



Thomas E. Brown, Sheriff

News Release Update

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January 25, 2010

DEKALB SHERIFF'S OFFICE 'GRASSROOTS' EFFORTS GENERATE \$12,000 FOR HAITI RELIEF

Sheriff Thomas Brown Jump Starts Fundraising Drive with \$1,000 Donation

Decatur, GA -- Sheriff Thomas Brown's \$1,000 personal donation toward the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office "grassroots" style Haiti disaster relief drive set the stage for rallying employee volunteers. It also jump started public donations totaling \$12,000 in less than two days.

At about 1 p.m. January 15, 2010, employee volunteers with some assistance from inmate trustees set up their makeshift donation station consisting of a couple of tables, a tent on loan from Wages and Sons Funeral Homes, Inc., and a few chairs on the Memorial Drive side of the Sheriff's Office headquarters building.

Two 6' x 8' signs with large red and blue print that seemed to scream the message "Haiti Relief Effort – Monetary Donations Accepted Here," accompanied by the flashing blue lights on two official vehicles, arrested the attention and slowed the speed of passing motorists, the would-be Haiti disaster relief donors.

As drivers approached, some volunteers waved enthusiastically to draw attention to their mission. Sheriff Brown and others were equipped with cardboard boxes with horizontal slits in the top for convenient insertion of all monetary denominations. They held out their cash receptacles for deposits with one hand and beckoned motorists with the other.

In response, many kind citizens pulled their cars to the curb or stopped at the nearby traffic light to give generously, or to give what they could spare.

"I want to do what I can to help," one motorist told volunteer and mail center employee Gay Nell McCray as he reached into his pocket and pulled out five \$20-bills to drop into her box.

"This was truly a 'roll up your sleeve, dig into your pockets and do whatever you can philanthropic event,' Brown said. "And that is what the people did.

"Along with green currency, we collected 640 quarters, 400 dimes, 180 nickels, and 6,100 pennies.

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"I am simply grateful that people care about others. I was absolutely touched by the support from the public and from Sheriff's Office employees, some of whom brought their spouses and children to help in this most worthy endeavor," Brown said.

Volunteer Christopher Maxwell, who works in the agency's Information Systems Unit, said that he personally needed to know that he in some way was helping the people of Haiti. He was accompanied by his sons, Elijah, 11, and Khalil, 10.

"I brought them out to introduce them to the idea that life is about giving back, about giving to others and supporting those who are less fortunate.

Maxwell said that his sons have watched some of the media coverage on the Haiti disaster.

"I want them to understand that when you witness the plight of others, in comparison your own problems seem very small," Maxwell said.

The drive lasted from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. the first day (Fri., Jan.15) and was slated to continue through Monday, January 18. However, rainy weather shut down Saturday's operation before it could get off to a good start and caused Sunday's efforts to be cancelled. Monday, Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, proved to be a success. Volunteers worked until shortly after 5 p.m.

On (what date ?) Brown, who is a member of the Decatur Rotary Club, will present the funds for distribution through the Rotary District Charitable Fund, Inc. Rotarians will purchase ShelterBox Kits for use by the people of Haiti. One ShelterBox Kit supplies an extended family of up to 10 people with a tent and essential equipment to use while they are displaced or homeless. One box costs about \$1,000.

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