



An adult and child reach one of the stations for a little refreshment at Lincoln Elementary Friday evening in First Southern Baptist's Hope for Haiti's Children 5K Run/Walk and 1-Mile Fun Run fundraiser. L&T photos/Robert Pierce

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

The distance from Liberal to Haiti is approximately 2,000 miles. That's how far a group from First Southern Baptist Church will be going this summer.

About 30 people went a significantly shorter distance Friday night to help fund that trip.

Walkers and runners gathered at FSBC Friday evening to take to the streets in west Liberal as part of the Hope for Haiti's Children 5K Run/Walk and 1-Mile Fun Run fundraiser.

Coordinator Jim Dodge said proceeds from the entry fees were applied to the cost of sending members of FSBC's mission team to Haiti who will be leaving in early July.

"It's \$20 for the 5K," he said. "It's \$10 for the 1-mile walk with the shirt included. If you just want to walk, it's \$5."

Dodge said the run/walk is an annual fundraiser, and there was no set amount that FSBC had to raise.

"We send a team to Haiti at least once a year if not more," he said. "Whatever's not used on this trip will just be applied to the next trip."

Dodge said the mission team will be doing a lot of electrical work, as well as working with the information technology at a church and school in Port Au Prince and installing solar panels.

FSBC missions leader Wayne Melanson said Haiti missionary Sherrie Fausey started Christian Life School in Port Au Prince, which Melanson said the church is glad to be a part of.

"Right now, in our school, it's actually grown quite a bit to about 270 students," he said. "Right now, because of the earthquake there, we had to move the school over because the original building was destroyed in the earthquake."

Melanson said construction will be done on the school, in addition to installing solar panels and batteries, and he added the building does not get a lot of electricity from the city.

"We're also doing a lot of wiring," he said.

Melanson said many other churches do ministries in Port Au Prince, and he said the project is something God has led FSBC to be part of.

"We're real happy to do that, go down and help where we can," he said. "We've been going. I think 2009 was our first big trip down there. We've been going at least twice a year since then to help with that. Last year, our year group went, and we were very much involved in the summer school program down there. They were teaching students and being a part of that along with the construction crew."

Melanson said 10 of the 14 members of the FSBC missions team going to Haiti will be doing construction, and there will be plenty of other projects for everyone.

"They've got a sewing lab, so we're taking lots of sewing supplies to them," he said. "They've got a computer lab, so we'll probably be doing some updating in the computers. Anything that we can do to help out and be a part of that ministry, that's we're all about."

The biggest expense FSBC is responsible for is airline tickets, and Melanson said there are food and transportation costs involved as well.

"We buy our own supplies, so we don't burden Sherrie at all with that," he said. "Everything we do for them, we supply all of that cost."

Melanson said the church's annual 5K walk/run is a lot of fun, and it definitely helps pay the way to Haiti.

"It helps pay for some of the cost," he said. "We've done some different things earlier this year where we had a fundraiser at the church, a spaghetti dinner. We're doing different things to help out as much as we can."

