

For one Alfred University student, 'Pour for Haiti' has very personal meaning

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Walner Edmond, left, and Shari Willey, right, are among the organizers of the fund-raiser for Haiti

For Walner Edmond, a junior Bachelor of Fine Arts major in the School of Art & Design at Alfred University (AU), "Pour for Haiti," a fund-raiser planned by the Foundry Guild to help survivors of the earthquake, is a very personal cause. Although he was born in the United States and raised in Gettysburg, PA, his family is Haitian and his father lives just outside Port au Prince. For a week after the earthquake, Edmond said, he didn't know if his father and other family members had survived. "Finally, we got a call from my father," he said. "The building he was living in was destroyed, but he was not at home at the time" and so escaped injury from the falling wreckage. He's homeless, though, living in a tent and desperate for food as are hundreds of thousands of other survivors. Prior to the earthquake, Edmond said, his 65-year-old father's health was "up and down;" he's concerned how his father will fare with scarce food and inadequate medical care. At the end of last week, Edmond learned a cousin had injured her leg, but the fate of other relatives and family friends is still not known. His father would like to come to the United States, but transportation and immigration barriers make that difficult. As much as the Haitian tragedy touches his own life, Edmond knows that other Alfred University students - those on the main campus in Alfred and others at the downstate satellite campus - also have family and friends in Haiti and are dealing with the same uncertainties and worries he is. He's helped his father, but he wanted to do more for others, too, so he's volunteered to help with the "Pour for Haiti," sponsored by the Foundry Guild. Scheduled for Saturday (Feb. 6) from 2-8 p.m. at the National Casting Center, State Route 244 north of the Village of Alfred. For a \$10 donation, participants will be able to create their own "relief sculpture" from cast aluminum. There will be music, food - "Guild" cheese sandwiches and toasted marshmallows among the offerings - and a silent auction of artwork donated by AU students. Edmond is donating work for the auction, and will also be on hand to help with the pouring. The "Pour for Haiti" is open to the public, and proceeds from the event will go to Haitian relief efforts selected by members of the Foundry Guild. Edmond is a graduate of Gettysburg, PA, Area High School. His father is Thermolien Edmond of Haiti; his mother is Carmile Jeanlius of Gettysburg.