

Following the emergency grants totalling £30,000 from The Freemasons Grand Charity, the Mark Grand Lodge has sent a donation of £49,000 from the Masonic Benevolent Fund to fund the purchase of 100 'Shelterboxes'.

Shelterbox is an International Disaster Relief Charity based in Cornwall that delivers emergency shelter, warmth and dignity to people affected by disaster worldwide. Up until a few years ago, the aid response to most disasters was in the form of food and medicine to help people survive the immediate aftermath. But little or no assistance was given in terms of proper shelter to help them through the first few days, weeks and months as they tried to rebuild their lives. ShelterBox was launched to fill that void.

At the heart of every ShelterBox is a ten-person tent. It is custom made for ShelterBox by one of the world's leading tent manufacturers, and is designed to withstand extreme temperatures, high winds and heavy rainfall. Internally, each tent has privacy partitions that allow recipients to divide the space as they see fit.

Each box costs an average of £490 including all materials, packing, storage and distribution to individual recipients worldwide. Based on six months use only this equates to 27 pence per person per day.



#### **A smile**

Every box contains a children's pack containing drawing books, crayons and pens. For children who have lost most, if not all of their possessions, these small gifts are treasured.

#### **Warmth and protection**

In addition to the tent, the boxes contain a range of other survival equipment including thermal blankets and insulated ground sheets, essential in areas where temperatures plummet at nightfall. Where malaria is prevalent mosquito nets are supplied, as well as a life saving means of water purification. Water supplies often become contaminated after a major disaster, as infrastructure and sanitation systems are destroyed, this presents a secondary but no less dangerous threat to survivors than the initial disaster itself.

#### **Self sufficiency**

A basic tool kit containing a hammer, axe, saw, trenching shovel, hoe head, pliers and wire cutters can be found in every box. These items enable people to improve their immediate environment, by chopping firewood or digging a latrine, for example. Then, when it is possible, to start repairing or rebuilding the home they were forced to leave.

#### **Fit for purpose**

Every item is durable, practical and brand new. The box itself is lightweight and waterproof and has been used for a variety of purposes in the past - from water and food storage containers to a cot for a newly born baby.

#### **A heart to the home**

A key piece in every box is either a wood burning or multi-fuel stove - that can burn anything from diesel to old paint. This provides the heart of the new home where water is boiled, food is cooked and families congregate. In addition, there are pans, utensils, bowls, mugs and water storage containers.

#### **Adaptability**

Shelterbox keep a broad range of equipment in stock so that they can adapt the contents of a box to a specific disaster, but for Haiti the needs are very broad based and so a standard equipment content has been chosen.

**Further information** can be obtained at

[www.shelterbox.org](http://www.shelterbox.org) The first ShelterBoxes to arrive in the country have been immediately utilised by Doctors in desperate need of equipment to help treat huge numbers of injured Haitians. 400 more ShelterBoxes arrived in Port au Prince on the 19<sup>th</sup> January and were being sent to a major distribution area in Leogane where the epicentre of the quake occurred. The scale of destruction there was even worse than in Port au Prince and there is an estimated one hundred thousand people in need of emergency shelter. Another 400 boxes arrived from the USA on the 20<sup>th</sup> January and 700 more were sent that weekend from the UK with a further 200 from France and 250 from prepositioned stock in Curacao.



As we went to press, we hear that more than 3,000 ShelterBoxes have been committed by various organisations including the MBF and Virgin Atlantic has agreed to fly another 500 boxes into Miami from the UK where they will be sent down to Haiti.

