



# ONE MAN HUMANITARIAN

by Michelle Greysen



**E**very day that a miracle donation arrives and an actual life-changing miracle can happen is Christmas for self proclaimed one man humanitarian, Carlton Toews. In spite of much devastation on this globe he really truly believes in the good of mankind rooted in his unwavering Christian faith and is changing the world daily, one child at a time. "I love Christmas, the lights glow on my house 365 evenings a year and my year round Christmas decorated sun porch remind the world around me and myself that every day is Christmas!" shares Toews, "It is a day to love and share God's love with others, it reminds us to bring peace and hope to others in need." Turning small miracles into big dreams Toews has dedicated his entire life to serving mankind. Long before there was an earthquake in Haiti he was already there in the most remote of areas bringing hope and much needed help. For over four decades and counting, this now mid-fifties man has quietly organized and self directed the people, funding and manpower needed to personally build now hundreds of homes, schools, clinics and orphanages in both Mexico and the last decade in Haiti. Spending more than half the year in and out of the country in a schedule of travel and organizing helpers and supplies, this one man power-house



Photo by James M. Nelson

minister, brings food, shelter, medical and more importantly, hope, to the hundreds of thousands of lives he has touched through his one-man mission. For Mr. Carlton, as the Haitian children like to call him, it is not about being an ordained minister, a Lutheran reverend and freelance minister since his young twenties, a fact he often forgets, but rather about what is needed where and how to make a difference turning small modest helpful means into big life changing dreams. "In July 2006 I made my first trip to Haiti" recalls Toews, "and since many more trips and miracles have provided the blessing of La Baie School, La Grange School & Medical Clinic, Duval School & Medical Clinic, Vion School, the Earthquake Relief Effort and many University

Scholarships." He also manages donations which sponsor clinics and university programs for medical school for a future clinic doctor, as well as many students also studying and hoping to become doctors, educators and more to continue raising them up from the humble rubble of a Haitian life of no hope until Toews met them and found a way to give them a future. Since dedicating himself to his one man mission work many decades back, Toews has founded Project Help Haiti & Project Help Mexico and completed to date 325 international building projects of help in Haiti, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Kenya, personally raising over \$1.5 million in aid, one private donor at a time. The last eight years alone he has brought

# one man who truly does change the world

over \$300,000 in personal donations into Haiti alone in the form of food and shelter and more.

What Toews accomplishes is the ultimate in grassroots humanitarian work. His story is not one of just telling of a need but rather he is on the front line delivering. One chance meeting leads to the next and the next as he sees the desperate need for a miracle and takes his unwavering faith in hand and makes it happen. In Mexico much effort has gone into bettering the lives of the families, and specifically women and children in the poverty ravaged areas south of the U.S. border. Under Toews' well honed planning, materials purchase and site preparation, modest homes are constructed over a four day period and the celebration of a house dedication is the gift of giving

for all those who come to help. "I am often asked can anyone build, and I always laugh and reply YES! If you can hold a hammer you can build." For Toews his teams of volunteers from students to senior, singles and families from all over North America all rally under his direction eager to make change. They frame, sheet, pull the wiring and drywall in one day, finishing and painting, roofing, siding over the next two, fill the home with used furnishings and purchases from the local market and proudly hand over the keys. For this career freelance minister who works globally and touches all walks of lives, businesses and like-minded people with resources to help, it is not always about money. Toews and his colleagues and teams on mission trips, constantly pack along bags of overweight luggage





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filled with technology, water filters, computers, portable solar power hubs, school supplies, soccer equipment, clothing and even medical supplies, pain medications and more. Many Haitian families are now raising goats and their children remain healthy and are now being fed once a day and even schooled in desolate remote villages where for hundreds of years no white man had ever stepped foot until Toews crossed through rivers and jungle and showed up to help and where now a Canadian flag proudly flies daily. In a current initiative Toews is helping young Haitian entrepreneurs become business owners, "A Motorcycle Taxi Business Loan changes young men's lives, providing them with a new motorcycle they are able to run a business, earn \$200 a month and payback \$40 each month to a fund building to provide another driver with the same loan opportunity." All of this goodness is not something Toews does, but rather simply just who he is. Another part of who he is, all while sharing himself with the world, has been a single father to two sons Christopher now turning 30 and his special needs son Andrew, 27. For Andrew, who has accompanied his father on hundreds of mission trips into Mexico has himself earned a remarkable story of developmental challenges but alongside his father, has also dedicated his time to better

the lives of the children he loves to play with at the orphanages on the hillside ghettos south of Tijuana. Although Andrew cannot read or write, he has given the world more humanitarian hard work and dedication than most young people his age. Even Carlton's bride has a hand in the family efforts and as a teacher in the lower mainland, Catherine Bryson has rallied her classrooms in the joy of giving many times over, inspiring a generous gift of several thousand spoons and bowls sent to the children's lunch program in Haiti. For Toews life is about humble beginnings and making one's way in the world, one day, one child at a time, one chance to make a difference and many opportunities to help as outlined on his signature site [12HoursOfLife.com](http://12HoursOfLife.com). His simple west coast lake cottage life boasts no frills but reeks of love and his humbly earned place in global humanity. No corporate offices, no staff, no salary, just one man who is quite humble about his place in this world based from his home office during the little time he spends there in between missions, "It's a simple little corner of the back room, tucked next to the stackable washer & dryer is my desk, my photos on the walls and the place where miracles are announced & prayed for everyday!" ■

