

OUR VIEW

A life-saving donation, from Greece to Haiti

THE ISSUE A Greece Volunteer Ambulance vehicle that was donated to a children's hospital in Haiti helped save a life.

OUR VIEW It's yet another reminder that one country's trash is another's lifesaver.

Ambulances save lives every day. It's not every day, though, that a cast-off ambulance from Greece saves a life in Haiti.

But that was the case last month, in the wake of the devastating earthquake that ravaged the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The ambulance, donated by Greece Volunteer Ambulance last year, was called to The Father Wasson Center hospital in Petionville, a residence and school for children with disabilities, after the building collapsed. An American volunteer was trapped, and after 12 hours of digging, rescuers hadn't made any headway. The only way to free her, they determined, was with the help of a jackhammer — located in another town. So off went the ambulance; the jackhammer was recovered, and the woman was freed.

For Bill Joyce, a Greece resident and emergency medical technician currently in Haiti, it was a welcome reminder of the power of giving.

"This is the ambulance that we were going to throw away — it saved someone," he said.

Joyce knows something about giving. He's in Leogane, Haiti, with InterVol, a Rochester-based not-for-profit that recently shipped off in planes donated by Constellation Brands and loaded with medical supplies, equipment, and a medical and surgical team. The medics served as reinforcements to an earlier wave of doctors who arrived in Leogane a week after the Jan. 12 quake.

As the media spotlight on Haiti fades, teams of devoted volunteers persevere. Their efforts aren't going unnoticed. Neither are the donations made by local people, organizations and businesses committed to helping Haiti rise again.

The humble ambulance had outlived its usefulness in our community. But in Haiti, it was a godsend. That's the power of a well-planned donation, of working together and, most of all, of compassion.