

Helping Haitians Help Themselves

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

A Message from the President



Among the many things I love about living in Wisconsin is the change of seasons. I know many people don't like

winter! It is beautiful to be inside and watch the snow fall gently, knowing you don't have to go out in it. Each passing day comes with changes. Trees begin to bud, fill in totally green, change to oranges, reds and yellows and then back to being bare to do it all over again. Daylight becomes longer with more sunshine which definitely improves people's moods. Our personal lives change with each year (which seems to go faster with age), also. School, work, marriage, family and finally retirement. That last part is where I'm at in my life. Even retirement has its ups and downs! In Haiti things have a way of changing, not always for the better. Earthquakes, hurricanes and food and gas prices skyrocketing, make awful changes, many times life threatening. You can help make positive changes! Clean water for a

family, 4-H club grants to help different clubs with different needs and education for children. Please visit our website at www.viphaiti.org to help make a change in the lives of the people of Haiti.

Until next time, may all the changes in your life be positive!!

Julie Stauss—VIP President

In Honor/Memory Of

Donation made in honor of
Heidi Thomas

- ~Given by Mary Thomas
- ~Given by Mark & Wendy Hoefert
- ~Given by Don Thomas
- ~Given by Richard & Linda Burg
- ~Given by Kerry & Jeffrey Franklin
- ~Given by Joyce & James Meinberg

Donation made in honor of
George Schowalter

- ~Given by Beth & Mike Grzesiak

Donation made in memory of
Dick Pfeiffer

- ~Given by Sandra Pfeiffer

Donation made in Memory of
Mamie & Tikey

- ~Given by Marlene Olbrantz

Community Need + Creativity + Cash: 4-H Grants Improve Quality of Life For All Ages

It always puts a smile on my face to get updates from our 4-H coordinator about all the ways that 4-H grants are being put to use. This year is no exception. Here are some of the grant projects 4-H clubs are currently working on:

- Building toilets
- Distributing school supplies
- Handing out soap in their neighborhood
- Fixing rough roads
- Repairing drinking water pipes
- Purchasing games and recreational equipment for club members to enjoy

And more!



I think what really makes our 4-H grant program unique is that we don't go in with assumptions of what we think Haitians might want or need. Rather we give 4-H clubs the freedom to determine what the needs are in their community and use the funds as they see fit. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. As a result, we see some amazingly creative educational and community improvement projects that equal a better quality of life for all ages.

We're only a few months away from sending our annual grants again. Now is a great time to donate to ensure that we can give all clubs the funding that they deserve. We always aim for grants of \$150 a piece, but sometimes have given less if we don't have sufficient donations. This year, we are about \$1000 away from being fully funded. Can you be part of the generosity that gets us to the finish line?

Jocelyn Ritger, 4-H Coordinator



Clean Water



In January 2022 1,040 water filters were distributed in ten communities in the lower central plateau region of Haiti. The distribution

was carried out by four Haitian men the VIP volunteers had trained and worked with in the previous five years. They were under the leadership of Samuel Marseile.

A community leader was designated in each area. They were given extra training to be a resource for people who may encounter problems with their filters. They also had the phone number to be able to call Samuel if they needed help. Each recipient was trained in maintenance of the filters which is mainly to back flush them with



clean water when they run slow or get plugged. The filters should last for many years if properly cared for. These are family size filters on a five gallon bucket meaning that 5,000 or more people can now drink clean water. The people paid 150 Haitian gourds which is equivalent to \$1.45 in US



dollars. The demand for filters far exceeded our supply. We hope to continue raising money to repeat this in about a year.

Ken Schumann



Education: A Welcome Visitor

Last November a young man who was part of Ventures in People's education sponsorship program in Mirebalais, Haiti visited Wisconsin. His name is Father Roustaveg Gerome, and he was in our program from age eleven until he graduated from Sacred



Father Roustaveg and Metka

Heart School in 2010. He had the opportunity to meet his VIP sponsor, Metka Rozina, from Hartford, WI and thank her for her support. Father was ordained a Catholic priest in Haiti in 2019.

Presently he is living in Rome working on his doctorate thesis presentation on social communication in the church. His intent is to return to Haiti to serve as a parish priest.

When asked what motivated him to become a priest, his response was, "In my teens I was part of a youth group in my church. I was sent to a youth conference where I became aware of Scripture passages from the Book of Luke chapter 9 verses 57-62 referencing the would-be followers of Jesus. This led me to want to follow Christ and do His work here as His servant priest."

Father Roustaveg feels that we need to motivate children in Haiti to make the right choices for themselves and their country. He feels that VIP's education program is doing

that. He said that the children also need to realize the importance of a faith in God and the strength they can receive from it. He feels that it is very important to invest in the education of Haiti's children. They need to be prepared to contribute wisely to the needs of those who surround them and to their country.

In regard to the danger and unrest in Haiti, Father wants people to realize that so much of this takes place in Port au Prince, and we need to concentrate on the good things happening in the smaller towns and cities in Haiti like VIP is doing in Mirebalais. He is also pleased with VIP's clean water project helping families to be healthy.

What a joy it was for us to get to know Father Gerome and for our VIP Board to speak with him during our last meeting. When he returns to Haiti his presence will bring meaning and hope to all he serves. We are grateful that VIP was a part of his life's journey.

The Education Committee



Then

Now