



November 2019

Dear Friends and supporters of Haitian Connection,

Instead of Christmas Carols and Peace on Earth, Haitians will be thankful if they have enough to prepare a meal, and if the guns will be silent during the Holy Night.

For the last year and a half especially (not to mention the last 400 years), the Haitian people have been suffering deep political and social upheavals, often violent, caused by the decreased value of the local currency by half, and increased cost of living by a quarter.

With whatever meager income you have (for the vast majority of the people here, this is still less than \$800 per year), you can now afford 25% of what you used to be able to buy.

People cannot live like this.

In addition, the severe shortages of fuel, the scandal over the funds that subsidized fuel, and the frequent and violent blocking of the roads, bring dramatic challenges to every single person in Haiti without exception.

At Christmas we talk about how a great light has appeared in the darkness, but we struggle to see it. Nonetheless it is that light that gives us hope. Haitian Connection is not giving up hope. We stand in hopeful solidarity with the Haitian people, and will continue our work steadfastly and with courage. To continue that work we have to change ourselves and what we expect. Rather than looking at large numbers we are grateful for very small successes. and treasure the nuances we notice when accompanying the people of Jérémie and the Grand'Anse.

While we have not seen the last 3 houses we constructed for women and their children, because it has been impossible to travel, we continue this project that brings security to women and their children. 104 houses built so far, and we continue on. 2,000.00 Dollars pays for a house with 3 rooms, a veranda and a latrine. A dream come true for women who never dared to have a dream.

Our mental health program is now urgent, more than ever. People are suffering, and so we reach out to give people the tools to manage their own lives just a little better. 300.00 Dollars allows us to set up an outreach and reach 50 to 100 people. The testimonies of the participants are heartwarming.

Our great love and compassion for the children of Jérémie is evident in our after-school program so loved by the children. This includes a successful reading program through the establishment of a small children's library. We also have a relationship with Fr. Jean-Rony's school in Jean Bellune, where we provide comparets (a Haitian sweet roll) to 450 students a week. The children love the comparets, and it tones down the hunger a little bit that most of them feel. To run these programs 300.00 Dollars a month would really help out.

We also have a scholarship program. For 100.00 Dollars a year you can sponsor a child to pay all of the tuition and uniform as well as text books. The tuition money also pays for the teachers' salaries, and many children are truly unable to pay. This presents a huge obstacle for the running of the school with 450 students and 26 staff members. Education is so important, and these children are the future of Haiti.

Despite the economic and political difficulties, we just expanded our micro credit program with 7 women from Jérémie who despite the impossible situation are able to do the impossible and eke out a living with the small commerce that they are able to maintain. Prices have doubled and tripled, and yet somehow they manage. An influx of funds would help to increase their inventory whenever trucks can come through to deliver goods. 500.00 Dollars would really help these women.

We would like to expand our cash without condition program to include some additional women. If you feel you would like to sponsor a woman for 30.00 Dollars a month that would be an amazing gift. These women are so amazing and can do so much with so little.

We are not only concerned with education for the children, but we also have an adult literacy program in Latibolye. About 20 women and a few men participate. We are now in our third year and going strong. We pay the teachers who work 5 days a week 50.00 Dollars a month. For our two very dedicated staff that amounts to 100.00 Dollars. Now that hunger is a reality we would like to supply them with food packets. When we strengthen women we strengthen families.

Haitian Connection also has a poor fund, when somebody has a real need, and no way to find help, Haitian Connection does assist whenever possible.

Keep in mind that the staff of Haitian Connection consists of volunteers who do not get paid. Occasionally they will receive a small stipend. So please be generous in these critical times, you can make a child smile and a senior feel assured, because she is listened to.

May you receive light and joy during this special season. And Thank You!



Renate

P.s. To give you can donate via the website Haitianconnection.org or send a check to Haitian Connection
5300 South Shore Drive
Apt 27
Chicago, IL 60615.