

January 28, 2017

Dear Friends and Supporters of Haitian Connection,

Many of you have already asked what are my plans now. So here is another update, a bit more optimistic than the last two. As far as Guy Philippe is concerned he did not have a court date yesterday as had been announced previously, but there were big demonstrations on Thursday, and schools were again closed. Nobody knows when his next court date will be. But tomorrow are elections once again in Haiti for local positions and a few senators. That hopefully concludes this election cycle. February 7 the new President is being sworn in, but he is under suspicion for money laundering, charges brought by the provisional president Privert, who also signed the extradition order for Guy Philippe. It seems like he wants to stay in power.

So back to my own plans. I will leave for Haiti on Sunday, February 5, and I am really happy about that. I was saying to a friend of mine that I know now how people feel that had been exiled. That is how I felt, always thinking about Haiti and dealing with the void I felt inside of not being able to be there. Once I get to Port au Prince, I will not go to Jérémie immediately, but will go to Jacmel as well as visit some friends who I have not seen for a while north of Port-au-Prince. Then go to Jérémie somewhat gradually when I feel things are safe. So many people are waiting for my return which is really heartwarming. I miss them just as much as they miss me.

But there is a silver lining in all this. It could be an opportunity to take Haitian Connection national. We certainly have the programs to offer, like Divergent Thinking, mental health training, literacy work, reading, that are adaptable to other places and can make a contribution to other regions. Also, it might be a possibility to work with new partners.

Haitian Connection will launch the Divergent Thinking Institute as well as a reading program with young children. You will hear about these programs as they get off the ground.

My roots are in Jérémie, and it will still remain the center of our activities with some outreach to other regions.

I will stay in touch, and thank you again for all your support.

Renate