

## **Bloomington Helps Haitians Start Year on Right Foot**

*by Valliere Jones, contributing writer*

Hundreds of people in Haiti will have more spring in their step in May, thanks to Avnet's Bloomington, Minn., branch.

Employees collected 536 pairs of new or gently used shoes during December and January, delivering two cars full to a local chiropractor, who will distribute them when he visits Haiti on a mission trip.

"So many things we take for granted or no longer have use for are valued by others who have less," says John Hunter, district manager for Avnet Electronics Marketing. "There are so many giving opportunities out there, and our office spirit glows when we have one taking place."

Avnet wasn't the only company to glow – Jared Graupman, sales and marketing representative, works on site at Digi International and told them about Bloomington's shoe drive. They joined the effort, as did the local Scott West High School wrestling team, which donated youth tennis shoes after hearing about it from Frank Kipp, outside sales representative.

To help inspire employees to donate, the Bloomington office placed shoes on or under its holiday tree. "Seeing little kids' shoes hanging on our holiday tree and knowing young children in Haiti would soon be wearing them felt good," says John. "I was surprised at how many shoes came in that had never been worn."

The shoe drive is only one of Bloomington's many collection projects throughout the year. "The team always seems to have a giving event going on – I am always impressed by the generous nature of Avnet employees," John says. "They find a good cause and get after it."