of an irrigation canal in Fernley, Nev., which flooded 600 homes. Harwood says water enters into the burrows and tunnels and weakens the earthen walls. There has been speculation that nutria burrows contributed to the weakening of the levees that failed around New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Harwood says, "I can't emphasize enough how much we struggled with this idea." He says rather than close off the popular dogwalking spot along Walterville Pond and the Leaburg canal, EWEB chose to let it remain open for public use, and "post the heck" out of the area with signs warning of the lethal traps and asking that dogs be kept on leash.

The traps are in the Leaburg canal, behind blackberry vines and brambles. Breaks in the thorny vines are posted with signs and red tape. Breitenstein says, "Maybe adults can read the signs, but children and other animals can't." She adds, "The signs are only in English. The traps are lethal. You would think they should be in Spanish as well."

The non-brushy side of Leaburg canal, across from the traps, is not lined with traps or signed, and Breitenstein says many people play fetch with their dogs in that area. Harwood says owners would have to let their dogs swim through fast moving water in cold January weather to

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

DEBORAH SADOWSKY

Growing up on Long Island, N.Y., Deborah Sadowsky couldn't relate to suburban life. As soon as she finished a degree in English at the University of Buffalo, she headed west to San Francisco. "I took a painting class at the Art Institute," she says. "It was an 'aha' for me. It felt right in a deep way." She moved to Eugene in 1973, took art classes at LCC, then started an independent-study master's program in art therapy at the UO. "I got training at a Pratt Institute summer program in New Hampshire and did an internship here," says Sadowsky, who finished her degree in 1978, then worked as an art therapist in Albany, N.Y., and at a number of psychiatric hospitals in the San Francisco Bay Area before returning to Eugene in 1992. She developed and ran a program for at-risk youth at the Cottage Grove Counseling Clinic, then moved to Options Counseling in Eugene, where she was trained in chronic pain work. For the past decade she's been a counselor in the Johnson Unit at Sacred Heart Hospital. A member of the Pain Society of Oregon, she received a grant in 2006 to develop an art therapy program for chronic pain. "It's a way for people to express what they can't talk about, to explore their experience," she says. "It's intense work, but really rewarding."

