



Ohio Haiti Wisconsin Spring 2015

Connections

PATIENCE, PATIENCE, PATIENCE

by Mary Van Den Heuvel

We heard the word PATIENCE a number of times from our Haitian friends on our January 2015 trip. Hearing it brought back memories of last year's trip.

During our trip to Haiti in 2014, Fr. Leveque took me to visit the new high school he had begun. He had started the first two grades, and had relocated from space in the parish grade school to a former orphanage.

When we entered the grounds, I was dismayed. The yard was overgrown with weeds and there was rubble all about. The veranda of the school was cluttered with old dusty furniture and the newly painted school had paint splotches on the ground.

There were two bright spots for me, however – the two classrooms of children in their clean, crisp sunny yellow uniforms who greeted us in English and the smell of cooking coming from the kitchen where the school lunch was being prepared.



As I returned home, I wondered what to tell fellow **Hands and Hearts with Haiti** members back home about the school environment.

Fast forward to a year later, when I was back in Haiti with Kay Schumacher and LoAnn Steward. Once again we went to visit the school. This time I was delighted to see the front of the school landscaped with lovely bushes and colorful shrubs. The veranda had been cleared of the rusted furniture and mopped. A third classroom of children was noisily shouting out answers to their teacher, enlivening the clean and bright building.



PATIENCE. We Americans want quick results and often have the means available to accomplish that. In Haiti, things take longer. For Fr. Leveque, paying the teachers was the priority. When that was accomplished, he tackled the next goal – attending to the building and grounds.

Addendum. The organization that has supplied a portion of the beans and rice for the students has discontinued its support. HHH Assumption parish, Broadview Hts. will be fully funding the lunch program through its Lenten donations.

Patience, patience, patience – So much to be addressed, but, more important, progress to be celebrated!

Ready to build

When **Hands and Hearts with Haiti** was formed as a partnership between American parishes and St. Louis Parish in Haiti, a priority for the organization was to build an elementary school.

Until adequate funds could be raised, land secured and a building design completed, Fr. Leveque began classes in the temporary chapel church. The school started with 36 kindergarten and first grade children.

This year a 2nd grade was added and enrollment grew to 80 little ones. The community is ready for a school. A parishioner has donated the land. It is time to build. Denice Healy from Mission of Hope, Inc. in Green Bay, and her many friends have kicked off our fund drive with a very generous donation of \$20,000.



The money will help to give the school a foundation, and the children a roof over their heads. HHH St. Matthew's Church and School, Green Bay will seek to add to that this Lent. They will be asking supporters to purchase a concrete block for \$5.00. This includes a portion of the cement and building materials.

The purchase of the blocks and other creative fund raising will make the school a reality and a promise will be kept.

Goat project provides economic gains for members of HHH partnered communities

After initial problems with the health of some of the goats provided by HHH to community leaders in the four chapels of St. Louis Parish, things are progressing nicely.

In-country project management support and contracting with Haitian veterinary technician, Brevil, have helped to make such progress possible. John Gracyalny supplied ear tags for the goats, and people have



reported that the ear tags have kept their animals from being stolen.

Training, ear tagging and vaccinating resulted in a 29 percent increase in births in a three-month time period. The new little kids and their mothers are looking healthy and well fed. The purchase of quality bucks is producing quality offspring, with a growing number being twins or triplets. When the goats are sold at market, many other area goat owners are noticing the difference and would like to breed their female goats with the bucks HHH has provided.

Currently, our program has 222 goats with 26 of them having been shared by the original recipients with other community members.

This sharing process provides a food source and economic gains for increasing numbers of families in the four chapel communities. It is hoped that such economic gains will also help families to be able to pay part of the cost of their children's education, and thus provide increased revenue sources for the school.

HHH supporters bring Gospel words to life

On Monday, February 23, the gospel reading at Mass was from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25. As our priest read the words, the work of Hands and Hearts with Haiti came to mind.

Then the king will say to those on his right... 'Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, ... naked and you clothed me...'

Those who support Hands and Hearts with Haiti by their prayers, actions, and donations are living out the words of Jesus.

The goat project is providing food and money to buy other necessities of

life. The water project with Water Mission International makes clean water available and eliminates the scourge of water-borne diseases. Those in need have received donated shoes and clothing, and handmade clothing from ESPWA volunteers.

And the king will say to those on his right... 'Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

News Briefs

- ◆ Fr. Leveque's plans include building a sugar mill to employ those who are unable to raise goats. He would like to do this in Noyau since there are many sugar cane fields there.
- ◆ Shoes that have been collected in our parishes are much appreciated. The St. Vincent DePaul Society at the church in Mirabalais distributes them to those in need.
- ◆ A new music teacher in the high school is holding music classes every Friday. She's helping her students to learn to read music rather than playing by ear. Donated instruments from HHH have been well received.
- ◆ Goat owners in the HHH project are learning the benefits of working together. They asked if HHH could help them set up a co-op to sell goats together at market for a fair price.
- ◆ Brevil, HHH's hired vet tech, is going to train three goat owners from each of the four communities to be vet techs. After this training, they will be able to handle health problems that may arise.
- ◆ Broadview Hts., HHH Women's ESPWA group has been meeting and sewing infant layette clothing since 2003. Sr. Denise Desil and Fr. Leveque distribute these items to those most in need. ESPWA means "HOPE" in Creole. The women of ESPWA use their gifts and talents to bring to the new mothers and their infants hope, dignity and the realization that every life matters.

If you'd like to help Hands and Hearts with Haiti, donations can be sent to:

Hands and Hearts with Haiti
9183 Broadview Rd.
Broadview Hts. OH 44147

Hands and Hearts with Haiti
130 St. Matthew Street
Green Bay WI 54301