

Helping Haitians Help Themselves

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

A Message from the President



What do you need?
Food, water and air to
breathe come to mind
right away for me. We
each have different
needs, wants and
desires! Every day I am
grateful for a roof over

my head, a warm bed to sleep in and food on the table (and in the dog bowl). My wants are a long list of things that would be nice to have but not necessary to live. I have accomplished my desire, to be the first to get to be 60 years old (in my immediate family) and retire when I wanted. At the end of February, I am retired for 12 years. Many of us live comfortable lives and some aren't so lucky.

Many of the Haitians that our organization sees are struggling to better their lives and that of their families. They need YOU!!! We are still in touch with our coordinators in Haiti and right now the atmosphere seems better. We are hoping to resume our trips soon and continue to 'Help Haitians Help Themselves'.

We need you too! Thank you for your continued support of Ventures In People.

Julie Stauss—President

Update from Mirebalais

After 4 months of turmoil in Haiti, children are back to schools at one hundred percent since the beginning of January. We don't have protests for now, but in many big cities, there are kidnappings. They kidnapped people asking for a ransom to free them. Last month they got some foreign people from Europe.

In Mirebalais all the kids are back to school now. Parents are happy and also the principals. Some of the schools work even on Saturday to help the kids, trying to give them more time to oversee the programs that they have for the school year.

We all hope things will stay that way but we don't know, because we still have big political issues in the country.



Louis Tenior Guerrier,
VIP Education Coordinator

Education: A Scholarship Recipient Now—Jean Ruben

From the Memory of George Schowalter who's visited Haiti 22 times.



Whenever I think of Haiti, there is one person that always comes into the forefront of my mind. It is Jean Ruben. I met him on one of my trips to Haiti in 1994 or 1995. He was a friendly young man and could speak enough English so that we could communicate. Engaging in conversation with him, I discovered he was in need of a “sponsor” to continue his education.

It was an easy choice, because we saw in him leadership potential and an excitement for learning. We also discovered his determination. He lived in Lamar, about 25 miles from Mirebalais. Every Monday morning, he would get up early and walk the 25 miles to get to school. He would then live with a relative during the week and walk home on Friday. That in itself told us he was determined to get an education. It was also during this time that his father, a pastor of a church, came to Mirebalais one day (walking the 25 miles) to thank us for sponsoring his son. He was also hoping that he might find additional support for his church. I felt badly that we had to deny him that request.

In the years that followed, we often would see Jean in Mirebalais when we came for our annual mission trip.

Fast forward, it was a joy when we were able to visit his home town and discovered that he had started a school, using his father’s church building for classes. He, with the help of his sister and parents, also provided a meal a day



My wife Joyce and I decided we wanted to be that person.

George and Joyce visit Jean in 2002.



for each child with the help of his father's church. He also "housed" some students who came from a distance. He started a "4-H" program from the skills he learned while in Mirebalais.

In 2010, the earthquake did much damage in Lamar as well as Port au Prince, the center of the quake. The church building was unusable. But when we visited his home, we found that school continued with outdoor classes separated only by curtains and sheets with three or four additional teachers. I believe the enrollment was about 60 students. In Haiti the concentration is not just on numbers, but on a desire to learn. The year before the quake, we (VIP) had brought two sets of "melodic bells". Jean taught them how to use

them and we got a "mini" concert. I also discovered that Jean also knew how to play the guitar and a violin. Ventures In People did not go to Haiti this past year, due to the unrest, but my guess is that the school in Lamar continues to be strong, because of Jean Ruben and because Ventures In People saw potential and provided a "student sponsorship" to a young man. Thanks to the student sponsorship program.... \$175 a year.... there are other students who have used their education to serve their country. It is a "miracle". We invite you to sponsor a child. Not only VIP but the people in his father's church sense his "gift" to their community and also call him Pastor Ruben.

George Schowalter



Clean Water Project

Last fall we were all set to distribute about 1400 family size water filters to people in Haiti in January 2020. Due to the political unrest we decided not to go to Haiti this winter. In 2019 I lost several days of work due to road blockades and demonstrations. It was not dangerous but we could not get out into the rural areas to distribute filters.

I am looking ahead to 2021. We will probably have to add a week to our usual two week distribution schedule. Therefore I will be looking for volunteers to spend a week in Haiti in January 2021. Volunteers assemble filters and personalize them to each owner as well as record names and telephone numbers. We use the phone numbers to make follow up calls to assess the success of the family drinking clean water and provide help if there are problems using the filters.

Email me at cleanwater@viphaiti.org if interested in volunteering in 2021.

Dr. Ken Schumann

In Honor Of

Water Filter given in honor of **Heidi Thomas**

~Given by Iona Schindler

Student Sponsorship given in honor of **George Schowalter**

~Given by Marc & Mary Shuter

Education: Reminder to Present and Future Sponsors

Now is the time to be considering your educational support for the children in Mirebalais, Haiti for the school year 2020-21.

Due to the rising costs of needed school supplies in Haiti, Ventures in People, along with Louis Tenior Guerrier, our education coordinator in Haiti, has made the decision to add \$15 a year to the cost per student for one year's education. Consequently, the cost per child will be \$175 a year. We can trust that you will understand this need, but if you have any questions, please contact one of us listed below. We look forward to hearing from new sponsors as well as from those who have been supporting students in the past. Some of our sponsors have been a part of our program for many years. We know that the families and children are grateful for all of you as is VIP.

Barb Seefeldt,

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Karen Hintz,

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Ann Neumann,

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In Honor Of Continued

Student Sponsorships given in honor of **Michelle Pehler & James McCormick**

~Given by each other