



MAISON FORTUNÉ ORPHANAGE

An occasional bulletin to report progress of the children's orphanage in Hinche, Haiti. It is also available on the internet: www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti

August 2009

WHEN "ALL THE LEAVES ARE GREEN"

Xaverian Brother Mike McCarthy is on the staff at Maison Fortuné where he serves as campus minister. He has just returned from a visit to the States where he "talked up" his work at the orphanage in parish mission appeals.

"...in summertime when all the trees are green, and red-birds sing...." I know this song dates me, but these words have echoed in my head ever since returning to the orphanage last week after a two week stay in the States. Everything I see here on campus has the mark of summer: the garden is producing beautiful eggplant and okra. It's too early for tomatoes and onions. Pineapples from Pandiassou are plentiful, and Altès and Leo who planted more than a dozen heads, told Bro. Harry today that they've all taken root! Good news for next year.

My prized pumpkin disappeared in my absence—it was growing so beautifully; I just learned that its most ardent admirer and the one who planted the coveted seed, ate it! Thank God in another garden by the kitchen two more are growing to record size. We won't be making jack-o-lanterns with them; they'll be in soup—if they make it that far!

The boys received their report cards and while the great majority rejoice in being promoted, there are a few heads that hang low knowing that they will be repeating the same grade. All our students who took government exams (6th, 9th and 13th graders) have yet to hear the results. Our record has been excellent over the years and no reason to believe this year will be any different. The boys are eagerly waiting summer-school reinforcement when the elementary school teachers come for a month of classes. Most of the boys prefer school to vacation. (I asked eighteen of them last night, and only two of that number liked vacation more than school.) You figure! Attendance in the game room, however, is picking up during these very hot afternoons when soccer is impossible.

For the past two weeks groups of selected students have been visiting their families. For some, that means walking hours to see a mom or a dad; for others an aunt or uncle; for almost all some brothers or sisters. They eagerly depart the orphanage on a Sunday morning after our prayer service, but rejoice in returning a week later to the place they now call home. It gives me great satisfaction to see them return and greet their friends and the staff here. They are truly happy living here, growing into the young men that we hope will make us all proud as they eventually enter into the Haitian society as Christian educated leaders.

When I returned in early July, I saw our new resident, Johnny Yves, who came to us from the Azil, the Missionary

of Charity's center here in Hinche for malnourished and/or abandoned children (as well as adults in need of care). Johnny, now 15 we believe, had been adopted some years ago, but then was returned to the Azil when his foster mother couldn't take care of him. He comes to us as a true orphan, bringing with him a new set of challenges for us as we try to put together a good educational plan for him. It is for young men like him that we have our mission here at Maison Fortuné, and thank all of you who make it possible for us to carry on this mission.

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2009

Thirteen residents were part of the fourth graduating class of the Fortuné Jean-Louis Primary School on the Maison Fortuné campus in June. They await the results of the national exams they took June 25-26, and we hope that all will be able to get into secondary school in September. The exams are grueling: three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon for two days. Our kids had to go to another school to take them, and about 100 children from elsewhere came to our school along with teacher-proctors from other schools to supervise. The exams were delivered each day by government officials!



The class of 2009

Among our group, we are delighted to note, was Marie-Denise Louis, our first female resident graduate. She comes from near Bassin-Zim, a community not far from Hinche where our kids—and visitors too—love to swim in the waterfall-fed pool. Her parents are deceased, and an older brother was taking care of her. For several years she asked to be admitted to Maison Fortuné, and she finally became a resident in September.



Marie-Denis Louis

There are currently about thirty resident girls at the orphanage. Most of them are in the lower primary grades, so it will be several years before the next one is ready to graduate.

As Brother Mike mentioned above, our 9th graders now in St. Martin de Porres' middle school section took the national exams for admission to the secondary section (10th to 13th grade)—we just got word that all passed, so our congratulations to them as well!

NO TIME FOR EASY LIVIN'

Summertime is called the rainy season [*sezon lapli*] in Haiti, and it's not exactly when "the livin' is easy." Brothers Mike McCarthy and Harry Eccles have an English class each day, and Br. Mike says the kids are "devouring it"!

The primary school teachers are holding classes for two hours every day except Fridays. Br. Mike says "nothing is planned for the high school students, but somehow, they do things on their own."

Peter Everest, who volunteered at the orphanage last summer, is back again for the month of August, and is apparently a big help. His project this year is clearing the land on the river side of the orphanage to make a beach for the children. We hope to have something from him in the next newsletter.

OUR "GREAT" BIG NEW TOYOTA

Jean-Louis is grateful from the parishioners of the Church of St. Mark in Virginia Beach and of St. Stephen Martyr Church, Chesapeake, Susan and Kevin Schrack, and the other contributors to our two-year long vehicle replacement fund. The new Toyota, shown below, was built in Japan and shipped to Haiti, arriving in June. It can carry twelve adults.



The new Toyota Landcruiser

WELLNESS PROGRAM NEWS

The Haitian Health Care Foundation has granted us for the second year \$2,000 toward the orphanage's Wellness Program, provided that this amount be matched by our Foundation—which it has done. This fund is for a variety of health care activities over and above the routine function of the orphanage clinic, including Emergency and hospital expenses.

The Haitian Red Cross held a first-aid training class at Maison Fortuné for the first week of August. Susan Pleasants, RN, arranged for this to take place—no easy feat. The Wellness Fund will pay for the trainer and the materials needed. All participants received a certificate, which will be helpful to our orphanage medical team as they look for jobs in the health care field. In addition, Bon Secours Health System donated shirts and a tote bag of first aid supplies. Eighteen staff members, teachers, and some of the older students participated.

FREE VACCINES FROM MERCK

Susan Pleasants RN, who oversees our Wellness Program, wrote this report.

On June 18, 2009, while visiting Hinche I received a call from Dr. Cruff Renard, director of the HIV program at nearby Ste. Thérèse Hospital with the good news that Merck was donating vaccines for the children of Maison Fortuné. Dr. Cruff has been a strong advocate for the children. He started coming to the orphanage to help last summer, and thanks to his help almost all of the children have had physical examinations and received treatment for a number of problems. He had recommended meningococcal vaccines for them, but due to lack of funding we had no idea how to pay for them—our small fund was dedicated to purchasing a few first aid supplies for our makeshift clinic.

Plans for the use of the clinic rooms in the orphanage's

administration building developed in conversations between Dr. Cruff, Lefort Jean-Louis and me, with the support of the Board of the Maison Fortuné Orphanage Foundation. The first step after getting some basic equipment and supplies was to form an on-site medical team to take care of the day-to-day needs of the children with the help of Dr. Cruff, his associates, and any visiting medical professionals. We have made great progress with developing a little “medical team” led by Frenèl Jean-Dieudonné, director of activities, with the help of three older boys, Gulnot Cambron, Noë Dorvil, and Dieuphete François, who have an interest in medical care and possibly becoming physicians. Our goal is sustainability and developing these students’ ability to provide first aid services to children until they can see a physician.

Fortunately the presence of this team made it possible to quickly mobilize and administer the vaccines that were generously donated by the Merck Company with the assistance of our Zanmi Lasante friends. After the vaccines were drawn up and placed in a cooler, we loaded up the medical charts and headed to the girls’ campus next door. I gave the vaccines while the team assisted with recording the vaccination on the children’s records, locating and comforting the children, or giving out candy and stickers. Our school principal, Pettris Joseph, helped to locate all of the boys, some of whom seemingly vanished! We had a 100% vaccination rate for the children, and for now we have allayed our fear that any of our dear children will contract meningitis (and spread it like wildfire throughout the orphanage).

GOING SOLAR: BUT NOT SOLO!

Joe DiRenzo IV, son of Board member Karen DiRenzo and her husband Joe, is a rising first-class (fourth year) cadet at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. For his major engineering project he designed a solar system to power the orphanage so that the diesel generator would only be needed in emergencies. The cost of operating the generator has been about \$7,000 a year.

With built-in cushions for shipping and contingencies, the budget for the project is roughly \$49,000. This would give us a clean source of energy for the future and would pay for itself in seven years.

The Board of Directors is applying to foundations for a grant to fund the project, but we know that we have the best chance for success if we can raise half the funds ourselves. We are starting a \$25,000 Solar Fund and invite your participation. Also, if you know of organizations or businesses that might help us put together these matching funds—which would help us secure a grant for the rest, please let us know. We can send you the technical details; just contact the Foundation Secretary at crubencamp@comcast.net. Please help us Go Green!

SPONSORSHIP - A GREAT WAY TO HELP

Remember the sponsorship program?

It is a way to make a contribution each month towards the operating costs of the orphanage. It helps with food, clothing, education and supplies like books, computers, etc. Participating in this manner gives us a steady stream of income to support and raise the children. We can plan ahead and try to avoid emergency appeals.

The sponsorship levels:

Gold Sponsor: \$100 to \$150 per month

Silver Sponsor: \$ 50 to \$ 99 per month

Bronze Sponsor: \$ 25 to \$ 49 per month

Note that you can contribute on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

How many children are supported now?

We have almost 135 living on campus and another 100+ are educated each day at the orphanage. And these are children who *really* want to learn. Their success in secondary school after they leave our primary school is testimony to the education they are receiving thanks to you.

How can I begin sponsoring a child at the orphanage?

If you need more information before making a decision, please contact the Maison Fortuné Sponsorship Coordinator, Terry Allen at terry78allen@gmail.com.

If you are ready to begin sponsorship, choose your level of contribution and the frequency. Please send your first check to:

Maison Fortuné Orphanage Foundation, Inc.
C/O The Treasurer
P O Box 3092
Chesapeake, VA 23327-3092

Please note on your check that it is for your beginning sponsorship or better yet, email Terry Allen at terry78allen@gmail.com to let her know that you have started. This will enable us to set you up and make sure you get future communications.

What happens next?

We do not send out invoices in our attempt to keep costs down. Our administrative costs are less than 3%. If you would like a reminder, let us know by email above and we will send you a reminder at the beginning of each month/quarter/year, etc.

In whatever manner you can help the children, we thank you for your ongoing support!

MAISON FORTUNÉ ORPHANAGE, HINCHE, HAITI

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP CONTRIBUTORS: July 2009-June 2010

Listed below are the individuals & groups that contributed since July 1, 2009 to the day-to-day operating budget (food, clothing, salaries, furniture, etc.) or to the capital budget (for building construction), or the Endowment Fund. We are very grateful; the orphanage could not survive without them.

Pearl Baird
Cassie Booth
Anthony Breen
Frank & Linda Carter
Dolores Christian
Bob & Sandra Coyle
Rev George Cowan
Lisa Czora
John & Marilyn Dohanich
Milton & Agnes Ebbert
Rev Neil Fackler
Mary Fitzsimons
Karen Gdula
Joseph Grim
Drew & Doris Grivna
Travis & Vicki Hale
Hands Across the Sea, Inc
Patrick & Kollette Hillard
Betty Jones
Jon & Ginny Kehoe
Rev William LaFratta
Earl & Carol Lienemann
David & Lisa Linnell
Chris & Stephanie Lowman
Br John Mahoney, CFX
Thomas & Maureen McGeehin
George & Louise McInnis
Lois McNally
The Merck Company
Kevin & Mary Murphy
Maribel Santiago
Perry & Kathy Sassic
Lorraine Sharpe
Lynn Simmeth
St. Vincent de Paul Society
St. Vincent de Paul Society, Beaver Co
John & Ellen Thompson
Loren & Marcia Tschohl
Celia Woodham

I am enclosing a check for \$ _____. I would like to designate it for (please check one):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orphanage operating budget | <input type="checkbox"/> Chapel Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orphanage Endowment Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Solarization project |

Name

Address

City State Zip

Please make checks payable to **Catholic Diocese of Richmond** and mail to:
Patrice Schwermer, Office of Justice & Peace, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond VA 23294

I am enclosing a check for \$ _____. I would like to designate it for (please check one):

- | | | |
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