

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

Dear Friends,
I have been on board since June 1, 2019, as Executive Director of the Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti and have learned much. Thanks to you and all our friends and supporters, we continue our ministry in Haiti working with the men, women, and children who live in the impoverished Christ the King neighborhood of Haiti's capital city, Port-au-Prince. In addition, we have approximately 14 parishes, organizations, and schools in the U.S. that twin with parishes and groups in Haiti. Together we serve some of God's poorest children on earth; people who should have no hope, but instead are blessed with an abundance of hope thanks to their tremendous faith in God.

We are grateful that you are a part of our ministry and work, and we hope you are well, as we journey together



Outreach clinic provides medical care for the poor; moms and their babies wait to be seen.

through the trying times that life often forces upon us. This latest challenge, Covid-19, also known as the coronavirus, is a reminder to us that God is at the helm. He guides us in good times and in bad and asks that we have faith in Him.

As a developed nation, we have many resources available to us and an infrastructure in place to help those in need. While this does not spare us pain and sorrow, it gives us peace to know the most vulnerable among us have organizations and resources they can turn to in times of need.

I write to you today with a heavy heart as Haiti gears up to face the challenges of Covid-19 as an under-developed, under-resourced and densely populated country. Haiti's national health care system is fragile, and they have a very low inventory of personal protective equipment, ventilators, ICU beds, and limited medical staff. Most worrisome, many Haitians have compromised immune systems due to poor diets, a lack of nutritional supplements, and a severe shortage of food.

During this Easter Season, I pray each of us is reminded that we help those in need because Christ asks us to do so. In our hearts and souls, we are reminded of the words of St. Teresa of Avilá,



Outreach nutrition program feeds malnourished moms and children until they are in good health.

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

If you can, please help us to provide food and nutrition, medical and health care, and educational scholarship sponsorships to our Haitian brothers and sisters. Your love and charity allow those receiving support to know God's love firsthand.

Thank you for all that you do to help our friends in Haiti, and may you always be aware that God walks with you on your journey through life. Please keep Haiti and its people in your daily prayers, as we will keep you in ours.

Susan

Susan Wallace, Executive Director

Planting Seeds of Hope

By Father Frank Rouleau,
Chaplain, Outreach to Haiti

Springtime is the season for planting, especially in Haiti where the farmers are dependent on the spring rains for their crops to grow. There is a lot of work in cultivating the soil and planting the seeds.

I was thinking of this recently when I came across a picture from 16 years ago of a fourth year medical student holding a surgical textbook. I first met this young man, Wilkens Gilbert when he was a young policeman in 1999.

I recently asked him about his educational experience. *“My childhood dream was always to become a doctor. However, considering the level of my family’s poverty, the economic barriers were insurmountable. After my high school studies, academically ready to go to university, the clouds in the sky were thick and doubt overwhelmed me. Coverage for education, daily transportation, lunch, books and documentation, and more was beyond my parents’ means. Light appeared at the end of the tunnel when one morning in October 2000, Fr. Gerry Kirby [from the Diocese of Norwich] called to tell me about the availability of financial support to cover the cost of studies. I jumped for joy, promising to be among the best in my class.”*

Through the assistance of Dr. Tom Gorin and our predecessor organization, Wilkens was the first person to attend medical school through



Dr. Gilbert is one great example of the success of the Outreach Scholarship Program.

our scholarship program. Today, the ratio of physicians to people in Haiti is 25 for 100,000 people, and the ratio in the US is 295 physicians per 100,000 people.

Dr. Gilbert is one of 50 general surgeons in Haiti and has given back to the community in which he grew up by establishing a medical clinic there and subsequently two other medical sites. The poor are welcomed in his facilities, as well as in our clinic in a country where many of the poor have no access to health care.

Most importantly through the Outreach to Haiti Scholarship Program, which has been in existence for more than 25 years, nine other physicians, many nurses, agronomists, economists, accountants, business people, etc. have been able to attend university. This educational program is life-changing for them, their families, and ultimately for their country.

Dr. Gilbert writes: *“It is clear that without this help, it would have been extremely difficult to reach the university level which is considered a great privilege in Haiti. Even today, I let myself be guided in my actions to benefit the greatest number of patients thanks to this support from Outreach to Haiti. Thank you to all the people who support the scholarship program of Outreach to Haiti. Thank you sincerely.”*

Please consider planting seeds of hope by contributing to Outreach to Haiti’s Scholarship Program. Students must work hard to get an education in Haiti. It is very difficult. The students in our scholarship program have the intellectual capacity to succeed



Outreach university students of today will be tomorrow’s leaders.

in school, but they do not have the financial resources. That is where we come in, especially since we know the students of today will be tomorrow’s leaders. We can help break the cycle of poverty in Haiti through education. May God bless your generosity in helping to educate these future leaders and planting seeds of hope!

We thank you!

Please Join Us

Charity Golf Tournament

Saturday, Sept. 12

Wintonbury Hills Golf Course,
Bloomfield, Conn.

The Bike Ride to Rebuild

Sunday, Oct. 18–Friday, Oct. 23

A 5-day, 337-mile bike ride (touching five of the six New England states) to raise awareness and funds to support our mission in Haiti

OTH Gala

For the Love of a Child

Saturday, Nov. 14

A Villa Louisa, Bolton, Conn.

Special guests include Bishop Cote, Diocese of Norwich and Archbishop Mésidor, Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Helping Haitians Help Haitians

Creating A Hand Up

By Dennis Petruzzi,
Board of Directors, Outreach to Haiti

We are pleased that with your help, we are able to offer an economic development program, Famn Avanse Kounyea (FAK) or Advancing Women Now that creates income for families while honoring the skills and resourcefulness of the people whom we serve in the Christ the King neighborhood of Port-au-Prince. FAK provides business training and start-up capital for women to enable them to develop their own very small businesses geared to meeting basic needs in their community while supporting their families.

This fits well with the long-held belief by Outreach to Haiti that economic development is key to our mission, "Helping Haitians Help Haitians." Throughout our history in Haiti we have supported efforts that enable people to enjoy the benefits of dignified work.

Another example is Outreach's long-standing Artisan Program that provides a marketing outlet for individual Haitian artisans, small businesses, and cooperatives.

The village of Croix des Bouquets (Bouquets of Crosses) is home to Haiti's signature metal art. From the hands of skilled crafts people, unique hand-made pieces emerge from recycled 55-gallon steel drums. The art as well as the sound of hammer and chisel attract buyers



A FAK mentoring session, part of Outreach's economic development program, which provides training and start-up capital for women to develop their own businesses.

including Outreach volunteer Sue Petruzzi, who manages our program. Items are purchased directly from the artisans at fair market prices and sold on our website and by Outreach volunteers at craft fairs in the U.S. Proceeds are used to help fund Outreach programs.

Outreach supports other businesses including Papillion (papillonmarketplace.com), which employs 300 crafts people and retail staff. They make and sell jewelry, pottery and other products made from clay, paper and wood that is readily available in Haiti. Papillion's (Butterfly) mission is to limit the number of economic orphans caused by the inability of parents to adequately care for their children.

Outreach also markets PeaceCYCLE (peacecycle.com) colorful tote bags, passport cases and other items from recycled plastic water packets that are cleaned and assembled by a staff of 20, using old fashioned coal irons and treadle sewing machines.

There are other ways in which Outreach creates opportunities. We are currently rebuilding our facility that was destroyed in the 2010 earthquake. We committed to using a local contractor who honored our request to hire

neighborhood workers to be part of the work force. In addition, Outreach graduate engineering students are interns with the construction firm.

Outreach's internship program offers real life work experiences to our students who have with donors' help, graduated from secondary and



Health workers employed by Outreach bring medical care to the neighborhood of Christ the King.

post-secondary schools. It is our hope the internships will help students to discover more of their talents and to find work in their fields of study. We also are grateful to be able to employ a Director of Operations, 14 medical professionals in our clinic, 3 professional staff in our education sponsorship program and 4 support staff.

Oftentimes travelers visiting Haiti come prepared to build projects or manage programs. Because Outreach to Haiti truly believes the best help is offering a hand up to our Haitian brothers and sisters, we support local initiatives and employ Haitians to help Haitians. They in turn support their families, build their communities, and bring lasting change to their country. They count on our help. We count on you to give them a hand up.

Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share. (1 Timothy 6:18)



Metal art and local crafts marketed through Outreach's Artisan Program.



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We are, all of us, God's Handiwork

For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

God's handiwork is in evidence through the work carried out by the Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti Ministry and by the faith of our Haitian brothers and sisters who share their love and hope with us. We recently received the following note from an artisan in Haiti, Jean Roody Souloque, who knows we are in the throes of the Coronavirus pandemic.

How are you doing these days? I was thinking about you.

By the grace of God, we are fine in Croix-des-Bouquets. My only concern and the concern of many in my country, is that the U.S. are still troubled. We have so many friends there that we love so much.

Let us keep praying so God can give you his face. You and your country don't deserve this. God has a plan for the U.S., don't worry.

I don't know you well yet, but I love people who love my country and my brothers and sisters in Haiti. I keep praying for the U.S. because if it wasn't for your country, things could be far worse in my country. We are numerous as we are a big population. Many of the children can go to school, many of our young can go to university. All that because you received our brothers and sisters and gave them jobs to do. Haiti will always be indebted to your country.

I consider America is great because it is not only great for itself but also for many other countries in the world.

May God hear your prayers my friends in America and know that Haiti is feeling so sad because of your trouble now.

This beautiful message expresses the love and hope many Haitians have for us and their thanks for accompanying them on our journey through life. We, all of us, are God's handiwork. Please support our ministry by keeping Haiti in your prayers, and if you are able, sharing your treasure to help our brothers and sisters there who are in great need.



Haiti's faithful where there is standing room only.