

Haiti Journal – July 2017

I usually can get clues as to what is going on in Haiti during the drive from the Port au Prince airport up the mountain to Riviere Froide.

I read the walls along the way. There are old names of political hopefuls; opinions as to whether someone is a robber or a good person; and demands for a fair wage. Workers are asking for 800 gourds per day (\$13.11 U S). The government gave 350 gds (\$5.74 U S).

I look at the ti machen (little merchants) selling their wares on the side of the roads. I saw many selling used clothing and hand made furniture. There is more wood after last fall's hurricane due to all the downed trees. There were vegetables but very little tree fruit. In the past, there would always be selling mangos since Haiti has over 100 varieties of them. This is because so many fruit trees were destroyed in the hurricane. Their gardens have been replanted but it will take longer to regrow the fruit trees. There was a little meat for sale but not as much as before. Many animals drowned and others died after the hurricane due to floodwaters spreading some sort of bacteria around.

The route we took was very long and unusual. We tried to stay up in the hills on the outskirts of Port au Prince. Then I found out why, there were many manifestasion (demonstrations) going on in the capital. Some were about the minimum wage; some were to get teachers pay for last school year (The past president announced that all children could attend school. He started some schools but most teachers were not paid.); and some were against the possibility that Haiti would reinstate an army (They presently have a police force only). I am pleased to report that these demonstrations were different from many in the past which included burning tires, throwing rocks, and some gunfire. These demonstrators walked, sang, and some just lying down in the streets. I was told that one student was hit by a car but he would survive. Many students joined these demonstrations. Therefore many streets in PaP were closed.

And now for some of my activities on behalf of all of you: I hope you don't mind but I will jump around a bit.

As usual, I met with many students.

Thanks to many very generous donations, we have 23 University students, 16 Professional School students, 63 Secondary School students, and 112 Primary students. The number of Secondary Students has gone up because 12 students from the Handicapped Program have progressed from the Primary school. This is wonderful but also more costly. Some students also need help with transportation, clothing, etc. We do what we can to help.

I would like to tell you about one of our scholarship students. His name is Casimy. We found him last year with no place to stay. He wanted to finish Secondary school. Casimy is an orphan. We were able to work out a plan. He sleeps at the school and works in return and gets some food from the Sisters at the Motherhouse. He received a scholarship to finish Secondary school. Now he has graduated. Thanks to many people (Loretto alumnae, generous donors, etc.) he will be starting nursing school this fall with added money for transportation. Casimy keeps telling me that he can't believe the life he is living now. He so wants to help others. It is all worth it to see his beautiful smile. I am truly the lucky one to meet so many of these young adults whose lives have been turned around thanks to all of you.



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We have another scholarship project in Haiti. I asked congregations here in the U S to help with the education of The Little Sisters young sisters. Thanks to the Dominican, Loretto, and Presentation Sisters and a Foundation, 15 Sisters are studying: accounting, education, cooking and sewing, administration, and philosophy. I went to the graduation ceremony of two of them studying sewing. This skill is important for The Little Sisters as they make all their habits and teach sewing to young women at the Professional Schools. The audience gave a standing ovation to the sister who modeled the white suit she designed and made. They had never seen her out of her habit.

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All of Gladimir's pigs but one sow died after the hurricane. Now he is starting over with 11 piglets.

The chicken project is also continuing. The four young men who are graduates of the Professional School are doing a very good job.

Thanks to Jay at Mainfreight Shipping Co., our boxes arrived just before I did. This wonderful company has been storing my boxes for Haiti in their warehouse and then taking them to FL for me when they have a truck going that way. From there Food For The Poor puts them on their container ship to Port au Prince. Most boxes contain medical supplies. Some clothing and school supplies goes as well. It is always like Christmas, Easter, Birthday, etc. when a shipment arrives. I can only imagine the thousands of people who are helped due to these two organizations who help to get these supplies to Haiti.

I taught an English class most mornings for some of The Little Sisters. Great students and great fun was had by all!

The Sisters and I also met with a man from Living Waters for the World. They will set up water purifications systems at 3 of the Sisters' missions. The Sisters can use some of the water and sell some. In this way they can maintain the project so that it can continue. The chickens I helped Gladimir catch yesterday were served at lunch to this group today.

I met Andressain. He was hit by a car some months ago and had no place to go. The Sisters put him in Rick's House (used by the handicapped children. It was wonderful to see Lucson who had polio helping him from his wheelchair.



Andressain had a terrible leg injury. Six cm of his leg bone is missing. They have an external frame on it now and will decide within a month if they can save the leg. In the meantime, he has a good place to stay, transportation to medical appointments, and food thanks to you.

The Professional School at Riviere Froide continues to be a wonderful resource for the area. The main problem is money for tuition. The Sister

in charge of this program has a plan to continue this project. If we can get the funds needed, she will start a little furniture factory. Graduates and students can work there getting a percent of the proceeds with the remainder going to the school.

There was a little lizard that lived in my room among other creatures. I always welcome the lizards because they like to eat bugs.

I visited Sigueneau as well. That is the Sisters' Aids and TB hospital. All of the buildings were destroyed in the earthquake. Some organization from Japan rebuilt a 2 story 62 bed hospital for which we are grateful. It has walls dividing 2 wards and some offices. Since some patients have both Aids and TB, others have only Aids, others have only TB, and some have drug resistant TB, these patients really need to be kept in separate wards. Sigueneau needs to finish a multi purpose room and build at least 2 new single story buildings for wards with many windows for patients.

I spent a good deal of time at Alta Vista. That is the Sisters' orphanage for handicapped children. Santana's Milagro Foundation gave a grant before my last trip to Haiti. Some of the funds were used for scholarships and much of the money went to help at Alta Vista. This program has no way of raising money unlike schools that charge tuition (although only 50% of the children can pay), hospitals and clinics (although only 55% of the patients can pay), professional centers (although only 40% of the students can pay).

We had planned out the possible uses for the Milagro gift back in January. I talked with the director, a contractor, the children, the workers, etc. Of course in Haiti, you never know what will happen but I was hoping that some of our plans had come to reality. I was so happy to see what had been accomplished. They purchased propane for cooking and kerosene for lamps, put up security bars to deter robbers, paid some of the salaries of the workers, dug a hole to put trash in, bought medicine, plates, cups, shoes, clothes, 2 water tanks and paid for transportation. The biggest thing was buying food and planting a garden. Israel was one of our scholarship students studying agriculture. He had to drop out when his father died. He needed to help his family. We paid him to supervise the planting of manioc, corn,

beans, yams, potatoes, etc. The parents, workers, and neighbors who helped with the garden got food. Alta Vista has 28 children who stay full time at the orphanage; 17 children attend the Alta Vista School; and 25 children live in their family huts but come for stimulation (physical therapy).

I saw in a magazine that Santana was celebrating his birthday in July. I was able to return with a little video of the children singing happy birthday to him.

Our funds were also used to buy batteries for the inverter, paying rent for 2 families, pay electric bill (although we get very little), pay the security guards at Riviere Froide, pay for internet service and technician,

I would like to introduce Mishkayina to you. My nickname for her is Mishi. I met her at the Motherhouse about a year and a half ago. Her face was swollen from being beaten and she was understandably withdrawn. She had been abandoned by her mother; taken in by a family who abused her and abandoned again; and then brought to The Little Sisters. We have become good friends and I would like you to see this bubbly little girl now wearing a special dress made for her by Ursula a woman from our church in Berkeley, CA.



This child inspires me to never give up. Her life experience should have defeated her and yet she is still smiling. She lives with the Sisters at the Motherhouse and brings joy to all.

The other photo I want to share with you is below.



Flowers with a border made from the rubble from the Noviciate building.

Some of you might remember the man from Stockton, CA who has donated seeds to us. I

usually pick only vegetables. Then I selected a few flowers as well and saw the enjoyment they brought.

At this point I usually tell you about some of the projects we hope to accomplish. Many of them are building projects. The Little Sisters have seen how well “Rick’s House” has stood up for 7 years. This is a pre-fab building.

I am looking for some sources of this type of metal pre-fab construction for buildings and even a silo or two.

I am also looking for a source of agricultural consultation. The Little Sisters have a farm up north and they want to develop it.

I would also like to find some contacts in the construction field. It could be companies or unions.

My selling schedule:

Nov. 3, 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Goldenaires Craft Fair
618 B Street, San Rafael, CA

Nov. 4, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Nov. 5, 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Newman Hall
2700 Dwight Way, Berkeley, CA

Nov. 12, 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM
St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church
1550 Diablo Rd., Danville, CA

Dec. 1, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Dec. 2, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Todd Holiday Craft Faire
1560 Hill Road, Novato, CA

Thank you again for your continued interest in Haiti. With Mishi’s smile and those flowers growing among the rubble may we all be reminded to look for the bright side of life.

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