

Reports from the field

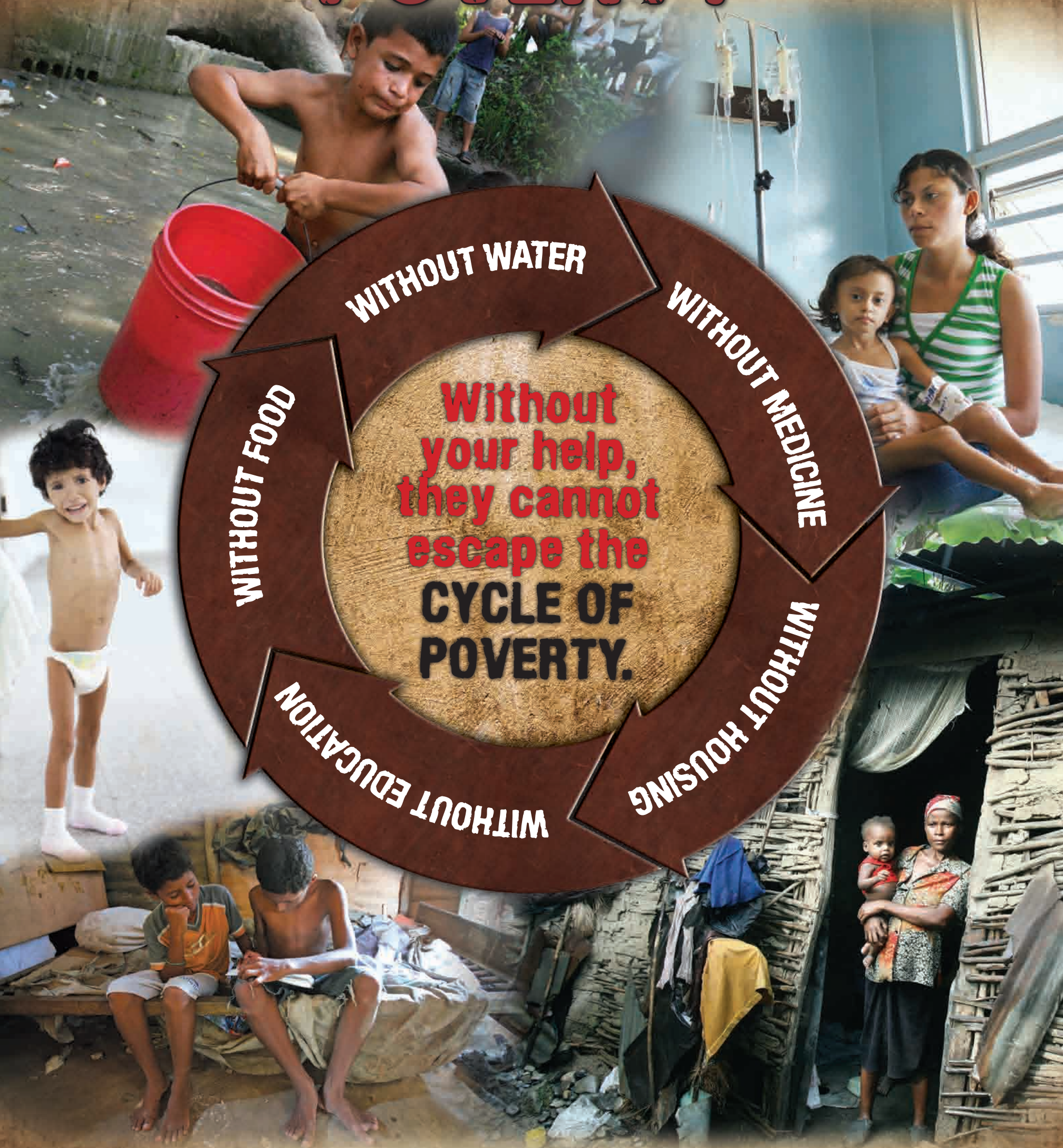
Answering THE CALL

August 2009



FOOD FOR THE POOR, INC.

THE CYCLE OF POVERTY



Without water, children must walk hours to collect water for their family... instead of attending school. Without an education, children can't get a job when they're grown; without a job, parents can't provide food and shelter for their children. And so the cycle of poverty continues.

The cycle of poverty can start anywhere and spiral out of control. The absence of just one of life's basic needs can adversely affect so many other areas until one generation after the other is ensnared in this downward spiral.

LOOKING FOR A CHANCE

As our staff walked through a ghetto in the Dominican Republic, a young boy began to trail our group. We sensed that he was looking for something. His name was Isaiah, and he was keenly interested in every step we took through his poverty-stricken slum.

After leading us back to his mother's crumbling shack, we learned that Isaiah is his family's main caretaker. He's also just 8 years old. Along with his mother and younger siblings, Isaiah lives in La Barquita or 'little boat'— an aptly named slum that's often flooded and sometimes submerged after storms.

Because there is little access to safe housing, healthcare or education in this "shanty town," there is little chance that Isaiah will break free from his family's cycle of poverty without outside assistance. "Our desire is to live better and leave this place," said Isaiah's mother, Alesandra. "What can I do? I turn to Jesus. He is the only father to my children."

In speaking with Isaiah, it became apparent that he is a genuinely bright and caring young man. Unfortunately, Alesandra cannot afford the \$10 monthly cost to send her son to school. Instead, Isaiah is forced to wander his squalid neighborhood daily in search of food or a rare opportunity to earn money for his family.

At the end of our visit, Isaiah shook our hands like a much older boy and thanked us for visiting. After he walked us out, he continued to follow us down a dirt road. It was then clear what Isaiah was looking for when he met us... a chance for a better life.

