

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



We thank you for the encouragement we've received throughout the year. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our prayer is that your home is adorned with His love, graced with His peace, and filled with His presence.

Have a love-filled Christmas and a joy-filled New Year!

-Dennis and Mary



May you have a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a blessed NEW YEAR!

Let us celebrate Jesus, who is our light in the darkness, who is our peace in the storm, who is our hope for eternity, and who is our greatest gift of all.

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift." II Corinthians 9:15

"May God bless you for your prayers, concerns and financial gifts for this work!" - Dennis and Mary Herko



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Your tax deductible gifts are appreciated,
and can be sent to:
The Herko Family
P.O. Box 910933
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Herko Family Mission Fund, Inc.
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Lexington, KY 40591-0933

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HERKO FAMILY MISSION
Jamaica, West Indies

CHRISTMAS, 2015

First Basketball Camp on New Court!



CENTER POINTE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (front row, l to r): Laura Wells, Cindy Cook, Emma Jack, Alex Roberts, Anna Edwards, Hannah Cook, Abby Weinberger, and Jeff Schlueter; (back row, l to r): Brennan Muha, Luke Scott, Caleb Poston, Richard Anderson, Sam Wells, Nick Hesselgesser, Steve Poston, Jonathan Anderson, Chad Wolf, Brady Roberts, Mark Roberts, and Bob Hesselgesser.

Dennis and Mary had the dream of having a basketball/volleyball court to give the youth in the Old Harbour community, a positive outlet for their energy. Many young people in the Old Harbour community end up in destructive lifestyles. Many of the boys begin to affiliate with "possies" gangs and Old Harbour has an extremely high rate of teen pregnancy.

Thanks to many who have donated to this effort. A special thanks to Jeff Schlueter, Mark Roberts, John Anderson, and the members of Center Pointe Christian Church in Liberty Township, OH, this dream of a multipurpose court, (complete with fence, bleachers, and lights), has now become a reality.

In July, 2015, a short term mission team from the Center Pointe Christian Church in Liberty Township, OH, came and conducted the first basketball camp on the new court. We partnered with the Old Harbour High School, whose coach also assisted with the camp. Over 150 high schoolers participated in the camp. They were taught basketball skills, life skills, and moral values. One camper was baptized during the awards ceremony. Community leagues are in the process of being established. The national TV station, CVM, did a news story on the camp, that aired during their sports segment. To see the newscast go to www.herkomission.org and click on the newscast.



Then and Now: Donna O'Neil



Donna (Peyton) O'Neil, at age 16 on her first mission trip to Jamaica, with a child from the Boy's Home in Kingston.

Hello my name is Donna O'Neil. I was born and raised in Lexington, KY and I had the privilege of growing up in an amazing church environment. Weekly I was able to see God move in new ways by being a part of Southland Christian Church. But truly it was not until I was about 16 years old my eyes were opened to a whole new world in which God would forever change my life.

I had witnessed a lot of young adults from my church who were going on short term mission trips. And I remember even at an early age longing to go and see what it was all about. Finally that day came, I decided to be a part of the team that would be going to serve alongside of the Herko family in Kingston, Jamaica. I remember thinking how I wanted to go and help and hopefully be a light to those who may need encouragement, or simply a friend. But little did I know that I would not be the one to bring about change, in fact it was I, who left changed.

Our mission while there was to help rebuild a church building that had been damaged by the hurricane. I wasn't used to getting my hands dirty so I learned that a little hard work was good for me. When we were not painting or helping rebuild, we were able to serve and love on young boys from the Boys Home. Each boy had a different story, some of great grief

and loss. I can still remember the sounds of their beautiful singing. The joy in which they showed just to have someone simply hold their hands. One boy in particular grabbed my heart. His big brown eyes captured me. He followed me everywhere I went. Daily I would bend down in the dirt and hug and kiss that sweet face of his. When it came time to leave I was shattered...at 16, I asked questions such as can I adopt at my age? How can I go back? I don't have much to offer but I can love a child....



Donna O'Neil and her family, 2015.

Well at 16 I realized I was not quite ready to adopt, but I knew that I would return to Jamaica and I did for a second time. Yet again... to have my heart stirred in a powerful way. The Herkos Ministry and love started a fire in my heart for the world that I could not let die out.

So a lot has happened since my two trips to Jamaica. I was able to travel the US and sing and raise awareness for children of the world. I spent 8 months living in Rajasthan India working with 550 children at an orphanage. Once again I found myself kneeling down in the dirt hugging children with a tear stained face...this time knowing God had a bigger plan than I could ever dream.

It would not stop with Jamaica or India...it was time to live out the dream I had since I was 16 years old. After returning from India we adopted our beautiful daughter. A few years later the adoption bug bit us again...but this time there was a little boy born in Thailand who would become part of our forever family. So we thought this would be the end to our adoption journey...BUT Surprise I got a job with adoption benefits and guess what? Child number three... an amazing son with a bright smile from Ethiopia came home to us at 6 years of age.

Herko Family Mission Budget for 2016

The mission's budget for 2016 is \$305,000.00. As we continue to advance the work in Old Harbour, the budgeted amount allows for the completion of the preschool/kindergarten building, along with the start-up costs for the school. The school will help the Old Harbour Church bring students and their parents to Christ.

"Your generous gifts will change lives in Jamaica!"