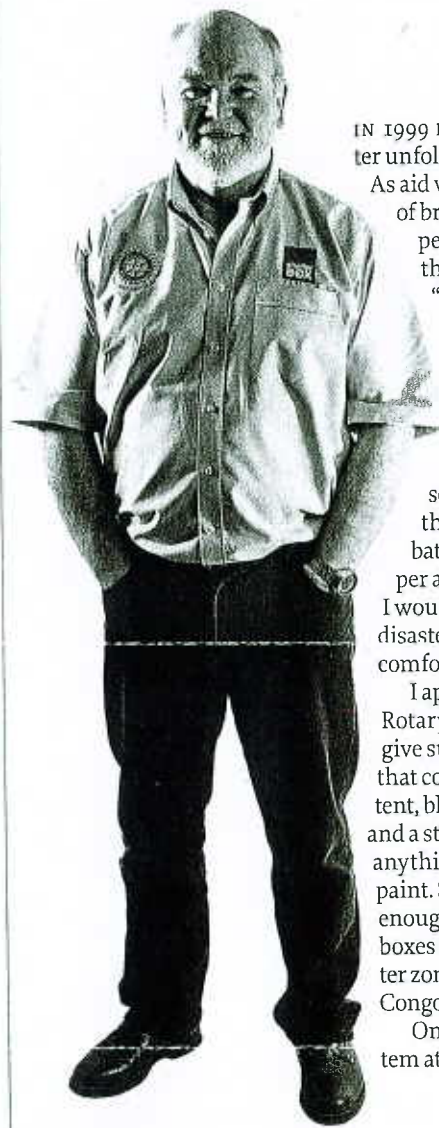


# Power of One. ShelterBox provides kits for people struck by disaster—including 100,000 Haitians

BY TOM HENDERSON



IN 1999 I WATCHED A DISASTER unfold on the evening news.

As aid workers threw loaves of bread on the ground and people scrambled after them, I asked my wife, "Why can't they hand the bread to those people? They've lost everything. Why should they lose their self-respect too?" It was as if someone hit me over the head with a cricket bat. I got out a piece of paper and wrote down what I would need after a natural disaster: shelter, warmth, comfort, dignity.

I approached my local Rotary Club with the idea to give survivors sturdy boxes that contained a 10-person tent, blankets, pans, utensils and a stove that could burn anything from diesel to old paint. Since 2001, we've raised enough money to send 75,000 boxes to more than 100 disaster zones in places like India, Congo and El Salvador.

On Jan. 12, the alert system at our warehouse went



### Gimme Shelter

See what life is like in a ShelterBox tent in Haiti at [time.com/haiti\\_tents](http://time.com/haiti_tents)

### WHAT'S IN THE BOX

A 10-person tent along with a water-purification kit, collapsible water containers, mosquito nets, waterproof ponchos, insulated sleeping mats, thermal blankets, tools, rope, stove and cooking supplies, plus crayons and coloring books



off; within an hour we were mobilizing for Haiti. Our warehouse is like a Walmart for disasters. We tailor the box contents to each crisis. A summer flood in Sudan requires more mosquito nets than a winter earthquake in Nepal. Haiti is tropical, so we put in fewer blankets and added extra water-purification tablets.

By Jan. 30, we had delivered 5,000 boxes to Haiti, and we are packing 5,000 more. All told, at least 100,000 people will benefit. The first tents that arrived in Port-au-Prince were used to house patients at a field hospital.

Our boxes don't just create tent cities. They build communities. Within an hour of the tents' going up, a mother starts hanging laundry lines and someone else sets up a mini-shop. Kids like the crayons and coloring books, which bring back a degree of normality.

In Haiti, people are turning the green ShelterBoxes into makeshift cribs, tables and wheelbarrows. Imagination is one resource that isn't in short supply. —As told to William Lee Adams

### QUICK TAKE



**750,000**

Number of people ShelterBox has helped worldwide, including 50,000 Haitians in January



**100+**

Number of natural disasters the nonprofit has responded to since 2001.



**10**

Number of people for whom each box provides shelter and cooking utensils



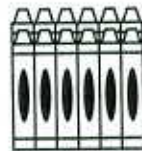
**150**

Number of volunteers around the globe who deliver the boxes to stricken areas



**110 lb.**

Weight of each ShelterBox, which includes a stove and water-storage containers



**12**

Number of crayons included, along with some coloring books, to help kids cope