



St. Francis-Haiti
Outreach Ministry

118 N. New Street
Staunton, VA 24401

NEWSLETTER

February 2017
Volume 11 No. 1



This month's pictures show pictures of students at Our Lady of Pointe-a-Raquette School.

News from Pointe-a-Raquette

In January, Marie Thomas, Angie McFarling, Lisa Olshove, Tamara Ridenour, and Chrissy Knight visited our twin parish of St. Louis in Haiti. We truly exercised the Ministry of Presence by visiting with the many families in the community. Our approach was to ask them new questions—not “What do you need?”, but “What are the things you do well and how can you use your talents to improve the community and your life?” We met a young man who is educated in the law and wants to serve the community, a woman who is a nurse, those who operate motorcycle taxi services and several small business owners. We want to encourage them.



In addition, we met with 5 women from Pointe-a-Raquette who were chosen by Fr. Augustin to take part in our first women's cooperative, *Fanm Vanyan*, which means *Valiant Woman* in Kreyol. The women will be given business training, and will form a support group to help them work together for the good of all. They will meet to pray together and after the business training, they will be given micro-loans to help them start their own businesses. Stay tuned on ways to invest in the development of the *Fanm Vanyan* program!

The Fanm Vanyan Cooperative

We also were able to visit the 3 mission chapel villages of the parish—Trou Jac, Picme and Au Parc— thanks to the new

parish boat which was a joint project of the Staunton Rotary Club, the Staunton-Augusta Rotary Club, the District Rotary and St. Francis parish. The trip to Au Parc, the furthest chapel, takes over an hour. The chapel communities are still recovering from the effects of Hurricane Matthew and the people so appreciate the aid that we have been able to send because of your generosity. We will continue to work with Fr. Augustin to support these devastated communities. These communities have no medical care or schools.



The new Rotary boat

Hurricane Matthew Relief

Fr. Augustin has been able to aid Trou Jac, Picme and Au Parc with food kits for the people as they recover from the effects of the Hurricane. We found homes destroyed, complete areas flooded, and people in desperate situations. Fr. Augustin is beginning to mobilize the community to help each other rebuild their homes. Concern remains going forward as the Haitian families lost much of their livestock and food security is at risk. We will continue to work with Father for the good of these communities and will keep you updated.

Men anpil chay pa lou. Many hands make the load lighter. Bondye beni ou. God bless you.



The village of Trou Jac



The village of Trou Jac

News from Bob's Clinic

We were blessed to have Dr. Mike Radoui, a parishioner from St. John's visit the clinic while he was in Pointe-a-Raquette with the St. John's Haiti Committee. Dr. Mike is an eye care specialist who also is trained in Public Health and has been deployed to Haiti with the US Navy. While in PAR, Dr. Mike was able to take water samples from the wells to test for bacteria. We will work with his findings to help the people treat their water to make it safer for drinking. We have some work to do. The clinic braved the outbreak of cholera in the community, although 3 people from the chapel areas died on their way to the clinic. The clinic staff is charged with broadening outreach to these struggling communities. Pictured here is the pharmacist, Guerline, who helps to keep medicine stocked at the clinic.



News from Our Lady of Pointe-a-Raquette School

The school children always are a bright spot and give us hope! We were able to take the school pictures and to play Frisbee with the children, which was a big hit! At our meeting with the teachers, we asked them to share a proud success from their classroom. We heard that they see change in the children from scared and tentative demeanors to confidence! The teachers are so dedicated to their role in shaping the children into productive and compassionate citizens. Everywhere in the community, we heard that Our Lady of Pointe-a-Raquette School is the BEST school in the community!! This is thanks to your generosity!! Two seminarians work at the school and are making terrific strides in Faith Formation and in creating Teacher Recognition and Appreciation programs. We also met with both teachers and families about the idea of a Parent Association at the school. This is a new concept for them, and we discussed ways they can add to the education of their children even if there is no money to give. We hope that some of the parent leaders will step up to start a PAT! One constant dream we heard from both teachers and families is that they would like to extend the school to include high school. This is a real need as once the children graduate from our 6th grade, there is little choice for them on the island. Please pray about how this might begin. Father Augustin's great dream is also some day to build a new school building.

Thank you from Father Augustin, the people of St. Louis Parish and the Haiti Outreach Ministry

Father Augustin and the people are always so appreciative of what St. Francis does for them. They look forward to a visit from you! Please consider traveling with us! He sent me the following to share with you: *Thousand thanks for your visit. People were very happy. Directors of the chapels say to you: you are welcome. They appreciate a lot your visit. It's a sign of love and comfort. They say now they feel they are not alone. Thousand thanks for your generosity and wisdom. Your ways to testify to the love of Christ touches a lot of hearts! Fr. Augustin*

For questions about the Ministry, please contact us at stfrancishaitioutreachministry@gmail.com or call Marie Thomas at 540-255-3166. Thank you always for your love and support!