

Helping Haitians Help Themselves

PO Box 1062, West Bend, WI 53095 • www.viphaiti.org

A Message from the President



Every year on my birthday I get out my baby book and read what my Mom wrote in it. The gifts and cards I received for my birth and early birthdays are all listed next to who gave them to me.

Most of the names in the book are long gone or have disappeared from my life. Among the many things that she wrote were my likes and dislikes. How I treated my brother when he was born, who I played with and many pictures from my early years. I have wonderful memories of a loving home and family. As my younger brother and I grew up we were encouraged to become anything we wanted to be as adults. The moon and stars were not out of reach. The good news is that my brother owned his own masonry business as an adult and became a husband and father. I became a rural mail carrier and loved it for more than 30 years. Unfortunately, not every person born has the same opportunities or support that we enjoyed. Imagine you have been born in a poor country like Haiti where many things we take for granted are an uncertainty. Clean water, an education and learning life skills aren't always available due to location or cost. Your contribution can make a difference. You can fund a grant for a 4-H club, send a child to school or purchase a water filter bucket system for a family. Or any size contribution is welcome. Check out our website at www.viphaiti.org. Updates to the website coming soon. Think Spring!!!!

-Julie Stauss, President

4-H News & Updates

Please keep our 4-H program leaders and clubs in your thoughts and prayers. Bernine, our coordinator has reported that a leader from the Mirebalais club recently passed away. Another leader (Emilie from the Sarrizan club) is also reportedly dying. I have met Emilie before. She is a sweet woman who has led one of the largest 4-H clubs for years. I know she cares deeply for the youth and families in her community. One of my most impressionable memories of her club was learning that they had been holding a night school, and as a result over a dozen parents of 4-H'ers learned how to read and write.

On a different note, we are still looking to connect Wisconsin families and organizations with partner clubs in Haiti. The sponsorship amount remains the same (\$150), but much like our education program, you will receive a picture and information about your club. We hope to cultivate long-term friendships and support for our Haitian 4-H clubs. More information can be found in the previous newsletter. Finally, a shout out goes to the Juneau Victorians 4-H Club in Dodge County, Wisconsin (pictured below). After having VIP speak at one of their meetings, they decided to sponsor a 4-H club and also provided us with a generous garden seed donation! These youth (and their families) have some big hearts!



As always, thanks for your continued interest in Ventures in People and our Mission! If you are interested in learning more about 4-H in Haiti and would like someone to speak at your group's event, please email help4H@viphaiti.com

-Jocelyn Ritger, VIP 4H Coordinator

Student Education

For a week in mid-January, I traveled to visit our partners in Mirebalais in company with my recent college-graduate daughter and her friend from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The three of us were in-country January 10-19. Louis Tenior Guerrier, our education program manager, acted as our guide and translator.

On the whole, the trip was a humbling experience. The challenges of being in a Third World economy were readily present. The national electrical power grid was down during virtually the entire time we were in the country. Only on the last day was the power transformer that had broken at the hydroelectric dam replaced with a new model brought over from Miami.

Because of a quirk in the calendar, we arrived just as the holiday break ended. Accordingly, attendance was low at many of the schools in the area as families were pulling together tuition for the spring term. We determined that starting up the teaching of English before the bulk of students had resumed their studies would not be helpful. While disappointed at fewer contact hours, Rachel, Nick and I still managed to get into two schools, including Lucienne Estime.



Louis and Rachel work with English Language students.

Our plans to help the students hear colloquial American English included teaching them the "ABC Song," as well as some focused work around teaching past- and present-tense verbs. Reviews of ordinal numbers, colors, seasons

and the calendar reinforced previous learning done with their teachers. Each instructor in our program was presented with a new French/English dictionary, and all the students (as well as the teachers) received new ballpoint pens for their efforts. Additional consumable items, including colored markers, pencils and copy books were shared with the schools during the journey. The English program is clearly quite important. The teachers and even the principals observed and participated with their students in the lessons we taught. Their hope for a chance to learn a useful skill was evident.



Students, teachers, and principals observed and participated in English lessons.

Haiti's justifiable pride in its place as an independent nation is counterbalanced by the fact that as a French-speaking (and Creole-speaking) nation, its residents are at a substantial disadvantage in the hemisphere where Spanish and English are the dominant mother tongues.

VIP's English program is just one more important way we work to help Haitians help themselves.

Rev. David McDonald, D. Min.
Senior Pastor, Windsor UCC (Windsor, WI)