

It's Not Easy but It's Rewarding

A Blog Post

By: Kaia Yudice

Heroes are just ordinary people who do extraordinary things. A hero is someone who devotes their life to an issue or issues to make the world a better place. A hero is brave, thoughtful, and goes out of their way to make a change. You have to believe and be passionate about what you are doing to actually make a change. A hero should have these traits: leadership skills, determination, and kindness. These traits are needed if you want to make the world a better place.

My hero is Kristin O'Connell. She founded an organization called Devoted to Children. Devoted to Children helps kids who were hit hard during the Haiti earthquake and gives them a home and family. Kristin was invited to be a midwife at a birth center in Haiti. While she was there she realized that there were so many kids in need of care, love, and hope. By forming the Devoted to Children organization she became a hero to many kids and adults.

Kristin O'Connell went to Haiti thinking she was going to be working as a midwife, and she did. After going to Haiti, Kristin realized that there was so much that needed to be done. There were so many kids who needed the love, support, and care that so many of us have. Kristin met one person who changed her life forever. "I became so inspired by his stories that I burst into tears and knew I had to do something." Kristin said when I asked her about her story. The man Kristin met told her about his dream to open an orphanage. Once Kristin got back to the US she raised a bunch of money to open the orphanage. Unfortunately, the man who inspired her wasn't as trustworthy as

she thought. She had to make a decision to give him the money and hope for the best or to take the situation into her own hands. One experience that she had, changed her life and led her to want to change the lives of others.

Kristin's journey was a difficult one but it was worth it. She was dedicated, committed, and was willing to put in anything it took. She started by not knowing where her adventure of being a midwife was going to take her. She has put so much effort into the organization from fundraising to spending quality time with the children. Kristin has done so much for these kids and for Haiti. She is an amazing person and hero.

"It is hard to imagine, but I do believe a few of our children may not have survived." said Kristin when I asked her what she thinks the lives of the children would be like without having the orphanage as their home. The children would've never had the opportunities that they have today. They would never be able to attend school or have the love and support they have now. Their opportunities of a bright future would not be possible. Kristin has put so much effort into making the children's lives the very best possible.

Currently there are 8 kids living at the D2C orphanage. The kids have classes they take everyday just like many of us. They also have many extra curricular activities including: English classes, dance, music, yoga and so many more. Because of Kristin, the kids an opportunity to have a bright future. The D2C orphanage is not just a place where the children have a roof over their head but it's a family. The organization is there to make the lives of the kids better everyday.

The goal of this organization is to make the kids feel like they are part of a family because, they are. D2C's other goal is to give the children opportunities to have a positive impact on their community. They need to feel like they can make a change and they can now feel like this because the organization is providing opportunities to learn the skills to make change.

The Devoted to Children organization also has a tutoring program for over 75 kids in Haiti. A summer camp is also held to enrich the children's lives. On weekends the teenage boys run a stand-up paddle board business called SUP Haiti. All of these programs are a way to make the children of Haiti's everyday lives more enjoyable.

Devoted to Children is non-profit organization and is always open for volunteers. They have so many ways you can get involved including, kids helping kids, going on trips to Haiti, and helping with fundraisers which are one of the most challenging parts, Kristin said. If you are interested in helping out D2C go to this website: <http://devoted2children.org>.

The world would do so much better if you were always helping people who have less than you. *"I believe we all want to help others, or feel inspired to make a difference, but sometimes we just have to ask how, listen for an answer, and take action when that opportunity arises" said Kristin.*

Kristin O'Connell is an amazing person and she will always be a hero to me and many others. She started out as an ordinary person who has now done an extraordinary thing. Kristin is bold, committed, a leader, and my hero.