

Blare's Bears sends Hugs to Haiti

Imagine living in a city when an earthquake hit. You're walking down the street headed home. All of a sudden the ground under you is shaking. You hear buildings cracking. Then they break apart and fall to the ground.

Wow! Would that be scary! What would you do? What if you got to your home and it had fallen down? You climb the rubble calling for your family. How would you feel? What would you do?

Well, what would you do if you saw this on T.V.? That's what happened to Blare Gooch. Blare was 12 years old from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is part Haitian. He was watching a news report on the Haiti earthquake. He saw a lost, confused boy wandering over the rubble of his home. The small boy was crying out for his family. Blare wondered what he could do to help?

Blare wanted so much to encourage the lost little boy. He wanted to reach out and hug him. He figured the best thing he could do is send him something cuddly to hug. When Blare felt lonely, he got comfort from his teddy bear, named

Brown Bear. Blare's idea was to send more than his one special bear to Haiti. He wanted to call on his community to collect a lot of bears. His goal was to collect 2,000 bears. That would encourage a lot of kids in Haiti. So how would Blare work toward his goal? Would he reach his goal?

Blare's initial plan included school announcements and postings on Facebook. It started locally, went statewide, and then nationwide. The project grew to include newspaper articles and radio coverage. In the end, Blare's Bears sent, not 2,000, but 27,000 teddy bears to Haiti!

Blare felt great. He learned that by exercising his behavior muscles "you can be small and still do something to help someone." What a great example of encouragement and how one person can inspire a community to give others hope.

Note: this text has been leveled for grades 6-8. For more of this and other lifestories checkout LifeStories of HOPE books. Also see multiple videos and other resources @ www.TrueSuccessTools.org.

Questions can lead to understanding

- 1) What evidence is there that Blare encouraged others? What resulted from Blare's desire to encourage others?
- 2) How did Blare's plan to encourage Haitian kids include others joining in his desire to encourage? Why do you think so many people helped?
- 3) How can you learn from Blare's lifestory about encouraging others? What specifically can you do to encourage others at school or at home?

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3) How can you learn from Blare's lifestory about encouraging others? What specifically can you do to encourage others at school or at home?