



St. Francis-Haiti Outreach
P.O. Box 2563
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NEWSLETTER

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This month's pictures show the children playing a parachute game at the school and the cooks cleaning the pots after a delicious meal at the school.

Trips to La Gonave

Two trips to LaGonave have been taken since our October newsletter! From November 6-13, 2014, Lisa and Maggie Olshove, and Marie Thomas visited the parish of St. Louis and the people of Pointe-a-Raquette. Many of you attended the great presentation during Adult Ed on December 7, 2014, however, if you were not able to be there, please take time to view the wonderful video of the trip created by Maggie and Lisa Olshove, and which is on YouTube (link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cn0xmZlpiA&feature=em-share_video_user) or on the parish website. It is worth seeing! We made many great relationships with the children at the school, with the teachers, the clinic staff and the parish community. Fr. Beneche and the leaders of the parish council of St. Louis are working hand in hand with us to improve the lives and opportunities for the people.

Marie Thomas returned to St. Louis Parish in February along with Sue Pauley and Jeanne Branch of St. John's Parish (Waynesboro). St. John's supports the St. Anthony's House (for the homeless) and a "meals on wheels" for those who cannot otherwise obtain food. The La Gonave Development Summit, a collaboration of all faith based organizations working on the island, was held during our visit. We attended and made many important contacts and met many spirit-filled people who are working to help the island communities. Discussion of many health and education projects left us encouraged and energized! See more information about the Summit on the back of this page! Continue to pray that the Holy Spirit leads the work for the people!

News from Our Lady of Pointe-s-Raquette School

Pierrot LaFleur, teaching supervisor from the Diocese of Hinche, visited the school for teacher workshops and observation in November. Through your generosity, three teachers, Bodelet Rosier, Jean Pathico Dorvil, and Lucita Guerrier, will complete the course for national certification in April and take their exams in July! New books, supplies, and YOUR words of encouragement were distributed to the classes during the visit, and each student and teacher (about 200) received a lovely rosary made by Ruth Fitzgerald. A parachute game, soccer and basketballs engaged the children! They are an energetic and happy bunch!

During the visit in February, the teachers were preparing a celebration for Carnival at the school. They created fun glittery hats and masks for the children and were planning many songs and dancing for the day. The children are so very grateful for their hot meal each day and the love they feel from YOU!

News from Bob's Clinic

We are very excited to introduce to you Dr. Junior Etienne who is joining Dr. Jimmy Fort at Bob's Clinic! Dr. Junior is completing his social service year to give back to the country. Having two doctors at the clinic will allow them to begin visiting rural families and communities. This opportunity for the doctor to visit a home gives him an insight into the family living conditions and family health history so that he can treat and teach the members of the family preventative measures. We are very excited too that Joe Vincent (father of Lisa Olshove) is working with the Staunton Rotary Club (led by president Tamara Ridenour) to apply for a grant to buy a motorcycle for the clinic which will make visits to the remote areas possible. In addition, Dr. Eileen Ryan, through a donation from Augusta Health, helped us to obtain much needed medicine for a patient at the clinic. We so appreciate our local partnerships! If you are a member of an organization who would like to partner with us to fund a project, please contact Marie Thomas! Collaboration is so important—read on!

LaGonave Development Summit:

"The next great frontier in missions is collaboration." -Geordan Randle

I attended the LaGonave Development Summit from February 5-7, 2015 and am very happy to report that many wonderful things are happening on the island. Dr. Jimmy and Dr. Junior from Bob’s Clinic were able to also attend the summit which was very beneficial as they are on the ground in Haiti. Doctors from the Wesleyan Hospital and from other clinics also attended. Dr. Jimmy and Dr. Junior are now working with the hospital to network and cover any special cases that come to their attention. This collaboration has already been at work—there is a baby in Pointe-a-Raquette that has been waiting to have a hernia repaired. The hold-up was that the family needed to save money in order to go to the mainland for the surgery. However, Dr. Jimmy told the hospital about this child and while the hospital has surgical capabilities, there is no surgeon there all the time. The hospital relies on visiting surgical teams. Dr. Jimmy has informed me that a recent surgical team was able to operate on the child! Our emergency health fund helped to pay the cost and so the family was able to have this done more quickly. The doctors are currently working on a similar situation with an older patient. For these non-emergency surgeries, collaborating with the other doctors is very important.

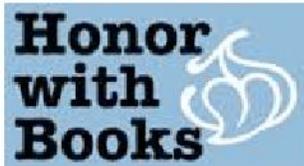
In addition, one of the other clinics on the island has been able to educate two women in the community to be certified nurse-midwives. Many Haitian women still prefer to give birth at home. Dr. Jimmy and Dr. Junior are working with the midwives to bring them to Pointe-a-Raquette to train the traditional “Matwones” (birth attendants) in best practices. We are also hoping to identify women in the parish who are good candidates to become nurse midwives.

Collaboration is also happening in education. Many teachers on the island are not government certified. We have been fortunate to send three of our teachers to Hinche for training through the Diocese of Richmond. The travel to and from Hinche has been difficult and expensive. We hope to work together with other organizations to establish a training facility on the island for the local teachers. A national goal in Haiti is to have all teachers certified in the next 5 years.

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

For more information about our programs, please contact Marie Thomas, 540-255-3166 or stfrancishaitioutreachministry@gmail.com.

Do not forget the “**Honor with Books**” program when you are thinking of honoring loved ones this Easter season! With a gift to the Honor with Books Fund, you will help to buy a new book for the library, provide instructional materials for a classroom, or help with teacher training



I enclose:

- \$25 to provide a new hardback book for the school library
- \$50 to provide instructional material for a classroom
- \$100 to send a teacher for additional training

Any amount to put toward a new book

Make check to: St. Francis Haiti Outreach

Mail to: St. Francis Haiti Outreach, PO Box 2563, Staunton, VA 24402-2563

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