



The Haitian Connection Newsletter

Lorraine Antieau, Editor

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Women's Empowerment Project Grows Wings



The community of Latibolye has carried their enthusiasm for the sales of konparets a step further. As Esther, the leader in that community, said, "We want to work." The women had taken the training on konparet production and decided to produce konparets themselves. They pooled their money to be able to buy the necessary ingredients themselves, purchasing breadfruit flour from Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery and obtaining the other ingredients at the local market. Since all the ovens in the Latibolye area were destroyed during the earthquake they women located a functional oven a few miles away. They rent the oven, and pay for the rental. They produce three sizes of konparets, one for 25 Gourdes, one for 50 Gourdes, and one for 100 Gourdes. All sizes are selling very well. This shows real initiative: "We want to work". Given the opportunity Haitian women will do all they can to make some money for their families. They truly have an entrepreneurial spirit.



Special Appeal

The women involved in the Women's Empowerment Project want to work. As they said themselves, "We have the motivation, the desire and the capacity to make a go of a project we would like to realize." In the aftermath of the earthquake, they would like to build an oven in their own community. This would allow them to produce more and also not only konparets but also bread, chips and other baked goods. The oven would provide income for the women and the families during these difficult times. We are asking for help to finance this project. The oven itself will cost \$500.00, and it also needs a house to protect the it from the elements, which would cost another \$500.00. If you feel so moved, please send a check to: **Haitian Connection, 5300 South Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60615**, or donate on the website via the donate button. You will be contributing to the establishment of a Haitian business for women and the whole community will benefit.

After-School Participants Pass Exams



Our after-school program is continuing and we are happy to announce that all of the children participating passed the 2nd control. This is excellent. In Haiti there are 3 controls each school year. A control is a very important exam for the students, which is part of their final grade and determines whether the student can advance to the next grade. Not only are the students and parents happy, but our teaching staff is also delighted. Their efforts are very worthwhile. They are very devoted and show up 5 times a week without fail. Hats off to them.



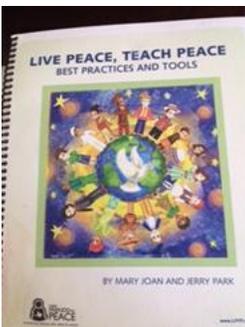
Enjoy this gallery of photos from the after-school program:



Haitian Connection Sponsors Summer Camps



Haitian Connection staff members are leading four camps this summer, in addition sponsoring another camp financially. We launched this as a pilot project, and because it has been so successful, we plan to offer more camps next summer and hope to continue for many years to come. It is a true joy to have been able to provide this activity for the children; over 200 children have participated.



The focus for the camps is on peace building to counter violence. Thanks to the Little Friends for Peace whose motto is, answering violence with skills for peace, we have a curriculum and some materials to begin. When the security situation improves, we will have a face-to-face training for staff. We are very excited about this new found collaboration with Little Friends for Peace. Besides songs and games, important issues are discussed, such as personal hygiene, protection of the environment, negative impact of violence (physical, verbal, psychological), mental health topics.

(Summer Camps continued)

Snacks and a meal are also provided. Initially we planned to only provide konparets, bread and peanut butter and fruit. But our Haitian coordinators decided that the kids needed more and so they made rice and beans. For many of these kids it is the only meal they receive that day. We also served drinks for each child. Thanks to our donors who made this project possible, and to our Haitian staff who gave their all to make this a very successful event.

The activities took place, in Deschamps under the leadership of Pastor Erik, in Jérémie under the leadership of Eliasme, and in Latibolye under the leadership of Esther. Beraca was the location of the camp financially sponsored by Haitian Connection. The final camp will take place in another region outside of Jérémie, but they are starting a little later. Please enjoy a few photos below:

Deschamps:



Jérémie:



Latibolye:



Beraca: The camp in Beraca received financial support from Haitian Connection. This program was initiated by a young friend of Renate's who does not give up and always has new ideas. Over 200 children of various ages participated. This camp's session ran longer than Haitian Connection's own program and focused on the arts, songs and dance. It was a great contribution to Jérémie in these difficult times.



Wedding of Pierre-Moise and Edlyne



Pierre-Moise is the Founder and CEO of Jérémie Breadfruit Flour and Nursery. Our collaboration goes back many years when he was a student at UNOGA (University of the Nouvelle Grand'Anse). He was also one of Haitian Connection's first scholarship students. Pierre-Moise was part of the inaugural class and majored in agronomy. He now has a Master's degree from Brazil.

Haitian Connection is wishing the new couple all the best for the coming years, much happiness, success, and continued health. Both will continue to help develop the Grand'Anse region.

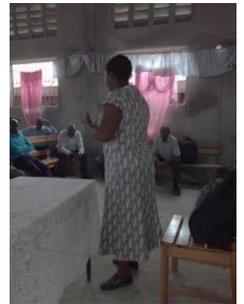
Community Mental Health Programs



Our community mental health workers are always busy. They visit different groups in the rural areas, and are always well received. Our mental healthcare workers work with them on stress reduction, play games, and they listen to the issues that confront the community. We have set up a WhatsApp group among our mental health care workers ourselves, and check in with each other at least 3 times a week to report

what we are working on and how we see the benefits that our work brings. The mental health agents are tireless in their efforts.

Our mental health workers are doing many community workshops, taking initiatives and going out on their own to speak to community groups about mental health issues, primarily in the rural areas surrounding the town of Jérémie. The wife of the Baptist minister in Jérémie, Madame Naomi Phelice, works a lot with women's groups in the area. Her latest outreach was in Marfranc, a village outside of Jérémie. She has been asked to return to give more training.



Housing Update

So far in 2022, Haitian Connection has completed 4 houses! Please read below for a brief introduction to each new owner.



House #1: The owner of this house is Sabruna Celestin, who lives in Matineau. She is 35 years old and the mother of 3 children: 2 daughters and a son, their ages are 11, 8 and 6 years old. A total of 5 people live in the house. According to Sabruna, her husband abandoned her after finding a younger woman. To make a living, she buys

things on credit and sells them on the market. Sabruna is very happy for the house. saying that is the greatest gift you can give to someone in need of a home. She says as a homeless woman that you will never be respected in the area. Sabruna previously lived in a small, dilapidated house. According to her, thanks to Ms. Renate, she now has a little honor in the community because she has a new home. Again, thank you, Mrs. Renate, for this great gift.



(Housing Update, continued)

House #2: This is a large duplex in the town of Prince, built for two women who are cousins and hold title to the land jointly. Both of these women left the Port au Prince because they could not make a living and returned to the place where they were born. Each family has separate living quarters.



The owner of the second house is Julia Pierre, who is 37 years old and has two children: an 11-year-old girl and a 3-year-old boy. In the second unit is her 38-year-old woman who has two sons, aged 10 and 3 years old. There are a total of 10 people living in the building. The children go to private schools. Julia trades in oil and spices and also does laundry.

Julia is very happy for the house, and says thank you to Mrs. Renate for this gift in this difficult year. Only God can reward you for this great gesture, she says. She will raise up those who have contributed to the house and pray.



House #3: The woman who received the third house is Caline Alexis, living in the small village of Berlège outside of Jérémie. She is 42 years old and has 6 children, 3 girls and 3 boys, ranging from 25 to 9 years old. 4 of the children are in school, 2 in private school and 2 in a school that receives support from the state. Tuition is not expensive. Currently 11 people live in the house. One of the daughters is pregnant and has not finished 9th grade.

The father of that child is too young to make an adequate income to support his child, which increases the load on Caline. Her husband is old and sick, and is unable to do anything to contribute to the household. Caline supports the family by buying matches on credit and selling them. Having her own house gives Caline value in society.



House #4: The owner of this house is Marie Magarette Antoine, who lives in Berlège. She is 59 years old and has 11 children: 6 girls and 5 boys. Her children range from 35 years old down to 13. Four of the children are in public school. There are a total of 14 people living in this house. Mme. Antoine is sick with a stomach ulcer and has an appointment to go to the HHF hospital. Her husband is quite old. He does not have the strength and

energy to care for this large family. Mme. Antoine earns a living from small trade in food products, and this makes it possible for her to live with her children. She has a small farm when the season is good. She sent some of her children away from home (restavek), because she had no place to house and feed all her children. Today, Mme. Antoine is happy because she has a brand-new house. She says thank you Renate for this great gift

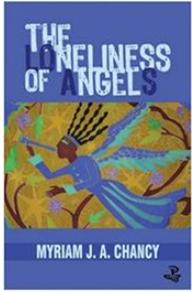


The picture to the left is in front of the latrine which we build with each house, the one on the right is Marie's old house which she now uses as a kitchen.



Book Corner

The Loneliness of Angels by Myriam J. A. Chancy, Peepal Tree Press Ltd, 2010



Offering a richly nuanced portrayal placing Haiti in a global context as a place of ethnic and cultural complexity, this novel explores the role of spirituality in Caribbean life and culture. Told through multiple voices in a nonlinear fashion, the narrative unfolds through the perspectives of a Haitian-Syrian merchant, Ruth, who recounts her young adulthood and final days as she intuits her imminent death; Catherine, a professional pianist living in Paris who travels home to Haiti upon hearing of her Aunt Ruth's murder; Rose, Catherine's mother, an empath, who is believed to have committed suicide in Canadian exile in reaction to the worst years of the Duvalier regime; Romulus, a once famous Konpa singer and an addict, who, released by rebels from a Port-au-Prince jail searches for his redemption; and Elsie, an Irish, working-class seer who emigrates to

Haiti in 1847 in search of a new mystic who will guide them all. Traversing the terrains of Port-au-Prince middle-class life, working-class French Canada, expatriate Paris, the peat bogs of famine-stricken Ireland, and tracing lives that cross boundaries of time and place, this is a deeply absorbing portrayal of a fragmented community whose deepest connections lie in a shared sense of spirituality.

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**

