

UMHB personnel package food for children in Haiti

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TEMPLE—Eighty [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#) faculty and staff packaged 18,000 meals for hungry children in Haiti.

Ranger Hughes, son of Meri Hughes, assistant math professor at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, measures out vitamins for children in Haiti as Linda Pehl, professor of nursing, and Deborah Jones, assistant professor of music, look on.

The UMHB personnel served in partnership with [Kids Against Hunger](#), an organization that packages and delivers food to children around the world.

Deborah Jones, assistant professor of music, had worked with Kids Against Hunger in a church fellowship group and believed it would be of interest to UMHB faculty.

“Working with Kids Against Hunger was just such a tremendous experience,” she said. “Everyone who experienced it was so thrilled to be a part of this project.”

Jones chairs the Christian Planning Committee, part of the UMHB Faculty Assembly, and was looking for a way for faculty to volunteer as a group.

“We’re trying to focus more on service as a university. So, we thought the faculty needed to do a service project. We wanted to do something really big. So, I brought up the Kids Against Hunger organization, and the committee just loved it,” said Jones.



Brian Brabham (left), UMHB assistant professor in exercise science, works with Sandra Rodriguez (center), secretary in the UMHB English department, and Alex Graham, a student tennis player majoring in sport management to package meals for children in Haiti.

The committee presented the idea to the faculty at their first meeting this year, and the group overwhelmingly approved the project.

Matt Lovett, assistant professor of exercise and sport science, also serves on the Christian Planning Committee. Lovett was in charge of gathering donations from faculty for the service project.

“Our faculty is segmented across campus. We all kind of stay in our own little world,” said Lovett. “It was good to meet people across campus, hang out and interact with them, especially for something that’s such a good cause.”

The faculty raised about \$3,000 to purchase food they could package—enough for 18,000 meals for Haitian children.

Another committee member, Becky Bunn, assistant professor of nursing, scheduled faculty members for food-packaging shift work.

“We had two groups of 40 faculty members,” Bunn said. “My group was from 4 to 5:30 p.m., and the second group was from 5:30 to 7 p.m.”



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The volunteers—many of them accompanied by their children and grandchildren, as well as some students—formed an assembly line. Donning hairnets and aprons, they packaged meals containing 21 vitamins and minerals, soy, vegetables and rice. The food mainly was in powdered form, except for the rice, and when added to boiling water can be prepared in 20 minutes.

Bunn and her colleagues enjoyed working together for Kids Against Hunger and hope to continue the tradition the faculty has started.

“Some of us in the College of Nursing were saying we kind of hope that we make this a yearly project,” she said.

“It makes a difference not only for the children in Haiti, but in how we feel. We were doing something together as a faculty that was going to make a difference in other people’s lives.”