



# 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](http://www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti)

June 2009

## NEWS FROM BROTHER MICHAEL MCCARTHY

We're still celebrating the new beginnings of the Easter season here at Maison Fortuné. School resumed on the Monday after Easter, and the boys were very eager to get back to class after almost two weeks of vacation; the majority here favors class over vacations—so different from the States.

We inaugurated the new game room over the vacation, complete with new tables and chairs, thanks to Brother Piet Van Kampen—and our faithful supporters as well. Now the games are all in one place, and under the direction of a newly-created team of six students, we're opening the room three days a week so the residents can enjoy some chess, coloring, using the building blocks and the foosball tables as well. We have to limit those entering to twenty at a time. Bingo is next on the agenda for a Sunday afternoon; the box of prizes is swelling, thanks to some recent visitors.



Brother Mike in the new game room with two visitors from Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School, Virginia Beach, and four of the Maison Fortuné kids

The game room team now brings us to a total of thirteen young men whom I call “leaders” here on campus: five of them are on the spirituality team; three on the clinic team, and six for the game room (the library team remains to be reassembled).

We greeted five seniors and the principal of Mount St. Joseph High School in Baltimore to our campus on Holy Thursday—a first visit from students from Xaverian-sponsored schools in the States, and we're hoping it will continue with great regularity. These young men wanted to witness the missionary efforts of the Xaverians in Haiti and introduce the reality of our country to their school. During their stay we participated in some of the Holy Week Triduum, including a Way of the Cross pilgrimage from Hinche to Pandiassou at 6:00 a.m. on Good Friday. Hundreds of people processed in prayer and song for the three-mile walk and took part in the Stations on the property of the Little Brothers of the Incarnation. (The walk back to the orphanage was much faster.)

We also welcomed nurse Susan Pleasants from Virginia; Dr. Thomas Diehl from Germany; and Fr. Jim Griffin from St. Mark's Parish in Virginia Beach who brought with him six high school students and Alex Cooke as the adult helper. These young men helped prepare the new game room and unpack the newly arrived library books. The 103 boys here at Maison Fortuné truly enjoyed the influx of new young life on campus, which involved chess games (no visitor beat Fernand, our resident Hinche champ), and soccer and basketball matches, which were also fun to watch as our visitors experienced the agony of defeat!

Another sign of new life is the growth of individual gardens on the property: many of the boys have taken a real liking to preparing small plots of land and planting the seeds they can get from Bro. Harry and me. It's a joy to see the boys experience the growth of their recently-planted beans, pumpkin, cabbage, and beets. With the arrival of the spring rains, we're all hoping that the interest in the gardens will continue and that the fruit of their labors will make it to the kitchen.

On Good Shepherd Sunday we gathered under the famous ‘mango tree’ next to the dining room for our weekly prayer service. All 130 residents were present as Delince Charles, a member of the Spirituality Team, led us in prayer focusing on Jesus as our Good Shepherd. It was a memorable day for

me because the Maison Fortuné community actually lived out that scriptural passage, connecting it with Luke's famous parables of the lost sheep and the prodigal son.

Why was it especially touching for me? One month ago Jean-Louis had dismissed a young man from the orphanage for continued breach of discipline, a lack of respect for the rules that govern this place. Kelby had been living in town, sometimes with an aunt, sometimes not. He still attended St. Martin's school, but little else in his life was the same. He had been going to the river to take his bath; the kids here knew he was having a tough time, not getting enough food, losing weight and wanting to return 'home' where his three brothers were, as well as all his friends. Kelby visited Tata, Jean Louis' wife, and begged her to intercede for him. Bottom line: the Friday morning before Good Shepherd Sunday, Jean-Louis conducted a 'community meeting' under the mango tree. All the young men were present as he talked about many issues at the orphanage. Each boy had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion and add to the agenda. At the end Jean-Louis posed to the community the question: should we readmit Kelby? Many boys spoke up; all were in favor of it. Jean-Louis had made it a community decision, a family decision; all the boys took ownership in the outcome. They knew their opinion counted.

The next morning Kelby returned to address the entire community under the mango tree; his three brothers spoke about their happiness in having their brother return. Kelby spoke about the difficulties he had experienced outside, shared his commitment to improved behavior and told everyone how much he had missed them. The lost sheep had returned to the fold; the prodigal son was welcomed back; the shepherd at Maison Fortuné community was living Jesus' message.

On Good Shepherd Sunday, Frenel Jean-Dieudonné, director of activities, reflected on the Gospel for the group, applying the passage to our lives here. He addressed Jean-Louis as our shepherd, looking out for the boys, being responsible for their well being, facilitating the formational aspect of life here. He thanked those in Virginia and elsewhere in the States and beyond for providing the financial support that enables this place to be the safe environment that it is. Yes, the events of the entire weekend spoke loudly to me that the spirit of Jesus is alive and well not only as we break open his word each Sunday, but also as we actually put it in practice in our lived reality with the group of

young men here who continue to challenge, inspire, and humble us in their journey to manhood.

*[As most of our readers know, Xaverian Brother Michael McCarthy lives at Maison Fortuné with Brother Harry Eccles and serves as its volunteer campus minister.]*

## MAISON FORTUNÉ WELCOMES BOBBY!

Maison Fortuné has a new student, a cute little guy named Bobby; he started class at the end of the Easter vacation and was jubilant! A United Nations officer had brought him to our gate after he found this 7-year old in a jail. He had been accused of robbery. Bobby and another boy were living with a family, and it seems that the other boy stole something from the family, but both were put in jail!

Little Bobby has never been to school and is busy making friends and learning the ropes about a safe life here. He now sports his new school uniform and feels like one of the boys. He went to the Bassin-Zim waterfall with the Mt. St. Joseph visitors and loved the opportunity to swim and play in the water. Br. Mike reports, "It's a joy to see him come alive!"

## JUST IN TIME TO UNPACK CONTAINERS

Lots of boxes shipped from Virginia by container finally arrived in Hinche, just in time for the boys from Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School in Virginia Beach to help unpack and shelve books.

Another container is scheduled to be shipped from Norfolk in July. It may not be too late to include what you would like to ship. Contact Leo Blumle ([blumleleo@aol.com](mailto:blumleleo@aol.com)) for information.



Our helpful visitors at work; every hand makes a difference.

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

Foundation Treasurer Craig Emerson was notified by various Combined Federal Campaign/United Way areas that the total amount pledged to Maison Fortuné Orphanage this year was **\$24,315.11** [net of expenses]. Of that he has already received **\$11,308.25**. One way of looking at this is that these pledges will pay for the secondary school expenses for our 40 or so kids for next year—or that it covers three months of operating expenses!

Thanks to all of you who pledged through the Campaign this year. Most of the donors were anonymous, but we include in this newsletter the names of those we know of. We have been approved for inclusion in the 2010 CFC/UW Campaign. The Foundation's number is **12234** in their international listing.

## MOTHERS DAY CARDS A HIT

Our Foundation's Development & Marketing Committee had the idea of providing cards which could be inserted in Mothers Day cards indicating that the sender was making a donation to the orphanage in honor of the recipient. They sent potential donors a mini-letter from one of the girls at the Orphanage, 5-year old Joanna.



Little Joanna Joseph, poster-child for the Mothers Day campaign

Now the results are in, and the names of the donors appear in the enclosure to this newsletter. They provided a total of \$3,640.00, a sum that will cover more than two weeks of food, clothing, and education for the kids! Many thanks to all who participated.

## A MILLION PENNIES!

*Sharon Neuhaus, on the staff of St. Patrick Elementary School in Norfolk, Va., sends us this report on the progress of the kids' campaign to collect a million pennies for Haiti (half of which will go to Maison Fortuné Orphanage).*

Saint Patrick Catholic School has really taken off with their pennies project.

In March, our first official "dumping" of all pennies from the classroom to the big container, for the "Million Pennies for Haiti Project" brought in 104,224 pennies. This project has brought an amazing awareness of the needs of the children in Haiti to all the fortunate children at our school.

I have visited all classrooms from pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade to share all my pictures showing the kids at the orphanage and talking about their needs and how helpful these funds are going to be. The excitement around the school is incredible. All the kids are talking about pennies! Some are asking their parents to turn their allowance into pennies. Some are writing articles for their classroom newsletter about the project, for example, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade is learning about micro-economics, and I talked with a little girl who is the project manager in her classroom in charge of the pennies in her classroom—she wanted to talk with me about ways to keep the excitement going.

There was a school-wide competition from May 13<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>. Whatever student in each class brought in the most pennies, he/she won the privilege to throw a ball at the dunk tank on Field Day. The competition was outrageous because those sitting on the seat in the dunk tank were mostly teachers. Of course our popular principal, Steve Hammond, was first up and was dunked quite a few times.

Prior to this competition we had 104,224 pennies, and that day we brought in more than we already had in the container. As of this date, we have 354,985 pennies and have surpassed our goal of having 250,000 before summer vacation.

Several of the teachers are planning a trip to the orphanage. Not sure when, but we hope soon.

Please go to [www.stpcs.org](http://www.stpcs.org), the school website, for an update on the pennies project. There are several pictures of the first “dump.”

## EXAM TIME AGAIN

In Haiti June is the month for all-important government exams in all the schools. These examinations take place at the end of the sixth, ninth and twelfth years.

At the orphanage’s Fortuné Jean-Louis School, the following sixth-graders are finishing their elementary school program and must succeed in the “CEP” in order to be accepted into the middle school program at the Collège St. Martin in Hinche: Nickerson Bristly, Caleb Charleston, Johnny Charles, Nadene Jean, Wilfred Jean, James Jolicoeur, Gisner Joseph, Marie-Denise Louis, Carl-Henry Michel, De Gregoire, Yannto Oréus, Jackson Pierre and Surfrance Siméon. If they all are successful, we’ll have 44 youngsters at St. Martin next year!

Currently the following boys will be taking the exam to move on to the tenth grade at St. Martin: Wilbert and Wilgens Denis, Noë Dorvil, Délince Charles, Ex-one Saintil, Yoldi Pierre, and Jean-Edouard and Widens François.

Another milestone this summer: Jean-René Clerveaux becomes our first secondary school graduate as he completes his thirteenth or pre-university year at St. Martin.

He will be taking the highly-competitive entrance exam for the State University of Haiti. He would like to become a pediatrician.

Please pray for all these young folks as they prepare for life beyond Maison Fortuné. We should have the results in the August newsletter.

## DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE

At present, the committee is looking at ways to increase interest in the Maison Fortuné Sponsorship Program through which families and individuals can sponsor a child at the orphanage. We will be asking interested donors to contribute from \$25 a month to \$150.00 a month (whatever amount they can afford) toward the upkeep of a child, which includes shelter,

clothing, clean water, three meals daily, education (including uniforms and supplies), and health care.

One-time gifts are wonderful, but a sponsorship commitment on a monthly basis equals income the orphanage can depend on. Contact: Terry Allen at [terry78allen@gmail.com](mailto:terry78allen@gmail.com). More about this to come.

## ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

For several years our friends at the Beaver County (Pennsylvania) St. Vincent de Paul Society have made the orphanage a beneficiary of their Annual Golf Outing. This year’s event will be held on July 17. Several MFOF Board members are planning to attend. If you’d like to participate or contribute in any way, contact the organizer John Dudo at [jdudo127@yahoo.com](mailto:jdudo127@yahoo.com).

## OUR WEBSITES

And soon there will be two: [www.maisonfortune.org](http://www.maisonfortune.org), maintained by webmaster Brian Gridley, a parishioner at the Church of St. Mark in Virginia Beach, and [www.mfofoundation.org](http://www.mfofoundation.org), maintained by John Blandin of Bishop Sullivan Catholic High School (BSCHS) with input from the Foundation’s Board of Directors coordinated by Art Mowbray, a member of the Board and of St. Stephen Martyr Catholic Church, Chesapeake.

It is our hope that the students at BSCHS will also be involved with maintaining the latter website.

The original website focuses on the orphanage itself; the new one on the Foundation and its mission—the support of the orphanage. The two will be linked, and we hope you’ll check them out. The new website is still under construction but should be operational before you receive the next newsletter.

# Mother's Day Contributors

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Brady & Meghan Berberich  
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David & Sally Whiting  
Barbara Willson  
Fred Wood

## COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN DONORS

*Listed below are the names of those we have been notified contributed to the CFC this year. Most of the contributions to the campaign are anonymous, but we are grateful for all!*

Donna Allen-McDowell  
Fred Bertsch  
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Edward Chartier  
John Cochran  
Denise Coulombe  
Jeffrey Cunningham  
Joseph DiRenzo III  
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Dane Wittig  
Melissa Witcher  
Johnathan Woodell

# MAISON FORTUNÉ ORPHANAGE, HINCHE, HAITI

## INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP CONTRIBUTORS: 2008-2009

Listed below are the individuals & groups that contributed since July 1, 2008 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.

Terry & Maurice Allen	Bonnie Elam, <i>The Haiti Connection</i>	David & Elizabeth Luther	Br. Cosmas Rubencamp CFX
Adele Andrews	Terry Elliott	Br. Daniel Lynch CFX	Mike & Laura Rubino
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Peter & Kim Catoe	Lezlie Hierholzer	Diann Simons Naber	St Titus Christian Mothers
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Dee Christian	Marion Hooper	ND Basketball Services	Timothy & Helen Nelligan
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- |   |  |   |
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| <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 |

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