

Mitchellville ministry reaches needy people across seas

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by Brooke N. Garner
 Staff Writer

Mitchellville resident Bishop Dr. Judy Fisher started the Mercy Outreach Ministry in 1991 after a trip to Haiti in 1987 changed her life.

Fisher was invited to visit Haiti to teach an orphanage staff about A.I.D.S. Her graphic pictures and explicit dialogue landed her several speaking engagements on their local television stations.

“When I went to that place my life was turned upside down. I couldn’t believe my eyes and I became angry. How can we allow a country 600 miles off of our shore be in this condition?” Fisher, 65, said. “I never thought I would experience something like that. When I came home I said ‘God, if you would allow me to do something for you in that country I will never ask you for anything again.’”

Fisher and her husband the Rev. Edward G. Fisher sold their house in Silver Spring before moving to Mitchellville in 1993. The couple has cut back on several of their leisure items to be able to send money and useful items to Haiti. Judy Fisher said that it has been “the most rewarding and the most frustrating experience.”

The Fishers have put out a second mortgage on their home and have managed to invest more than \$100,000 in their ministry. To raise money for the ministry, the couple also rents space in their church building Full Gospel Church of the Lord’s Missions International, Inc located in the District.

“I live for Haiti. There’s nothing like being able to give back and knowing God is going to bless you for what you’ve done,” Fisher said. “The Lord has blessed me with all these degrees and I owe it to him and myself to give something back to my people.”

Fisher was not content to just send food and money overseas. She is firm believer in helping people help themselves so on a follow-up trip she asked the people of Haiti how else she could help.

One component of the ministry is a garden project started in 1991 that was designed to encourage self-sufficiency. The project started with four gardens but has grown to 67 gardens on the island nation with more than 1,693 acres under cultivation.

One of the problems in Haiti is the lack of electricity Fisher said. To combat this problem her ministry has shipped a solar energy powered oven so Haitians can cook large amounts of food at one time.

Recently a plea was made over the Lake Arbor General Community listserv by M.O.M. member Andre Fraser asking residents to donate laptops to be sent to Haiti. Fraser helped to design the first M.O.M. web site.

“Helping others has always been instilled in me by my own mom. Dr. Fisher’s energy and dedication to helping others is infectious,” Fraser said.

“My wife and I have been long time supporters of M.O.M. We believe in helping others and we believe in Dr Fisher’s vision.”

The Frasers joined M.O.M. close to ten years ago. Fraser, a Lake Arbor resident, asked his community to assist Fisher in her vision by donating lap top computers.

“With lap tops, they have batteries that can be charged by generators. There is not enough energy to run big computers all the time,” she said. “Lap tops are no longer a luxury. They are a necessity when you don’t have access to plentiful electricity.”

Fisher has also provided educational training to several residents of Haiti in the fields of computer, technology and

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water sanitation.

“This ministry has succeeded on faith and faith alone,” Bishop Fisher said. “Nobody is on payroll in my organization. Everyone gives and gives and we depend on the Lord to give back to us.”

For more information on the Mercy Outreach Ministry visit www.mercyoutreachministry.org or www.fishersworld.com/mom.

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