



Eliezer Marcellus is heading up relief efforts for Haiti.

HELL ON EARTH

The earthquake that devastated Haiti in January has faded from view, but the suffering goes on. The Rutgers community is helping to bring relief.

Moments before the earthquake struck Haiti last January, Eliezer Marcellus was on the phone with an uncle in Haiti, who relayed that everything was fine with the family. An hour later, 10 of his cousins were dead. Since then, Marcellus, a senior counselor at the Educational Opportunity Fund program at the School of Arts and Sciences, has helped provide relief to a nation living through “hell on earth.” Since moving from Haiti to Camden, New Jersey, with his family when he was 12, Marcellus had visited once, in 2009. “It was hard to ignore the poverty, but the country was functioning,” he says. “I visited my two grandmothers, my aunts and uncles, and 40 cousins.”

Marcellus is heading up a relief effort in a Camden neighborhood that has a small Haitian population, centered at the Hope Memorial Baptist Church. Ample donations of food and water, clothing and

shoes, and medical supplies have arrived, and Marcellus has surmounted the challenge of getting the goods to Haiti. Two relief missions are trying to help Grace Village, a tent city of 20,000 refugees in Port-au-Prince. When he first arrived, Marcellus broke into tears. “I struggle with that vision every day. I see myself in them.”

The lack of goods, services, and progress is beyond comprehension, he says. “Grace Village has only seven port-o-potties. Bodies are rotting under buildings in the 110-degree heat. People try to clear the rubble with their hands. Neighborhoods smell like death, beggars are everywhere, and no one feels safe.”

Donations have come from colleagues at Rutgers and Rowan University, his alma mater; school districts and organizations in Camden County; and NJ for Haiti. To help, contact Marcellus at eliezerm@rci.rutgers.edu or visit nj4haiti.org.