

## Helping Haiti – Highlight of San Diego relief efforts

Posted by [Sarah Alaoui](#) on Monday, February 1, 2010 · [Leave a Comment](#)

A 7.0 magnitude earthquake that shook impoverished Haiti on January 12 took an estimated 250,000 people's lives. Its aftermath left even more individuals stricken with disease, starvation and lack of adequate or no medical care—threatening to push the death toll even higher. The crisis, however, did not go unnoticed in San Diego.



Photo from DVIDSHUB via Flickr

People of all ages and from various organizations joined together as a community and took the initiative to plan events and pool their resources together in a multitude of ways to help the country overcome its devastation. Restaurants hosted events and donated portions of the proceeds to the cause while popular clubs and lounges gave the cover charges they raised to various charities working in Haiti.

The philanthropy was not lost at the school level where students from various campuses around the San Diego area used Facebook and other creative means to spread awareness and raise money for the disaster. Many volunteers and workers have taken the time to fly out to the area of the crisis and help out physically.

On Wednesday, January 20th, Side Bar nightclub and lounge dedicated their weekly Industry Night to a fundraiser for Haiti. They donated the \$10 door charge and other cash people contributed to the Red Cross who facilitated the donations abroad. In addition to this charge, they also had raffle tickets and prizes donated by various industry members to encourage people to come in and spend money for a good cause.

The Ivy Hotel, Stingaree and Hard Rock Hotel were just some of the sponsors of the event and altogether, they all raised \$5,000 for the cause.

"The event was extra special for us because of the money we raised and the turnout despite the pouring rain," Side Bar partner, Mike Georgopoulos said.

Jasmine Seafood Restaurant hosted a Haiti earthquake relief dinner show on Sunday, January 24 and gave 100 percent of the proceeds to the Tzu Chi Foundation, an international relief organization working with FEMA in Haiti. On the other side of the spectrum, the San Diego Chargers made appeals for donations during their playoff game against the New York Jets.

At UC San Diego, student organizations are raising funds from bake sales and other events to support Haiti. Senior Kenny Pettersen has traveled to the country seven times on medical trips starting when he was sixteen. Many friends he has in the area have had family members killed in the earthquake and his experiences have made the tragedy even more real for him.

"My response was less of a choice and more of a reflex. I have been speaking out and praying on behalf of Haiti for years, hoping that the world would notice this country's great needs. The world is now finally paying attention, and even though it's in the worst of times, I want to do everything I can to help stir people's optimism and inspire them to get involved," Pettersen said.

Pettersen helped create the Haiti Emergency Action Team (HEAT) to promote short-term public awareness of the situation as well as address long-term needs. So far, the students have raised \$10,500 for Haiti and are currently planning a benefit show to be held in mid-February.

The University of San Diego is working with Friends of the Orphans, a nonprofit organization founded to directly support two hospitals and an orphanage in Haiti. The school's men's basketball team also raised \$1,143.62 at their Saturday, January 16 game against Gonzaga.

At the graduate level, the Thomas Jefferson School of Law is raising money for an orphanage in the village of Bon Repos which was heavily impacted by the disaster.

Several physicians from the UC San Diego Medical Center went to the country to help with relief efforts. They are sponsored by International Relief Teams of San Diego. They have been providing updates on their mission on the UCSD Health website as well as keeping a Twitter account with details on what they're doing in the area.

Efforts are still ongoing with people and organizations from around San Diego using their available resources to help the Haitian people in whatever way they can.

"I think the biggest thing is really that the Haitian people are amazing and are going to overcome this if we continue to hope and dream big with them and don't give up," Pettersen said.