



Thanksgiving 2020

Dear Friends and Supporters of Haitian Connection,

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday this year, we all realize that it will be a different Thanksgiving than those in previous years. The corona virus has changed more than just how we celebrate holidays, it changed a whole way of life for many here in the US and other countries.

Thankfully and contrary to expectations, God (as many Haitians will say) has taken pity on Haiti, and corona has not infected as many people and the death rate is low. Schools have opened without a problem. First in August to finish out the previous lost school year, and now on November 9 to begin a new school year. But despite the fact that the threat of COVID-19 did not materialize to the extent imagined, Haiti is still beset with many problems.

One is the rapid devaluation of the Dollar (see the accompanying article) which was sudden and left many Haitians who rely on remittances from abroad in a difficult situation with the value of those remittances down to half of what they were before. Many NGOs who primarily function with American Dollars have also been hit hard. While prices (as mentioned in the article) originally went down, they have now crept up again, so life is a lot harder for many people (as if it hasn't been hard enough already).

The second issue confronting Haitians is the rise in insecurity. Kidnapping is on the rise. There have been 124 kidnappings so far. The most disturbing has been perpetrated on a student in Port au Prince. It aroused the whole population to demonstrate. I am attaching Edwidge Danticat's moving article for you. But this insecurity has also made itself known in Jérémie. The last week, two health centers were broken into, one is located in Abricots and the other in Gatineau. Computers, medicines, and buckets filled with food were stolen.

Despite the many obstacles, Haitian Connection continues to work alongside our Haitian partners. In this year of COVID-19, insecurity and devaluation of the Dollar we were able

- to build 5 additional homes for women and their children, bringing out total today to 109 homes. We are still able to stay within the \$2,000.00 Dollars.
- We paid the salaries of 6 elementary school teachers in Jean Bellune
- We provided full scholarships for 15 students, both in elementary school and in secondary school

- We sponsored the establishment of a community store in Latibolye allowing the population to purchase locally rather than having to pay the high cost of transportation to go into Jérémie
- We supported the Jérémie law school with the gift of 25 laptops
- We continued without interruption our program cash without condition for our 10 women
- We supported out small credit association with necessary funds so they can continue to function
- We supported 10 women from our poor fund who had been falling on hard times
- We purchase 20 locally produced chairs for our Haitian Connection center in Jérémie for our re-opening this month
- Our mental health agents continue to work in their community to provide mental health first aid
- We facilitated treatment for two psychiatric patients in Port au Prince (they have greatly improved), this included an inpatient stay of 2 weeks, meds and treatment
- Construction of a wall enclosure for the parish of Jean Bellune, construction on the church should start shortly
- Purchase 8 batteries or Jean Bellune so that they can have electricity at eh church and rectory
- Provided translation services to the Breast Cancer Clinic in Jérémie
- Sent a 6-month infant old to Port au Prince to provide for hernia surgery
- Distributed 4000 komparets per month with Trees that Feed Foundation to schools and orphanages

In order to continue our work for this coming year we need your support. We would like

- to build 5 additional houses
- re-open our afterschool program with a small computer lab and staff (we pay our staff)
- establish a computer lab in Jean Bellune
- establish a school kitchen in Jean Bellune
- continue with our current programs (see above)

All of this will not solve the problems facing Haiti and Jérémie, but by accompanying people in their struggles, we can see to it that they will benefit or at least not be further deprived.

Wishing you a blessed Thanksgiving and thanking you already for your contribution to this life-giving work of Haitian Connection. It is truly a privilege to be involved with the people of Jérémie and to know that you are all on our side.



Peace and Love,

Renate