



The Haitian Connection Newsletter

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News from St. Bernard de Clairvaux in Jean Bellune



The kitchen construction at St. Bernard de Clairvaux in Jean Bellune is finished and the kitchen is now functional. The women employed are from Jean Bellune, and they are preparing over 400 meals 5 days a week for the school children. Hats off to them because they are making it work, and the children are getting a warm meal every school day. The children and the staff of the school are very happy. The kitchen is providing work to local women. In addition, instead of using charcoal the kitchen is using propane which cuts down on smoke and depends less on the weather. Rain is no obstacle to cooking. Thank you to all the generous donors whose contributions made this big project possible.



St. Bernard de Clairvaux celebrated carnival, a welcome distraction from all the problems Haitian children encounter daily. Food is always a necessary ingredient to make carnival a success, and the community was happy to use the new school kitchen built with the help of Haitian Connection. A good time was had by all. The kids were very active in organizing this activity.



In other news from St. Bernard de Clairvaux, the new wall around the church property is now finished and in place to protect the upcoming construction of a new church. The previous church building was destroyed by Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Haitian Connection provided financial assistance for the building of the wall.

Afterschool Program Helps Students Shine



Haitian Connection's afterschool program in Jérémie is going strong in 2021. The kids continue to participate enthusiastically, especially as they are in their second exam period of the school year. They



see the value of education and are working hard despite being surrounded by political unrest. The students are happy to have a place to study and get additional help from experienced teachers. Thank you to all who support this effort. Men anpil chay pa lou. (Many hands lighten the load). It is a joy to be working with them, and the fact that the program continues to thrive is one of Haitian Connection's proudest accomplishments in such difficult times.

Here is a letter one of the students, Marie Ermeline, wrote:

I like the after-school center a lot, there are things in school that I do not understand well. But after I work with the teachers at the center, I understand them much better. The center does a lot of things for me. I don't have money to pay a tutor and at the center they explain things very well and they are very nice. My family knows about the center and they are very happy because I got an excellent grade in math. Thank you so much Madame Renate, because you opened this center for us. God bless you and guide you in everything you do.

Enjoy this collage of photos taken at the after-school program:



Haitian Connection Continues Building Houses for Women



Our goal for 2021 is building an additional 5 houses. Construction has started on the first two. These houses are for women and their children so that they can live safe and secure. People from the community decide which woman will receive a house, and local people do the construction. That way money flows back in



to the community. A very sustainable project which lifts women and their children out of poverty.

Chickens Offer More Than Eggs

Despite the increasing insecurity in Haiti, Haitian Connection is continuing its work in solidarity with the Haitian people, especially its women. This pilot project



just started whereby women in our cash without conditions program are each receiving 2 egg laying chickens. If we see that this is a beneficial project, we will expand it. These women can sell the eggs, improve the nutrition of their kids, and after some time they can sell the chicks these hens produce.



Book + Media Corner



Humanity's Last Stand: Confronting Global Catastrophe by Mark Schuller

Are we as a species headed towards extinction? As our economic system renders our planet increasingly inhospitable to human life, powerful individuals fight over limited resources, and racist reaction to migration strains the social fabric of many countries. How can we retain our humanity in the midst of these life-and-death struggles?

Humanity's Last Stand dares to ask these big questions, exploring the interconnections between climate change, global capitalism, xenophobia, and white supremacy. As it unearths how capitalism was born from plantation slavery and the slaughter of Indigenous people, it also invites us to imagine life after capitalism. The book teaches its readers how to cultivate an anthropological imagination, a mindset that remains attentive to local differences even as it identifies global patterns of inequality and racism.

Surveying the struggles of disenfranchised peoples around the globe from frontline communities affected by climate change, to #BlackLivesMatter activists, to Indigenous water protectors, to migrant communities facing increasing hostility, anthropologist Mark Schuller argues that we must develop radical empathy in order to move beyond simply identifying as "allies" and start acting as "accomplices." Bringing together the insights of anthropologists and activists from many cultures, this timely study shows us how to stand together and work toward a more inclusive vision of humanity before it's too late.

Mark Schuller, current President of the Haitian Studies Association, is Professor of Anthropology and Nonprofit and NGO Studies at Northern Illinois University and affiliate at the Faculté d'Ethnologie, l'Université d'État d'Haïti. His long working experience in Haiti has resulted in many scholarly articles as well as practical insights in the current situation.

Documentary Profiles the Only Pediatric Hospital in Haiti



The Land of High Mountains is the inspiring true story of the only pediatric hospital in Haiti. The hospital is run by Fr. Rick Frechette, ordained priest and medical doctor, with over 35 years in Haiti. In a country where one third of the population is under 14 years of age and foreign NGOs consistently come and go, NPH Saint Damien Pediatric Hospital has been providing Haitian managed life-saving care to the most vulnerable children for over 30 years. The title of the film is an homage to the native Taino who long before European subjugation called this

place, "Ayiti." This word means, the land of high mountains. The mountains in Haiti, both literal and metaphorical, are imposing and seemingly endless. This documentary is a powerful account of the incredible people, both Haitian and foreign, who are working together to heal the children of the island and to realize the dreams of a nation.

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**

