

OUTREACH TO HAITI

espwa, our newsletter of hope



H E L P I N G H A I T I A N S H E L P H A I T I A N S

Come Experience Haiti with Us

By Dennis Petruzzi

Whether you are a seasoned visitor engaged in a Twinning relationship, an aid worker looking to share much needed skills or a first timer seeking a truly life changing experience, Outreach has a place for you to stay in Haiti.

Our hospitality program is geared to meet the needs of the traveler in a clean and welcoming environment and strives to help you to reach the often unique goals that you have set for your trip. Our staff is friendly, flexible and accommodating. Haitian meals are served at breakfast and evening dinner with lunch available for an extra charge. Our skilled and courteous drivers will provide pick up and drop off and safely navigate the urban and rural routes you will be travelling during your stay. We have internet access and Wi-Fi. And while public electricity is sometimes not available we have a generator as a backup. Father Frank Rouleau, our Twinning Director and Chaplain celebrates daily liturgy in our chapel and will facilitate evening reflections if desired. A fluent Kreyole speaker, Father Frank also often serves as translator.

Twining groups whose Haiti twin is located outside of Port-au-Prince typically spend the first and last day of their trip at our Mission House to facilitate airport transfers. In the peaceful surroundings, it often serves as a place for planning and evaluation.

We organize and host immersion trips that provide volunteer and cultural experiences for international visitors. Participants tour our programs, volunteer at orphanages, feeding programs and hospitals, attend a vibrant Sunday liturgy at a local parish and visit sites of cultural and historical significance for the Haitian people.

Our guest facilities also provide a base of operations, transportation and translators for visiting medical and dental groups as well as volunteers involved in providing technical support for building, infrastructure, environmental and economic development projects

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The hospitality staff at Outreach to Haiti. From left, Twinning Director and Chaplain Fr. Frank Rouleau, Roland Hercule, Jeanne Jacquet Sainterve, Jean Rosebert Jean-Louis, and Jean Marie Brutus.

Spirituality of Parish Twinning

By Rev. Frank Rouleau
Twining Director and Chaplain

Parish Twinning is all about relationships. It is about a partnership between a Catholic faith community in a First World country and one in a developing country. It is the respecting of each other's human dignity and equality in the partnership. Parish Twinning can provide assistance in areas which the foreign twinned parish identifies: e.g. education, health care, and other projects. Our Norwich Diocesan Outreach to Haiti philosophy has always been to help Haitians to help themselves, to provide the means for them to accomplish their objectives.

Parish Twinning is also an opportunity for Americans to step out of their own culture, language and comfort zone and to experience life through the eyes of the 3rd World. We have many material blessings and advantages in the US that others can only dream about. Yet how often do we take things like clean water or electricity for granted? Seeing the conditions that people in the 3rd World live under can make us advocates for social justice and an equitable distribution of the world's resources. And for our sisters and brothers in Haiti, a visit can be as one Haitian priest said "a sign of hope for my people that they are not forgotten, not ignored".

Parish Twinning at its core is all about the Gospel. Pope Francis tells us "the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need. Ours, he goes on to say, is "an authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values,

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What US Twins Support

Education: building projects, tuition, teacher salaries, school lunch programs and English language classes.

Housing and Welfare: an orphanage for girls and one for children affected by HIV/AIDS.

Healthcare: clinics, medical salaries, feeding programs for children and the elderly.

Environmental and Economic Development: clean water, sanitation, solar energy, planting and sewing projects.

Cultural Exchange: enabling our mission house to provide immersion and volunteer experiences.

For a complete list of twinning relationships visit our website www.outreachtohaiti.org and click on Programs and then Twinning.

Annual pilgrimages solidify commitment to Haitian people

By Larry Reymann

St. Anthony's Parish, Renton, Washington, is a culturally diverse Catholic community of 7,000 souls. Our direct connection with Haiti began with the earthquake of 2010 and the death of a young parishioner, Molly Hightower, who lost her life in the collapse of the orphanage with the children she served in Port-au-Prince. Led by the Holy Spirit, the direction of our pastor Fr. Gary Zender, and parish staff and leaders, we began the process that took us to Ste. Anne d'Hyacinthe in a mountaintop village five backbreaking kilometers above Ti Goave, Haiti. Fr. Frank Rouleau and Outreach to Haiti have guided our pilgrimages in Haiti since 2012: three annual visits there with a fourth planned in October, and two visits here with him and Pe Josue, Ste. Anne's pastor (their third visit here in April 2015).

Our delegations to Haiti number eight parishioners, all of whom have had their lives dramatically changed by the journey. The challenge is to share those experiences and motivate the wider parish to support the partnership codified by the twinning covenant we signed in 2013. In the covenant we committed to support maintenance of the first vehicle the parish has ever had (a four-wheel-drive, four-passenger pickup); enhance the salaries of the seven teachers in the parish school and create a school meal

program for the 150 or so students who learn there.

The cultural diversity that so enriches St. Anthony's here also provides no shortage of homegrown needs from Latin America, the Philippines, Southeast Asia and elsewhere. While we acknowledge that necessity, the instruction and example of Pope Francis guides us to serve the poor, even, and especially, when we have no personal connection to their poverty. Consequently, each delegate must also accept the responsibility to communicate the reality of their experience at Ste. Anne to our parish here. Happily, the various parish cultural communities have responded enthusiastically to that message.

The focus of support for our mission is the annual fundraiser dinner in April, which featured Fr. Frank and Pe Josue as guests of honor. Our message is delivered with our prayer for the people of Haiti at Sunday Masses in the weeks leading up to it; speakers after each Mass a month out;

a history of our covenant featured on our website; flyers in our weekly bulletin; the encouragement and support of parish staff; and the consistent parish interface the delegates and our Standing With Haiti committee provide all year long.

Our faith, and the faith of our partners, who have little else, sustains us. As a fellow traveler once put it: "We go to serve the people of Haiti, but are so much more greatly served by them."



The delegation from Renton, Washington with some of the school children.

Interested in experiencing Haiti?

We would be pleased to arrange a trip for you or your group. For information about accommodations or available dates, to connect with a group that is currently scheduled or for answers to your questions, contact Rosanna at 860-887-1019 or rosanna@outreachtohaiti.org.

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in Haiti.

You may assemble your own group or contact our office in the United States (see text box for contact information) to join another that may meet your schedule.

Since the earthquake of 2010 we have operated our guest house from a rented facility in Petion-ville. We are currently engaged in a capital campaign and are hoping to consolidate our programs, including Hospitality, in a single facility in the Christ Roi neighborhood of Port-au-Prince on the property where our clinic is currently located. We are hoping to have the building completed toward the end of 2016. If you would like to support that campaign we would be most grateful.

The Hospitality Program is integral to our mission. The guest house is not just a place to stay. The program and the place are linked to our vision and offer opportunities to trav-

elers to live and work in solidarity with the Haitian people in the spirit and message of the gospel challenge.

Come experience Haiti with us.

JUST A CLICK AWAY!

Help Outreach to Haiti by going to **Smile.Amazon** and choosing **Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti** as your designated charity and be SURE to bookmark Smile.Amazon.

For every dollar you spend on Amazon, they will give Outreach .5%.

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Gettysburg students see importance of education in Haiti

By *Conor Brooks*

This past spring break, I was able to lead a group of 10 of my fellow Gettysburg College students to Haiti. The things I saw on my first trip, four years ago, will never leave my mind, things both beautiful and devastating. Almost predictably, every one of the first-time visitors went in with an open mind and heart, ready to learn.

Our trip focused mostly on access to education, an issue that is a hot button topic as much in Haiti as in the United States. Outreach to Haiti provided us with this incredible opportunity to meet and speak with students, teachers, school administrators, human rights activists, even government officials, all working towards a more educated Haiti.

Four months prior to arrival we formed pen-pal partnerships with university students in Outreach's program. Students exchanged messages mostly using Facebook or email. When we got to Haiti, one of the first things we did was meet with all the pen pals. Together we talked somberly about problems with the government one minute, laughing hysterically about the latest episode of "Orange is the New Black" the next. It is conversations like these, the ones that show us all as people, that I hope we never forget.

We had the chance to visit a local primary school. In every classroom we entered we

asked the same question: "Do you think education is important?" Without exception, every hand went up, every time. In Haiti, the job prospects for an uneducated person are brutally limited. In a country with 80 percent unemployment, children as young as 6 or 7 are fully aware of the struggle they face if they are left outside the school walls.

We also met a member of the Haiti Ministry of Education. In Haiti opportunity for education is not guaranteed. Fewer than 20 percent of children in Haiti receive a public school education. Without the scholarships offered by Outreach's sponsors, tuition costs make enrollment in private schools prohibitive for most families. The minister was clearly aware of the problems with the education system, and deeply desired to fix them. Lack of funding has been devastating to their cause. A government without any significant tax income has difficult choices to make. One day, he hoped a well-funded public education system would serve everyone.

Haiti is a beautiful place. There are so many things working against the Haitian



Gettysburg students meet their Haitian pen pals for the first time.

people, and yet their hope and potential persist. The time our group spent in Haiti was focused not on how we knew what the Haitians didn't, but rather how we could learn from the Haitians. I am confident in saying I have gotten far more out of Haiti than I have given. Haiti is a country with so much to offer. As we learned on our trip, it needs dedicated leaders with heroic levels of patience. These leaders are already there. They are sitting in the desks and chairs of the cinderblock schools. We won't know the extent of their success for years to come, and yet we cannot wait to see it.



Second graders after being asked by Gettysburg students to raise their hands if they thought education was important.

Twinning continued from p. 1

to leave this earth somehow better that we found it."

Caring for others in need, respecting their human dignity, lifting them up in prayer are constituent parts of our faith. Jesus identifies himself with the poor. "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison and visit you? And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25: 38-40).

Parish Twinning is a means for us to live out the Gospel, to build up the body of Christ, to reach out in solidarity to our sisters and brothers in the Faith in the underdeveloped world, to be in partnership with them, to share our blessings with them, to help them stand on their own, to accompany them. It is also a means for us to receive their deep spirituality. And it is a way for us to deepen our own faith, hope and trust in God, to grow in knowledge and love of Him.



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DREAMS

New Building Plans – More Than Just Bricks and Mortar

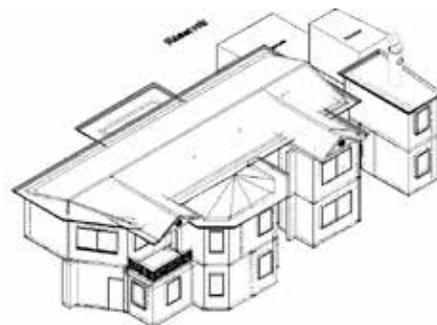
The plans for the new building in the Christ Roi neighborhood reflect our ongoing, now 30-year, commitment to the people of Haiti and the design integrates the programs and services we offer to them.

A reconfigured well-equipped clinic and nutrition center, with laboratory and pharmacy, will provide a comfortable and dignified environment where patients, mostly mothers and children, can be provided professional and compassionate care.



The proposed building to replace the Outreach to Haiti mission house in Port-au-Prince that was destroyed in the earthquake of 2010. This structure will be used as the central office for our nutrition, education, medical and hospitality operations. A capital campaign continues to raise the required building costs. With your generous donations, completion of the facility is projected by 2016.

The Christ Roi campus is the hub of the education program and is where Outreach coordinates student and parent activities, relationships with area schools and supports student/sponsor communications. The new building will adequately support parent meetings, student liturgies and age-appropriate extracurricular programs. These activities provide, among other things, life skills, computer literacy, and health, hygiene and general safety classes to students in our program.



Having guest rooms which accommodate international volunteers in the same location from which we offer these life changing and life-saving services will be a visible sign to the community that they are not alone in their struggle.

The bricks and mortar will represent solid evidence that the core mission of Outreach to Haiti is to be present to the people of Haiti and to work in solidarity with them.