



The Haitian Connection Newsletter

Lorraine Antieau, Editor

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A Letter from Renate

Dear Friends and Supporters of Haitian Connection,

The last few weeks and months have been difficult ones for Haiti. Yesterday I literally cried over Haiti much like Jesus cried over Jerusalem. The Haiti I used to know I do not even recognize anymore. The future that seemed once possible now seems largely closed. How does it feel when the future seems impossible? Where does hope go when disaster swallows this horizon of possibility?

During the past few weeks Haiti has been beset by the convulsive tremors of political unrest, both intimate and general at the same time, groping in the dark trying to find direction out of this morass. Weeks now without gas and the resulting consequences of no electricity, no means of transportation, no refrigeration, so schools in session. It feels like something is going to break and it needs to.

People are angry, frustrated, and in despair. From where cometh our help? We have to dig deep inside us to cling to a ray of optimism, to a small beam of light. And as always, we find it in the children who have not lost their innocence completely. But this year many of them will not be able to return to school, because the economic means of their families will not allow them to so. But it is important that they have that chance to keep at least the semblance of normalcy in their lives. School allows them to do that.

Haitian Connection has established a scholarship fund for a school in Jean Bellune where parents cannot even pay the 10.00 Dollars yearly tuition. No child is refused attendance, but it makes it difficult to pay the teachers. When things seem overwhelming it is helpful to focus on the small gestures we can make. A drop in the ocean for sure, but for some people that drop is the ocean.

This week we have a medical delegation here, breast specialists, who examine women for the presence of breast cancer. They do ultra sound biopsies. We had to cut off the generator several times because of the demonstrations. And yet there was satisfaction that we were able to provide these very poor women a service. Today an elderly couple came in, thin to the bone, with the woman definitely having breast cancer. We offered them a plate of food, and it seemed as if they had not eaten this kind of meal in weeks. In a weird way it was a joy to watch them eat their food with so much gusto, and being so very grateful. It takes so little to make somebody happy. Not sure whose happiness was greater, mine or theirs.

Many thanks for your continued support!

Renate

Partners in Parenting Haiti First Aid Activity



From September 12 to September 17 the Executive Director of Partners in Parenting Haiti and a board member together with two members of the Global Orphan Project came to Jérémie to look at PIPH's program. Jan Arney and Linda Woods from PIPH brought First Aid kits for each of the 16 children. We had talked to them about First Aid before, but now they actually had something in hand to use in case of minor emergencies. The kids were thrilled; it is one of the most useful gifts I have ever seen. The information about first aid was followed by a skit demonstrating an application of what was learned.



Cooking School for Kids



On Saturday, July 27, Haitian Connection organized a cooking school for the children participating in the Partners in Parenting Haiti program. Our chef, Madame Wilfred, taught them about the importance of breadfruit and ways it can be used. Then we made cremas, a popular local beverage, as well as porridge, and stressed the importance of using local products to benefit the local economy. In all, 16 children and five adults participated.

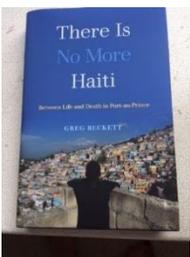


Haitian Connection Announces UN Consultative Status

Haitian Connection is pleased to announce that we have been accepted for consultative status at the United Nations ECOSOC section. This will allow us to further the environmental and economic issues facing Haiti in concert with other countries facing similar issues. It increases the international profile of Haitian Connection.

Book Corner

There Is No More Haiti: Between Life and Death in Port-au-Prince by Greg Beckett.



University of California Press, 2019.

This is not just another book about crisis in Haiti. This book is about what it feels like to live and die with a crisis that never seems to end. It is about the experience of living amid the ruins of ecological devastation, economic collapse, political upheaval, violence, and humanitarian disaster. It is about how catastrophic events and political and economic forces shape the most intimate aspects of everyday life. In this gripping account, anthropologist Greg Beckett offers a stunning ethnographic portrait of ordinary people struggling to survive in Port-au-Prince in the twenty-first century. Drawing on over a decade of research, *There Is No More Haiti* builds on stories of death and rebirth to powerfully reframe the narrative of a country in crisis. It is essential reading for anyone interested in Haiti today.

Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery Continues to Grow

With the help of Trees that Feed Foundation, Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery (JBFN) has installed a new solar dryer. The dryer will allow us to dry more breadfruit in an efficient way, so we can increase production. Also, no electricity is needed to preserve food. Jérémie Breadfruit will now be able to dry breadfruit, mangoes and most other fruits and vegetables. The dryer was made in Haiti by master craftsmen, expertly packed and loaded, and delivered from Port au Prince, over difficult roads, so it arrived without any damage. It was assembled in Doudouch, where the factory is, and is fully operational.



Pierre-Moise, the owner and manager of JBFN, conducted a training on breadfruit transformation, how to turn breadfruit into flour, for the group that delivered the solar dryer from Port au Prince. He also included a session in the training on how to propagate breadfruit trees by using roots.

We had a visit from Larry Rauenhorst who has visited JBFN in the past. He built a small solar dryer for us with plastic tarp and bamboo (right), all materials that can be obtained in Haiti without much difficulty. Larry also donated some important tools to us, including a large electrical drill, something that is difficult to purchase here in Haiti. THANK YOU, LARRY.



Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery is continuing to transport breadfruit seedlings to Port au Prince with the support of Trees That Feed Foundation. We are helping reforest Haiti one tree at a time. The breadfruit seedlings are transported by pickup truck. They cannot be exposed to the sun and wind too much, so they leave the nursery very early in the morning. Pierre-Moise, owner and manager of JBFN, hires the truck, and pays for the transport. The seedlings are brought to Three Angels, an orphanage in Port au Prince (Delmas), and distributed from there.

Weight of Silence Launch Parties

Author Janine Harrison is donating 100% of the proceeds of her first book of poetry, *Weight of Silence*, to Haitian Connection! Two launch parties were held, the first on Saturday, September 28 at Paul Henry's Art Gallery in Hammond, IN, and the second at Haitian American Museum of Chicago on Saturday, October 12. If you were unable to attend, please purchase her book at your local independent bookseller. Also available at Amazon.

Partnership with Local Health Providers



Haitian Connection is proud to partner with the Grand'Anse Health and Development Association. GAHDA provides essential healthcare and a range of supportive services to the Grand'Anse Community. Renate Schneider, Haitian Connection's president, has worked with GAHDA on several occasions as a translator and intake worker. Dr. Bette Gebrian is the founder and executive director of GAHDA. The organization's focus is women's health, especially breast health and cancer detection.

October USA Breast Cancer Month: Notes from Dr. Bette Gebrian

There is no month dedicated to breast cancer in Haiti. There are no national programs or routine screenings. There are only a handful of pathologists to diagnose cancer in a country of over 10 million people. An hour and a half from US shores, a young woman died last month leaving her 11-year-old son, her breast cancer too advanced for surgical care. She was 32 years old. There is limited medication for cancer and almost none to ease horrific pain as women die. GAHDA and our Haitian partners, including women's group members, religious leaders, radio stations, the largest private cell phone company, nurses and physician volunteers have joined together to do something about this.

Thousands of Haitian families in the remote, rural SW region of Haiti listened to a radio program hosted by 3 popular stations as Dr. Jean Robert Douge described early signs of breast cancer and where to find diagnostic services in Jérémie. He talked about breast health and shared stories of women who were lost to the disease. In August and September, GAHDA advertised dates for biopsy clinics by text messages in Haitian Kreyol to thousands of cell phones throughout the region, and through religious leaders who read the announcement about the GAHDA clinic dates during services.

Dr. Douge, an internist born in Jérémie and trained at the National Consortium for Breast Centers (NCBC) was joined by a group of sonographers and a radiologist from Sioux Falls, South Dakota to conduct a biopsy clinic. Hundreds of women received a clinical breast exam, sonogram, biopsy when necessary and pathology results (within 10 days).

The women made tremendous effort to access the clinic. A nurse midwife in a remote clinic urged a 60-year-old woman to make the trip to Jérémie – a 2-hour trip by motorcycle. Two came from the island of Cayemitte, first by boat and then in the truck of a religious leader. One woman and her husband walked across the footbridge over the Grand'Anse River and continued on foot to receive care. Many women walked into the clinic having slept in town the night before.

Additional tests were offered free of charge at the GAHDA Center on October 11 by Robert Downey of Global Health Teams, including CBC and liver profile in preparation for surgical intervention. Teams from Connecticut and Mississippi alongside local Haitian anesthesiologist and general surgeon perform breast cancer surgeries twice a year.

October is not good for the women (and a newly found male) in Haiti with breast cancer. There are no tanks of gas in the operating room for anesthesia. There are no drums of diesel fuel to run the hospital generator. The only surgeries performed are emergency cesarean sections for women in labor. A surgical team, prepared since July to come for a week of breast cancer procedures, had to postpone their trip until the new year. The youngest woman waiting for surgery is 38 years old and diagnosed in 2018. She takes a cancer medicine orally while she waits. Time is running out for her.

There is no breast cancer month in Haiti. It is every day, for every family, one to one with support of many. Help us with funds for education, transportation, screening, ultrasonography, biopsy, pathology, surgery, treatment and palliative care! www.gahda.org

Haitian Connection

Haitian Connection is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization founded in 2005, which focuses on the needs of women, children and young adults in the Jérémie region of southwest Haiti. A variety of projects have already touched thousands of lives: houses have been built for more than 97 women and their children; a small microcredit program is providing economic opportunity for women in 2 communities; a potable water initiative is giving healthy water to one thousand families; and local school teachers have received training in the Child-to-Child method. Haitian Connection's Divergent Thinking Institute is providing Divergent Thinking seminars all over Haiti.

As a response to the earthquake in January 2010, and its psychological aftermath, Haitian Connection has established a mental health program in Jérémie to provide counseling as people resettle, tally their losses and adjust to a new reality. 27 members of the community have been trained in psychological first aid. This served the greater Jérémie area well after Hurricane Matthew in October of 2016. Our mental health agents were able to hold community meetings to give people an opportunity to debrief and receive some training in stress reduction techniques.

Support Us

Haitian Connection is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation registered in Illinois and your gifts are tax deductible. Our projects depend on volunteers and the financial support of people who desire to help.

The cost of building a home for a woman and her family in Jérémie is \$2,000. The houses have three rooms and a latrine. You could contribute to a house, or even get your church/organization to sponsor a whole house. After Hurricane Matthew, this has become a priority for people in the region.

Scholarships for needy students from elementary to secondary schools.

Microcredit group: contributions accepted.

Mental Health Program: contributions to mental health center accepted (total cost for one year \$10,000)

Support for training programs in Divergent Thinking, mental health, Child-to-Child, and continuing education. For every program for 25 people we provide a meal for all participants and give the facilitators a stipend (about \$500 per training).

To support our projects financially, donate online by visiting our website at: www.HaitianConnection.org and clicking on the PayPal button.

If you would prefer to send your donation by mail, please address checks to: **Haitian Connection**
5300 South Shore Drive # 27
Chicago, IL 60615

When you order from Amazon.com, giving to Haitian Connection is easy! Simply go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> to get started!

Get Involved

We are looking for volunteers: English teachers, educators, specialists in various fields to give short conferences or seminars.

To volunteer, contact **Renate Schneider** at haitianconnection@gmail.com or by phone at **312/493-3719**; in Haiti: **011/509/3 463-7532**

