

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



Jeanne Jacquet Sainterve (r) and her daughter, Sherley.

Degrees of Change

By Dennis Petruzzi

When I was at our Mission House last October Jeanne Jacquet Sainterve arrived at work each day just as she has for over 20 years. A long and arduous commute, some of it walking and some of it on the back of a motorcycle taxi, had not stopped her from greeting my wife Sue and me warmly. Our exchange is always brief and limited by the differences in our native languages. But there are enough words available among us to communicate our enduring friendship. Jeanne has been an integral part of our hospitality program and is, in many ways, responsible for the quality of service that we provide to our guests.

For Jeanne work is not just a livelihood, but also an opportunity to forever change the course of her family's lives. She and her husband Joseph, who works as a mason, have 3 daughters. Because Jeanne is an Outreach employee, each of their children has been eligible for our Education Sponsorship program. In a country that has almost no free public education, this benefit can have a dramatic and positive impact on the lives of a family.

This year the Sainterve's oldest daughter, Sherley, is 25 and will complete Universite Quisqueya Medical School. Currently working in her internship,

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HEALTHCARE & EDUCATION

Building Blocks for Economic Development

The Outreach to Haiti clinic in Christ Roi has long focused on maternal and child healthcare in the hopes of meeting the needs of these most vulnerable groups. Lack of accessible and affordable healthcare has contributed mightily to struggles that manifest in the everyday life of a Haitian family.

Recent statistics (*see box on page 2*) for Haiti from groups including the World Bank, the World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization, and the United Nations World Food Program show a confluence of debilitating economic, health, and literacy indicators leading to its position as the most underdeveloped country in the Western Hemisphere.

Over the years Outreach to Haiti has developed and added services designed to respond to these conditions. Once we relied on addressing the needs of patients who chose to visit the clinic. Several years ago we instituted a community health initiative that dispatched trained health agents to proactively reach into the neighborhood identifying needs, educating on health issues and making referrals. When once we simply distributed food, we added a fully integrated program for malnourished children. Then, seeing the need, we expanded the nutrition program

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Nursing intern Shella Merzil (above) and Health Agent Fabiola Abraham (right) attend to an expectant mother.



Spanning the Technology Divide

There are many differences between a student's educational experiences in Haiti and those of a student in the United States. For starters, the widespread availability of free public education, does not exist in Haiti as it does here. Most students whose parents cannot afford private school tuition, simply do not go.

Outreach to Haiti's education sponsorship program offers scholarships in response to that reality and, as a result, nearly 200 students kindergarten through post-secondary are able to attend school. Still there are many things missing from what we, as Americans, experience in education. Resources in many Haitian schools are sparse. You may see roughly constructed benches and desks and a blackboard in a classroom and not much else. The curriculum offers no frills or enrichment electives. Resources are limited, but the student's desire for learning is not.

Outreach's education program attempts to close the resource gap as much as funds allow. An example of this effort focuses on technology. While many students here in the United States are never far from being "connected" it is unusual for a Haitian student to have their own laptop or tablet. A grant from the Tom and Julie Wood Foundation in Indiana



Computer resources in use after school.

has taken space once used for storage and repurposed it into a basic but high functioning computer lab. A donation of laptops from The Leep Family Foundation, also from Indiana, completed the transformation. On average 7 students can be seen working in the lab after school each day.

The lab, currently open Monday through Friday and an occasional Saturday, features 8 new laptops, a high speed internet connection, a shared printer and a dedicated server. Software includes Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint and Adobe Reader. And there is virus and malware software to protect our assets.

Students may use the lab to do research, prepare reports and presentations or simply complete and print homework assignments. Older students can prepare university or employment applications and resumes and younger students can hone their computer literacy skills under the watchful eye of our staff or high performing student volunteers.

Parental controls are in place on each laptop and use is monitored by our Education Program staff on site as well as through review of reports designed to show websites visited and applications used. A list of rules, posted

on the entry door, reminds students that with privilege comes responsibility. Outside software or external devices are prohibited from being installed on our laptops and social media use is allowed but subject to a time limit. To avoid accidental spills, food and drink is not allowed.

Regardless of what is lacking in the government's system, students and parents continue to place a high value on quality education. In response to that, a principle tenet of our Education Program is to reject the notion that this is Haiti and that our students will have to do without certain things. Having a computer lab does not address all the inequities that come from living in an underdeveloped country. But it is a gap we are pleased to be able to fill.



Lab space before renovation.

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How You Can Make a Difference

Sponsor a student by giving a student the gift of education. The annual costs to provide tuition, books and medical and dental care to a student are listed below. Payments can be made annually, quarterly or monthly.

- \$425** To sponsor a primary school student for one year.
- \$500** To sponsor a secondary school student for one year.
- \$800** To sponsor a technical school student for one year.
- \$2,000** To sponsor a university student for one year.

If you cannot sponsor the tuition for a child, you can donate directly to the scholarship program in any amount. We welcome all support!

An Event of Olympic Proportion

Last year Dan O'Sullivan our Director of Administration and Programs and board member and Finance Officer Tom Campbell completed a six-day 339 mile bike ride to raise funds and awareness for Outreach to Haiti. The distance reflects the miles between the largest city in northern Haiti and its largest most southern city. They raised a remarkable \$9,300 through donations and mile sponsorships.

In this the year of the 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympics, Dan and Tom have been inspired to schedule a reprise. Like last year's ride from Maine through Connecticut this year's event will also take place in New England. And like last year several Board members and friends of Outreach will be joining in for at least part of the ride. But to make this a major success we are opening the invitation up to satellite events held by **anyone** from **anywhere** doing **anything**. Participate by holding your own fun fundraising activity during



Tom Campbell, Dan O'Sullivan and long-time Outreach supporter Jim Hubert.

the periods of August 5 -21 (Olympic Games) or September 7-18 (Para-Olympic Games).

Schedule your own bike ride for any distance. Get people together for a fun run or walk. Get your gym buddies to do some miles on the stationary bike or treadmill or to do laps in the pool. Find a school gym to host an all-day volleyball tournament. Hold a kayak or canoe regatta on a local lake. Whatever works for you will work

for Outreach. Make it a family, friends or church community effort and in the process tell people why supporting Haiti is important to you.

We will post participants' stories and comments and all results on our website and on our Facebook page.

If you are interested, email us info@outreachtohaiti.org or call Dan at 860-887-1019. Help us to bring home the gold for the people of Haiti.

Healthcare and Education *continued from p. 1*

to include expectant mothers in December 2015.

We are now embracing a new challenge. Building on OTH's success in providing primary and community healthcare services, and a spectrum of educational opportunities for individuals, Outreach is preparing to launch a new economic development program later this spring. The



Nutrition Coordinator Rose Laure Milor takes a bicep measurement to monitor weight gain.

Haiti by the Numbers

- 2.5** doctors for every 10,000 people.
- 30** percent of children under 5 suffer from chronic (height) malnutrition and **10** percent from acute (weight) malnutrition.
- 73** percent of children less than 2 years old and **60** percent of pregnant women are anemic.
- 32** percent of children under 5 were deficient in vitamin A and 3,200 deaths are caused by deficiency each year.
- 43** percent of the population have recommended vaccinations.

The infant mortality rate for children under 5 is **76 per 1000** live births twice the regional average.

Life expectancy, on average, is **63** years of age.

A 3 year drought has doubled food insecurity to **30 percent** of the population

program has been named Fanm Avanse Kounye (FAK) or in English, Advancing Women Now. FAK is an 18-month pilot program open to women completing OTH's Nutrition Programs.

Using the skills of contracted coaches, FAK will provide the next steps for women to develop the skills, confidence and future-oriented mindset essential to secure a

livelihood and attain a sense of well-being for themselves and their families. Women will be granted a startup asset and provided microloans to begin their enterprise. In addition to ongoing support and training, Outreach commits that women in the program will receive primary healthcare for themselves and their children.



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Degrees of Change *continued from p. 1*

Sherley will soon begin an assignment as a general practitioner in a local hospital. Her long term plans include completing the additional course work and the training necessary to become a heart surgeon. She also hopes to one day open a clinic and has pledged to work with Outreach's Maternal and Child clinic when she can.

Thankful for the opportunity she has embraced, Sherley recently told us:

"I am so grateful toward such a wonderful program. Honestly, it would be impossible for me to achieve my most cherished dream, which is being a doctor. My parents would never be able to afford such a tremendous thing for me. I would ever be thankful to you for that and I will never stop thinking of you. I'll always pray for the sponsors as long as I live."

As for her siblings, 19-year-old Monika is in her second year of the prestigious Universite d'Haiti where she is studying Economics. At 11 years old, Schladyne is doing very well in primary school. In her program biography she writes of dreams of joining Sherey in the medical profession.

The sponsorship program is very much a partnership that, to be successful,

requires discipline and commitment on several levels. In the Sainterve family, Jeanne and Joseph have made the education of their daughters a top priority. The Sainterve daughters in turn have accepted the challenge of doing well under often difficult conditions and committing to the requirements of both their schools and the Outreach program. The sponsors make a financial and frequently an emotional investment expecting no return beyond an opportunity and an improved future for their student. For its part, Outreach to Haiti commits to making certain the Sainterves, and as many other families as possible, have the necessary resources and support to realize their dreams.

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%. It won't cost you any more and your experience with Amazon will be exactly as it has always been.



MORE THAN A SCHOLARSHIP

Outreach to Haiti's Sponsorship Program also includes the following:

- An annual physical and dental examination
- Corrective eyewear
- Computer lab (see related article)
- Developmental workshops and seminars
- Internships and help with resumes and interview skills