

November 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 was a day that changed my life. It was the day I set foot in Port-au-Prince, Haiti for my first abroad medical/surgical mission trip and the day I realized that my heart was Haiti and I was meant to be a steward to its people.

My name is Katie O’Laughlin and I am a twenty-five year old Rockhurst University graduate. My journey into the adult world, while initially uneventful and discouraging has turned into a very clear testimony that God really has a plan. I was lost. I was so confused and disappointed that after doing everything I was told to do, I still couldn’t find my way to what I wanted. I had a plan and my plan was disrupted. The clear path I once saw was obstructed and a new foreign path appeared before me. But I took that path anyway, and I could not be more proud and grateful for the decision to do so.

I have been involved in service throughout my life but there was a point where it wasn’t just something that was required but was something I sought out. In high school my eyes were opened up when I joined a service group called Lasallian Youth, a club that focused solely on giving back and serving others. And my passion was discovered. My freshman year I started going on summer mission trips across the Midwest with Lasallian Youth and continued to participate into my years at college. While at Rockhurst I participated in local charities and the Special Olympics as my drive to continue helping others continued. After graduation, I encountered that aforementioned fork in the road where suddenly, my life was going to take an unknown swerve. I would not go

to graduate school, but I would start working for a group of surgeon's. This is where I met Dr. Edward Higgins, the epitome of a steward and role model whose life passion was to travel around the world and help the less fortunate. I soon discovered two things: One, I didn't get into graduate school because I wasn't meant to do that, I was meant to go into Nursing, where I could further aid people in need. And two, I needed to follow Dr. Higgins and broaden my realm of stewardship. I immediately signed on to his next destination, Haiti and soon learned that I too shared his passion and I too am meant to be a steward to those who need it most.

The name of our mission is Ke Nou, which stands for Our Heart. Our Heart has called us to Haiti to minister to the people of this nation who have endured so much. We answer the call with our heart. Our mission is Ke Nou.

The stories are numerous from my experiences in Haiti and I would be happy to share them all with you. But today, I am here to thank you. St. Elizabeth's Church and its parishioners have taught me how to be a steward. Without the direction of the Church and the support of you, I don't know if I would have discovered my ability to be a steward to others. And for that I am grateful. I am also grateful for and looking forward to participating in the School of Service program that is beginning implemented here at St. Elizabeth's School. I am ecstatic that the kids in the this parish will have the opportunity to discover their passion like I did mine and if I can help in any way to do that, I would be honored. I would like to show and teach anyone how rewarding these

kinds of experiences are for themselves and the recipients of the gift. Like Anne Frank once said "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait single moment before starting to change the world."

I return to Haiti this November to continue my philanthropy for the country that is so much in need of it. Any support you can provide would be greatly appreciated, whether it is sponsoring me on my trip, spreading the word of our mission or most of all your prayers for the safe travels of my team and our fulfillment of our services to the Haitian people. I thank you so much for your time and I hope I can make you all proud in my life's endeavors of being a steward to the country of Haiti.

Thank You!