

Friends,

I was recently in Haiti for a very, unexpected reason. I visited December 1-8 to see a program on Disability Awareness take place for the student's at the mission.

Please read the article about this program on the next page.

The bonus on this unscheduled trip was that Pastor Pierre returned to his home country after a two year absence, with me. Alex Franco a FOH board member and also Pastor David Morgan, the previous pastor at Hillside Christian Community Church came along.

It was such an uplifting and loving experience to see the JOY of the Lacroix Community as Pastor Pierre returned.

Pastor Morgan gave the message at church on Sunday and told the Bible story of the lost sheep, that Jesus left the others to search for and return to the flock. It brought a tear to my eyes to see everyone praying and cheering God for bringing Pastor Pierre back to them.

There was dancing in the aisles and people were waving scarves in the air. There were even corsages for all the guests.

During the week there were constantly people coming to see Pastor Pierre and talking with him. Each time there were prayers spoken and hymns sung praising God for what he did to save the life of Pastor Pierre.

It must have been very similar when the Wise Men and Angels visited the Messiah in the Manger. I can truly tell you, I have never felt closer to God as I did during this visit to Haiti.

As I count my Blessings this year, I count each of you as one of the people that bless my life. Your partnership with Friends of Haiti is valued by so many and appreciated by Friends of Haiti ten-fold.

The gift you give as a Child Sponsor helps so many people: your child, their family, the teachers and staff at the mission, the people of the Lacroix Community and the Friends of Haiti board members. I can think of no other gift that touches so many people in such a loving and valuable way!

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

God Bless You,
Denise Douglas, President

Pastor Pierre and Ermithe were honored with a plaque for 33 years of service to the community of Lacroix



Pastor Morgan Giving the Message

Pastor Pierre Talking to the
Congregation

DISABILITY AWARENESS PROGRAM WITH TEAM ZAYREN---

A team of Haitian Soccer Players with disabilities came to the mission schools to show the students that even with a disability, you can do everything others do and live a full life.

They shared their stories with the students. Some of them had been injured in the 2010 Earthquake that hit Haiti. Vanessa was in a car accident and lost her right arm. Another shared his story of losing both arms from an electrical shock and receiving two prosthetic arms at a conference in Houston, Texas. He showed how he could answer a cell phone and text message on it.

Two of the athletes and their coach played soccer at the World Cup on the team representing Haiti. The rest of the team had no disabilities nor did the other teams they played.

The team from Haiti won 6 out of 7 games and lost to Angola in the last round. They were very proud of their accomplishment and even brought their ID tag and trophy from the World Cup to show us.

Team Zayren played an exhibition game for the community in the late afternoon. There were about 500 people who came out to see them play. The blue team won in a score of 4 to 3. The members of the team dropped their crutches and did a victory dance for the audience, most of them dancing on one leg. It was a sight to see the community cheering for the teams. Soccer called football in Haiti is the national sport.

The team was started in September 2010 by Cedieu Fortilus who grew up in the Lacroix Mission School before going to Port au Prince to attend a school for Physical Therapy Assistants. Cedieu worked his way through school by learning and making prostheses in Port Au Prince. He has a Physical Therapy clinic in Gonaïves and helps people understand and accept people with disabilities when he is not working or leading the Soccer Team.

The team name is Team Zayren. The name Zayren means scorpion. They chose this name because a scorpion can lose a limb and still go on living a normal life.

Friends of Haiti sponsored the Program and the Soccer Game.

The team stayed in the Lacroix New Testament Dormitory. The kitchen staff prepared three, hearty meals each of the three days they stayed with us. It was astounding to see how much food was needed to keep the 25 team members feed. The mission staff also made sure each had a clean bed and a hot shower as needed.

I was discussing with Cedieu the living arrangements of the team when they are not playing a game. I was amazed to know that most of them live in sub-standard houses, with no running water, have little food and only a few have jobs that pay the rent.

BUT...for the three days that they stayed at the mission, they were treated like Kings and Queens and for that I was very grateful!



Technical School Coming Soon---

Dan and Madel Beck have pledged the next two years to living in Haiti, constructing and administrating the Lacroix Technical School of Haiti.

Dan is a New York contractor and Madel is a former special education teacher.

The school is slated to open on January 7, 2019 with Sewing, Computers and Carpentry as the first available disciplines being taught. The school is in the process of taking student applications and hiring teachers and staff for the school. The school is on the mission grounds in new buildings.

Each student will have new tools and materials that they will be responsible to maintain, as well as being on time and attending each class. A good work ethic will be stressed as part of the program curriculum.

Classes include class time as well as hands-on lab experiences. The first 20 students in each discipline will be from the Lacroix area but classes will be opened to all, as the school progresses and new disciplines are added. This program will be a blessing for students who tend to be too old in lower grades.

The Technical School should be self sufficient in a few years but donations are needed to get the needed supplies and/or sponsor a student's education.

You can find out more at friendsofhaiti.org under the PROJECTS TAB where supply lists are available, Technical School guide lines and a message for Dan and Madel Beck.

Our Sponsorship Staff--

The Sponsorship Staff has been busy keeping track of our sponsored children and preparing letters and Christmas Cards for sponsors. In addition JR and Pastor St. Germaine are holding a Bible Contest with the middle and high school students at recess during the Advent Season.

Students have to read and learn assigned chapters in the Bible. They have to answer questions for team points. There are ten teams and a prize will be awarded to the winning team on Christmas Eve.

There will also be a choir concert given by some students at the Christmas Eve Church Service. A woman from the community is sewing white dresses with red bows for the concert.

The men of the Sponsorship office work hard to keep us informed about the children and also are responsible for photographs, rice and beans distribution, and keeping track of a student's progress at school.

*Unfortunately, Begelet had a serious health issue the last day of my visit to Haiti and remains hospitalized. Please include him and his family in your prayers. He is an asset to the Sponsorship Program.



Jean-Ricot, Jene Rene (JR), and
*Begelet Anelus

Friends of Haiti is a 501c3 --- Donations are tax deductible

The official registration and financial information of Friends of HaiTi may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Child Sponsorship-- A Way to Give Hope

Education is a key to open doors--- For a Haitian child it is not only a key, but an opportunity to a better future. The Child Sponsorship Program connects a Haitian school-aged child with their sponsor.

Haiti's government does not offer free education, so families must pay to send their children to school. For most families this puts education out of their reach. \$20.00 a month gives a child their education, a uniform, a hot meal each day and good Christian role-models.

There is a difference in the children that go to school. They smile more, are happy and have a purpose for their life. If you are able to help a child go to school, please contact

Friends of Haiti
PO Box 1441
McMurray, PA 15317

or

1haitichildsponsor@gmail.com

Sponsorship donations can be sent monthly \$20.00, quarterly \$60.00 or yearly \$240.00.

Rice and Beans for the New Year

I would like to purchase a gift of Rice and Beans for my Sponsored Child _____

Child's name and number

Please give my gift to a child in need _____ \$25.00 small portion

This gift is from: Please include your name and address _____ \$100 large portion

_____ Total Donation

Mail to: Friends of Haiti PO Box 1441 McMurray, PA 15317

The Friends of HaiTi was established in 2008 to support the
LaCroix New Testament Mission.

We continue our Mission as volunteers who work in partnership with the people of Haiti through programs, construction and education that will empower them to improve the quality of life within their culture.

People who have a heart for the plight of the Haitian people operate the Friends of Haiti. We are dedicated volunteers, who seek to continue our relationship by offering financial support, education and traveling to serve the mission as well as informing Americans about the many needs of the Haitian people.

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