

Hurricane Matthew's impact on Haitian Connection's Projects

Dear Friends and supporters of Haitian Connection,

In order to give you a better idea as to the needs of Haitian Connection at this time, I want to let you know as best as possible where we are with the every one of our projects, and if you are moved to contribute you can do so by using Paypal at the Haitian Connection website or sending a check made out to Haitian Connection and mail it to 5300 S South Shore Drive #27, Chicago, IL 60615

To those of you who have already donated, many, many thanks. You will all receive your tax exempt letter in due time.

Housing Project

Many of the houses, about 80%, have lost their roofs, some of them have walls that have fallen in. We need \$5,000.00 minimum for repairs. The last 3 houses we built have held up and are serving as shelter for people in the community. This is urgent, because unfortunately the rains are falling, especially in the evening making it difficult for people to stay dry.

Breadfruit Flower Business and Plant Nursery

The workshop for the breadfruit flour business has been severely damaged, since the roof flew off the facility. We will try to cover that and make sure our equipment is still functioning. Thanks to a tremendous support from Trees That Feed Foundation we will concentrate on getting seeds to get out plant nursery up and running and distributing the seeds to farmers in our network, so they can begin planning. We are looking for crops that can be harvested in 3 to 5 months. So people have something to eat, and farmers have something to sell. We are happy to let you know that thanks to the support of Trees That Feed Foundation our 2 agronomists can keep their employees, so that they can support their families as well as have money circulating in the community. This is something that is extremely important. Any access you have to seeds will be more than welcome, as well monetary contributions of any amount.

Haitian Connection Office, Meeting Center and Tutoring Center

Miraculously the Center survived the hurricane. The second floor flew off completely since it was made out of tin, but the first floor is intact, except for some water damage. We decided to open the center for a transitional or interim school together with Partners in Parenting Haiti, so that the children in our foster care program have a place to go during the day and not lose all of their learning. In addition, this allows us to retain our tutors as employees so that they have an income and money goes back into the community. Both staff and kids are excited about this interim measure. We do need money for basic school supplies, since all was lost during the hurricane. Some schools that our kids attend survived, but some did not. Even those schools that could

*open will not, until the State declares they can open. If they open before then they could get into real trouble. We need **\$500.00 per month for 21 kids, 4 staff members and supplies.***

Microcredit Project

*The women in our microcredit project lost all their inventory during the hurricane, but they also lost their houses, again due to roofs falling off and walls crumbling. We would like to provide them with seed money so they can get some inventory, because people need to buy some basic things to be able to sell. The women had to buy some basic clothing items themselves, as soap for personal washing as well as for laundry. Some food stuffs and school items will need to be available also. Again a donation to this project will help the women help themselves. **\$500.00 to \$1,000.00 would be a good amount for a minimum of inventory.** We also will expand to a community in great need that we have not serviced before.*

Literacy Program

*The school where we held our literacy classes has been destroyed. While we are not able to begin immediately, we are looking to January to start up again. This is a program that gives women a lot of self-esteem, occupies their minds and is useful in their daily lives. We need basic school supplies and books, as well as money to pay our teachers. Again, when we are able to retain our teachers, we pay them and money can circulate in the community. It takes **\$150.00 a month** to pay our 3 literacy teachers.*

Mental Health Program

*This program will be very useful in a month or so. With our mental health workers, we will hold community workshops to provide the population with basic tools for stress reduction. Again, to keep this program alive we need funds so we can pay our community mental health workers. To have some people in the community have some access to funds, which will help all of the community. An additional **\$1,000.00** would be most helpful.*

Poor Relief Fund

In these times of extreme distress, people often need just a little money to make it through the day. Our poor fund is set up for that. With a very little bit of money we can make a difference in somebody's life. No donation is too small.

The University of the Nouvelle Grand'Anse

Into our 7th year the university suffered immense losses. After a great start with some very dedicated people, and being in the middle of our second course for the first semester hurricane Matthew ravaged the university. The campus itself was under 4 feet of water due to the swollen river behind the campus. The relatively new classrooms are not usable at this point since the roofs simply blew off. Our computer

lab is a total loss. The yellow building is standing, but mud reached even the 2nd floor. The greenhouse is flattened and of course any agricultural programs are decimated. The guest house that accommodated so many of our visiting professors no longer exists. Actually 2 of the professors, one Haitian and one American escaped thanks to the heroic rescue effort of one of our UNOGA students 10 minutes before the house collapsed.

Yet, we are not giving up. We continue to finish out our courses in temporary classrooms to at least encourage the students so they do not feel abandoned. We also want our 4th year students to finish with their thesis, even if it is not with the usual pomp and circumstance, but we need them to finish so they can get their diploma and hopefully find gainful employment so they can help their families and communities. We will need to re-think how we can be more innovative in instruction and coursework. All that will take some time. But nothing is impossible. We do need funds, and are looking to find spaces for some of the students with other universities. Scholarships for our current students will be most helpful, because this is not the time that we can ask them to pay up. They have no funds, and before the storm hit UNOGA had all of 2000.00 Dollars in the accounts mostly due to non-payment of students' tuitions. So if we can get scholarships that will help the students as well as fill the operational budget of the university. A year scholarship is **\$500.00** for one student.

We will also approach Google again at a later time for more laptops, so we can refurbish our computer lab as soon as possible. At this point we have not ascertained the loss of laptops. The electrical infrastructure on campus is in total disarray. We had to house 3 professors in a hotel, and while we got an excellent rate for \$55.00 per person, we will need to pay a debt of \$825.00. The hotel owner is not pressuring us, but will need the money at some time. We need to pay our ancillary staff who cooked and washed for the professors since the hotel was unable to provide food service. In addition, the professors who are finishing courses will also need to be paid at some point.

Since we are without a guest house now, we will eventually need to look for a different place to accommodate the professors.

How much will all this will cost is difficult to estimate but an initial **\$20,000.00 will be necessary** just to get the minimum repairs of infrastructure done.

The Parish of St. Bernard de Clairvaux in Jean Belun

The vice president of Haitian Connection, Fr. Jean-Rony, has just taken over the parish of St. Bernard de Clairvaux as pastor. Even before the hurricane the parish, which is in a remote area outside of Jeremie, had a lot of needs. Now the needs are even greater. The church is ruined, but being cleaned up. The school for 409 kids is standing and

*currently is housing people from the community who lost their houses. Once it is ready to start up again, the situation will be similar to the one at the university. We need about a **\$100.00** scholarship for each student. If your church, parish, organization could commit to 10 scholarships that would be really helpful, because it is with these scholarships that the teachers are being paid. It is extremely important that employees are being retained, so they have money for their families and their communities. If you know of a parish who is interested in entering in a collaborative relationship with St. Bernard de Clairvaux, that would be wonderful. We fully understand that they cannot meet all the needs, but if they would just pick some small portion that would be a tremendous relief.*

Vehicles

*Haitian Connection really needs a vehicle to get around and service all the different projects, speak with people and support and encourage them. A car has been ordered and half of it is paid. We need another **\$5,000.00** to complete the purchase.*

*St. Bernard to Clairvaux needs a pickup truck. Right now Fr. Jean-Rony is using a motorcycle to get around on very treacherous roads. A pickup truck would allow him to transport goods to the parish, pick up food from Food for the Poor, and be of service to his parishioners. A used 5-year-old Ford pickup is **\$15,000.00**.*

I am telling you all this so that you have a better idea of what the needs are. No donation is too small to be appreciated.

In gratefulness

Renate Schneider, President Haitian Connection
Vice Rectrice UNOGA