

**[Recording starts 0:00:00]**

**MATT:** *“The exciting part is when you see a kid who’s grown up in Western Kansas really feeling passion about helping and empathy for students in Haiti, you know, that really is incredible as a teacher.”*

**VICKI:** *The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every weekday you’ll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.*

**VICKI:** Hello, teachers and welcome to Wildcard Wednesday where we talk about all kinds of exciting different things for classrooms. Today, we have science teacher, Matt Clay, from Kansas talking about sending science kits to Haiti (<https://www.gofundme.com/haitisciencekit>). So Matt, tell us about this project, what did you do?

**MATT:** So this project started out at the beginning of the school year a little bit casually. But what we were trying to do was get experiments and activities that my students designed that we could then send, package in suitcases and send to a school in Haiti to give that school, kind of, the opportunity to work more hands-on with their science classes.

**VICKI:** Now, now did you find out about the school in Haiti?

**MATT:** About five years ago, I actually went to Haiti to do some construction work on a clinic and what we were building was a guest house for people to stay in. Since we were building that there’s not anywhere for us to stay yet, so we had to stay about a half mile away and that was across the street from a school. So I actually used to take shortcuts through the school, getting back and forth from where we were working. And that was something that just stuck with me that – you know, I’d like to do something to benefit the school and it’s just taken some time to kind of figure out what that would be and develop the idea a little bit.

**VICKI:** So what has been the response from the students in Haiti?

**MATT:** You know, the school and the students – communication can be a little bit difficult, but the school has been incredibly supportive and even other aid organizations that are in that same area of Haiti have just been so positive and encouraging and so grateful and it’s really been incredible to be able to pass those messages along to my students that these folks are really grateful for what you’re doing and really excited about what you’re doing.

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**VICKI:** Okay. So Matt, give us an example of what one of these science kits have in it?

**MATT:** So we are still designing them and we are kind of in an ongoing iteration process. But part of it is we’re getting basic lab supplies. They set aside space to be a science lab, but they don’t have any supplies to go in it. And so part of our effort is a fundraiser and being able to get those, just kind of general test tubes, beakers – that sorts of

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supplies. And then the other side of it is that kids have design experiments and activities. So part of that was thinking about what's sustainable, what will survive the trip, what is something that can be reused over and over at their school?

And so that's included things like – we had a student design wind wagon, so it's just this little simple car out of notecards and straws and bottle lids, but it actually gives a really simple way to test kind of different engineering practices. And so we've had some activities like that. And then we've actually had a couple of students that have gone through the work and the research to figure out what it would take to send a couple of tablet computers and what videos or resources we can put on there and how we can kind of protect it for the conditions, how we can make sure that it's something that we'll be able to reuse over and over for long periods of time. So they did a lot of work on figuring out how we could use that as a way to send a bunch of science instruments in really a small amount of space because the logistics of getting it there are kind of difficult, and so space and weight are pretty limited as we're putting these together.

VICKI: So how are your students responding, Matt? Because I know you're excited, I actually read about it from a friend – I believe Kevin Honeycutt (<http://kevinhoneycutt.org/>) posted it on Facebook and tagged you.

MATT: You know, it's been really incredible, it took them some time to kind of warm-up to the idea and get used to it. But it really, I've really seen them develop a passion for helping these kids in Haiti, **which to me is, really, the exciting part is when you see a kid who's grown up in Western Kansas really feeling passion about helping and empathy for students in Haiti, you know, that's pretty incredible as a teacher.**

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For me that's been – really the biggest reward is watching kids that are genuinely excited about working on it.

And you can tell they're starting to get a sense of pride as they're getting some momentum, and the fundraising, and, you know, we're getting some support and a little bit of a community built around it. We have an elementary class in our district that's actually also thinking on helping with fundraising because they wanted to help in the project. And so it's kind of been a bit of a point of pride of them that this is something they're involved in.

VICKI: So, what's the biggest problem you've had with the project?

MATT: The biggest problem is really that there's not a template for doing something like this. So we had troubles in getting communication with the school just because internet and electricity are kind of limited resources. We had struggles in our fundraising in figuring out how do you share a message? Although those area frustrations that the realities – that that's the learning experience for the kids. The fact that those have been learning experiences for me, I think, adds even more to that because the kids

know that those are things I don't know the answers to and we have to figure out together.

And so, really, when you start, you're kind of worried about the struggles but, really, as a teacher those are – the opportunities are the difficulty in it.

VICKI: And as you work through those, it's just such a powerful experience. Now, I hope that all of our listeners will go to the show notes because, Matt, I know that you'll give me a link so that we can share it and let others support you in this. Now, Matt, let's kind of take a shift a little bit. I want to ask you, what is something teacher can do right now in their classroom applying what they've learned from you today? So how could other teachers do something similar to what you're doing?

MATT: I think the first step is **you have to look for the stories of need in the world and you have to share those with your kids.**

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And before we started designing anything with this project, I shared my experiences in the story of seeing kids in orphanages in the schools. **And so I think the first thing is you find the stories of other people and you share them with those kids.** It's surprisingly easy to get started, you just look at what could be a first step and you take it, there's not a right or wrong path, you just kind of start moving and you start having a conversation about what needs are out there and is there something that we can do as a class to try to help with those?

VICKI: So, Matt, let's finish up with this. What do you say to those who say,

*"We don't have time in the curriculum to help others?"*

I mean, the question makes me cringe but I'm asking it anyway. What do you say to the naysayers?

MATT: This is something that I have no doubt kids will remember long after they're out of school. Education isn't about the curriculum or the content, it's about the experiences. The reality is that we produce a lot of students that know a lot of content and curriculum that are really lacking experiences. And my thought is that you don't have the time not to help kids get experiences like this.

VICKI: Fantastic ideas here. I hope you'll check out the blog with Matt Clay and his science kits for Haiti. And remember, teachers, get out there and be remarkable.

I have a MakerBot Mini Replicator 3D printer in my classroom and I highly recommend it. Well, my friends at MakerBot have agreed to give away the same printer I have in my classroom to one lucky classroom teacher who listens to my new show The Ten-Minute Teacher. So to enter, you go to iTunes and leave a review and leave your Twitter handle or your Instagram handle or some way that we can reach you between February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 14<sup>th</sup> 2017.

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*Transcription created by [tranzify.com](http://tranzify.com)*

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