



NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2008

RECENT ACTIVITIES

586 students completed the 2007-08 academic year at Lekol Sen Jan Batise and Collège Pierre Toussaint in June. Congratulations to all – and especially to the 30 graduating sixth-graders who passed the national exam and will move up to the Collège! The three classes that have now graduated from LSJB have a combined pass rate of over 96% on the exam, compared to 70% overall in Haiti.

We've provided \$25,000 this year to add five new classrooms to the LSJB building. Structural and exterior work is done, and interior finishing is under way so that all will be ready when classes resume in September. The school now comprises 19 classrooms, an office, and space for a library and computer lab. CPT will again add a further grade level (grade 9) to its program in 2008-09.

Sixteen teenagers and nine adults from Sacred Heart Parish in Winnetka, Illinois, traveled to Sassier in late July. They teamed with teenagers from Sassier to share stories, laughter, fun – and plenty of hard work! In less than a week, they painted the school building inside and out. Fulton Becker, Brian Broccolo, Kathleen Carroll, Will Cotter, Maddie McCormick, Greer Martin, Hannah Miller, Catie Morette, Jim Mullen, Annalisa Rizzolo, Ellie Russell, Michael Russell, Leah Schmid, Lauren Sheperd, Max Talbot, and Lauren Zadina formed the teen contingent, accompanied by Bernadette Broccolo, Patrick Desir, Fr. Bob Heidenreich, Joan Holden, Gerry Keenan, Beth Kelly, Kathy Janega, Jacquelin Lubin, and Patty Talbot. They were also able to deliver the first installment of children's and young-adult books in French and Spanish being collected by Lizzie Schoder.

A \$10,000 grant from the International Monetary Fund's Civic Program is being used to purchase textbooks for students in grades 2 through 5 and the new grade 9, as well as additional texts for grades 6 through 8. The students pay a nominal fee to rent the books. Most other schools in Haiti have only one or two texts per class, unfortunately – so students, parents, and teachers alike are delighted with the texts and the enhanced learning opportunities they afford.

Our first scholar has nearly completed his university studies! Pierre-Paul Dimanche will soon graduate with a degree in math and science education for the upper secondary level. He plans to teach in Jeremie for a few years, and will then return to Sassier to teach at CPT when grades 11-13 are offered. Four other Zanmi Sasye scholars will soon begin the final year of their studies in nursing, agronomy, and civil engineering in Haiti. In 2008-09 we intend to continue our financial support for them, our secondary-level scholar, and the two students studying nursing and computer science in the U.S., and we hope to support an additional scholar in Haiti as well.

We conducted two week-long clinics in April, treating more than 800 patients in Sassier and over 700 in Voldroque. Civil unrest and cancelled flights prevented several of our U.S.-based

volunteers from participating. Many thanks to our Haitian-based physicians – Alain Casseus, Glavdia Delva, Jeremie Desrois, and especially Juliette Olivier, now a veteran of three clinics – for helping overcome the obstacles and ensuring that our patients received caring and professional treatment.

This summer has seen major progress in the continuing project to terrace land in mountainous Sassier and plant saplings and plants, all of which will help to reverse deforestation and soil erosion. More than 70 Sassier participants built additional retaining walls for terracing and planted 46 new fruit trees on land donated by Sen Jan Batise Parish, creating the area's first cooperative orchard. Fritz Pierre-Louis and members from Washington provided financing for labor, trees and plantings, and other material costs; Zanmi Sasye contributed funds to purchase tools and pay the expenses of Holfrentz Cenal and Fito Legrenade, our two scholars in agronomy who served as the project technical advisors and supervisors.

COMING UP

The 2008-09 school year is almost here! Your \$100 donation to the Adopt-a-Student program will provide a full year's education at Lekol Sen Jan Batise for a young girl or boy.

The Collège Pierre Toussaint capital campaign is moving forward. More information is available on our Website at <http://www.partnerswithsassier.org>.

Lizzie Schoder is continuing to collect books in French and Spanish to stock the new school libraries; please contact us if you can donate any used fiction or non-fiction books suitable for children and young adults. We're also looking for CD/DVD instructional media in English and Spanish for the computer lab.

Our next week-long free clinic is scheduled for the week of 10 November. We hope to treat about 700 patients. Needed: volunteer medical professionals and non-medical helpers, donations of medicine and medical supplies, and financial contributions.

We hope to expand the agricultural/soil management project to include demonstration plots and a vegetable market garden in the coming months. We'd also like to begin work on improved water management for sanitary and irrigation purposes. Needed: technical assistance from agronomists, hydrologists, and civil engineers, as well as financial contributions.

As always, we are grateful for your continued interest and generosity.

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