



Tribute to Paul Farmer, 1959-2022

Servant of the Poor – Paul Farmer by Gerry Straub



“The idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world”.

The global health community and countless others who were healed, taught, or simply inspired by Dr. Paul Farmer were shocked and saddened to learn of his death on Feb. 21. Dr. Farmer was a medical anthropologist, physician, and co-founder of Partners in Health, a nonprofit that revolutionized global health care. He believed the poorest of the poor in places like Haiti and Rwanda deserved high-quality medical care—and dedicated his life to delivering it.

In Haiti Farmer saw that more than just treating the illness of a poor person, there was a need to care for their social needs, such as do they have enough to eat, who watches their kids when they come to the clinic. You don't just treat the patient; you also must treat their environment. A person leaves the hospital healed and goes home to living in the same germ-infested situation that contributed to their illness. Farmer was faced with the scandal of inequality in health care in countries where most people do not even have access to primary care. He wanted to provide the social support his poor patients needed. Farmer realized the he needed medical people to accompany the poor in their illness. He established links between the clinic and the person's home.

Paul Farmer's Catholic faith drove him to work untiringly to make a preferential option for the poor in health care. Farmer, with his colleagues at Harvard University and Partners in Health, was instrumental in bringing the fruits of modern medicine to millions of the poorest people in the world, in places like Haiti, Rwanda, Peru, Russia, Malawi, and West Africa during the recent Ebola crisis. Challenging the conventional wisdom of global health experts, Dr. Farmer demonstrated it is possible to deliver high-quality medical care on a large scale in settings of great poverty and to build communities around the globe where good health and hope prevail. When you are poor, it is easy to give into despair. Farmer was, for the poor, an antidote to despair.

Renate's Note: The world lost a giant, a saint, a healer. Haitian Connection had the privilege of visiting him in Cange, his Aids clinic, and also his amazing hospital in Mirabileais. Paul Farmer has served as my inspiration, and even though I did not get to work with him side by side, his spirit has always accompanied me. May we all continue his work.

A Note from Renate



I had a wonderful visit in March with Mary and Mike McLoughlin, Founders and Presidents of Trees That Feed Foundation. They have collaborated with Haitian Connection and Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery for many years. Their mission is to plant trees that can provide for nourishment for people. They have taken a special interest in Haiti, but work worldwide. Kudos for all they do.



Tasty Results Emerge from Cake Decorating Workshop

Haitian Connection supported a cake decorating workshop at ECAMM over Carnival weekend. The students loved it, and they made some amazing cakes. It is great to have these skills, they can lead to a job or to occasional employment during special seasons. Thanks to all who contributed to this effort, especially also to Fr. Luxo who never tires of looking for activities for Jeremie's young people.



Mental Health Training Brings Hope to Remote Areas



Haitian Connection in collaboration with FNGA (Fondasyon Nouvel Grand'Anse) conducted a 4-day workshop in mental health. This workshop was addressed to the communities in the mountains around Jérémie, areas which are difficult to get to, and often neglected. It took place in the village of Despagne and 30 participants came from Despagne and 4 nearby mountain villages. The training was aimed at trainers of the trainers. In other words, the people Haitian Connection trained are now able to go out in the communities and train others and work with the population. The greatest challenges confronting these remote areas is that there is no mental health service at all, hurricanes and earthquakes create trauma for the entire population. Very little aid reaches them after these natural disasters, so that goods cannot come through and the cost of food goes sky-high. People find it impossible to provide for their families, which creates even more stressful conditions. Three of our mental health trainers did an amazing job. Bravo! The people they trained want them to come back.



Jérémie Medical Student Interns at Paul Farmer's Hospital

Haitian Connection's donors are so generous. One donor, who formerly taught at the Université de la Nouvelle Grand'Anse (UNOGA), is supporting a medical student with his school and living expenses in Port au Prince. Thank you so much Cheryl, and hats off to the student, Reginal, who is persisting with his studies despite all the problems in Port au Prince: lack of electricity, an attempted kidnapping, no consistent internet, etc. Even when bullets are flying, he continues to study. His commitment is amazing. Reginal is currently interning at the hospital in Mirebalais, funded by Paul Farmer and Partners in Health (PIH), which has become the largest teaching hospital in Haiti. We are so glad that Reginal is getting a chance to intern there.



Celebration of Women and Girls Working for the Planet

CARIBBEAN PHILANTHROPIC ALLIANCE

WOMEN & EARTH WE CARE

A virtual celebration of women and girls working for the planet

DATE
SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2022

TIME
4PM EST / 5PM AST

REGISTER NOW

zoom **f** **LIVE**

MARY McLOUGHLIN
Keynote Speaker
Trees That Feed Foundation

NALINI SOORIAL
General Manager
Recycling Partners of Jamaica

DR. SONIA PETER
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Ministry of Education & Research Programme

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President & Founder
of Haitian Connection

VIVIAN THOMAS
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PUSH A YOUNG ONE THE LIFE

CECILIA SCHNEIDER
Owner, Product Manager/ Creator
DIXIE PASTELINE BAKERY/ARTS

On March 26, women from many countries had the opportunity to speak about their projects at a Zoom conference sponsored by the Caribbean Philanthropic alliance. The projects focus on caring for the planet. Mary McLoughlin of Trees That Feed Foundation was the keynote speaker for the event, and Renate spoke about Haitian Connection's Women's Empowerment Project at the meeting. TTF has been very involved in Haitian Connection's efforts in Jérémie, and she and her husband have similar projects all over the world. For this work, Mary received the Women of the Earth Award from the Alliance. Congratulations, Mary!

New Opportunity for After School Students



Sometimes when one door closes, another one opens. As we reported in our last newsletter, we had to vacate our previous after school location. But it turns out that our new location at St. Jean Bosco School is a much nicer setting. The room is large and airy, with benches and several blackboards, and the location has security. The children are very happy and so is our staff. In fact, because of this

favorable new situation, some parents pleaded with us to admit their children, and we have accepted three additional students. As you can see, the children take their schoolwork seriously, and they are proud to have extra tutoring.



Mental Health Efforts in Deschamps

Pastor Erik Pierre, one of our most active mental health agents in the community of Deschamps meets daily with a number of community groups to teach them stress reduction techniques. Life is getting more and more difficult for people in the Grand'Anse region, and our training on stress reduction is always well received. To paraphrase Kermit the frog, it's not easy being poor.



Jérémie Breadfruit Flour Creates Opportunities for Women



On Saturday, April 2, 2022, Haitian Connection sponsored a training on the uses of breadfruit and especially in comparet production. The request for this training came from the women's group in Latibolye. Esther Jean Jacques as part of the Women's empowerment project, has organized a group of women to sell comparets, thus assuring that they are able to make some money to sustain their livelihood and send their kids to school. Comparets are Haitian sweet rolls and very popular. This effort was a joint project with Trees That Feed Foundation and Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery. The idea for the Women's Empowerment project came from Mary McLaughlin of Trees that Feed, and the initial pilot is already very successful. The comparets for this project are produced by Jérémie Breadfruit Flour.

This particular training was conducted by Pierre-Moise Louis, the proprietor of Jérémie Breadfruit Flour. Esther, the leader of the women's group made all the local arrangements and provided breakfast as well as lunch for all participants, assisted of course by other members of the group.



The training was enthusiastically received and served as a motivator for the local sales force. As a side note, the comparets you see in the pictures were baked on site, not in an oven, but rather in a very large pot with double covers.

Haitians can be very creative, finding ways to work around the many obstacles they encounter. The participants loved the comparets and got to taste them and also take some home to their families. This shows that where people work together, progress can be made!



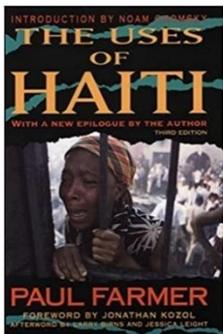
International Women's Day Celebrated in Latibolye



March 8, International Women's Day, the women of Latibolye came together to pray, to learn, to sing and dance, and unite as one. Haitian Connection underwrote the whole day, sponsored the food, the music and everything else to make this day a success. Our mental health agents were actively involved. Esther, one of our mental health agents, organized the whole day with help from women in the community. Latibolye was heavily damaged during the earthquake, and this day was a welcome respite for the women.



Book Corner



The Uses of Haiti by Paul Farmer

This classic work by the late Paul Farmer is truly a must-read for all those interested in understanding the history of Haiti.

“The Uses of Haiti tells the truth about uncomfortable matters—uncomfortable, that is, for the structures of power and the doctrinal framework that protects them from scrutiny. It tells the truth about what has been happening in Haiti, and the US role in its bitter fate.” Noam Chomsky, from the introduction

In this third edition of the classic *The Uses of Haiti*, Paul Farmer looks at what has happened to the health of the poor in Haiti since the coup.

Winner of a McArthur Genius Award, Paul Farmer is a physician and anthropologist who has worked for 25 years in Haiti, where he serves as medical director of a hospital serving the rural poor. He is the subject of the Tracy Kidder biography, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*.

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

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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**

