



SHALOM HAITIAN EDUCATION FUND NEWS

An occasional bulletin to provide information on the Fund's partnership with the Office of Education of the Diocese of Hinche, Haiti. It is also available on our websites: www.haitianeducationfund.com and www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti.

June 2010

GOOD NEWS ON RESPONDING TO THE NEED FOR MOTORCYCLES

Readers of this newsletter will know that we have long sought to find funding to provide motorcycles to the diocesan supervisors of schools to enable them to get to the schools not on the main road.

Recently we got word that the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities had responded positively to the grant proposal from the Haitian Education Fund (prepared by Board member Dot Summers). The Foundation will provide **\$6,200** for the purchase of two motorcycles.

This grant, however, is conditional. We have to raise within the next ten months an additional **\$6,200**, and the sooner we do that the sooner we can make the purchase. Please help. Designate your contribution to our Motorcycle Fund on the form enclosed with this newsletter. Thank you!

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Richard Joseph, Hinche diocesan director of education, sends us this report.

At the end of April we had a great meeting in Lascahobas with all the secondary school principals of the diocese to share information and make decisions about the end of the academic year. Msgr. Lévêque Bien-Aimé, Vicar General and Vicar for Education, was there also, along with the seven pastors whose parishes have high schools.

Fr Bernardin Raphael Desras led us the opening prayer, and Msgr. Lévêque Bien-Aimé welcomed everybody and thanked them for coming. I informed the participants of these activities of the BDE [diocesan office of education] since the earthquake on January 12:

- We accepted about 3000 displaced children in our schools.
- Caritas [diocesan office of Catholic charities] provided more food to the schools which had feeding programs and helped one more school (Notre Dame de la Guadeloupe in Darlegrand) to begin a feeding program.
- Fourteen schools received money from Caritas to pay the tuition for the refugees, and two received aid from Fr. Romèl, the diocesan treasurer.
- The national Committee on Education has sent a proposal to the Canadian Commission for the Management of Funds, but we have received no response yet.

We discussed also the following:

- The pre-exams [practice tests] for the 9th grade are scheduled for June 7-9, and for the Philo [13th, university prep year] June 21-25.
- The end of year exams for the other classes will be held on June 30.
- There will be no State Exams this year for the 6th grade or Rhéto [12th]. The ministry will prepare exams and send them to the schools, but they will be corrected by the teachers and no certificates will be issued for these children.
- The state exams for the 9th grade and Philo [13th] will be held--July 13-15 for the 9th grade and July 19-22 for the Philo.

Much progress has been made regarding our school gardens policy:

- In Lascahobas Fr. Bernardin encouraged the students to plant and to eat local foods. In the future they plan to raise goats.
- In Cerca-Carvajal they are growing cabbage, eggplants, and carrots
- At Los Palis, one teacher taught the practice of agriculture to the children.



Lascahobas students planted cassava (manioc), corn, beans, peanuts and plantains for use in the school feeding program. Mr. André Fritz, the pedagogical coordinator, and Fr Bernardin Raphael Desras, the principal, accompanied the children on this project.

On May 17th, Teachers' Day, we had a teachers' conference in the auditorium of St. Martin de Porres secondary school in Hinche, featuring Jean-Robert Charles, the Rector of UNAP (the Autonomous University of Port-au-Prince).

We discussed too the possibility of holding a one-week teacher training session August 16-20 for secondary school teachers. It will be sponsored by UNAP, but we need to plan for food and lodging at the Emmaus-Center.

Fr. Descamp Wallin, an Episcopal pastor, led us in the closing prayer, and we expressed thanks to Fr Bernardin, who provided a big meal.

ANNUAL JOINT MEETING HELD

Recently several members of the HEF Board of Directors were in Haiti and had a chance to meet with the diocesan Committee on Education there. Kathy Gross provided a report on the event. Here are some excerpts.

Response to the earthquake:

In response to our question about what Caritas/Hinche and the diocesan education office were doing to provide services to the almost 3,000 new children in parish schools since the earthquake, discussion focused on:

- The need for psychologists for counseling.
- Nutrition and starting a feeding program: Caritas helped with the feeding, trying to help each parish, which is often the entire village.
- Caritas/Spain helped with food. All 24 parishes in the diocese got food.
- A physician from *Zanmi Lasante* [Partners in Health] provided information to all the teachers to help them spot issues related to trauma.
- Schools in the parishes of Savanette and Boucan-Carré had some damage. CEEC (Catholic Episcopal Bishops Conference) sent information to try to replace what was lost.
- After the earthquake, every displaced child, all ages and grades without exception, was received and welcomed. Some examples of the secondary school numbers: Thomonde - 187; St Martin - 152; Papaye - 62.

School Gardens

We asked about whether the education office folks had spoken with Caritas/Hinche about teaching children about gardening (our diocesan parishes care a lot about school gardens). Cerca Carvajal, Saltadère, Lascahobas have them, and they are doing well. Lascahobas grew all the food for the feeding program [an example of a Battaglia grant at work!]. A final point about the school gardens: Caritas has agronomists who can come in and teach the kids about gardening, but the schools must make the request.

Discussions with supervisors:

Sister Alcide, a member of the diocesan Committee on Education, met with the supervisors. They talked about the challenges they faced and brainstormed to try set priorities. Transportation and paying for it continue to be a major obstacle. We hope that the grant from the

Raskob Foundation will help solve the latter problem.

Currently the office has two supervisors of schools—one for the Upper Plateau, the other for the schools of the Lower Plateau. They work three days a week and are funded by the Haitian Education Fund. There is a need for additional supervision, and we would like to provide funding for that if we can.

Teacher formation.

Since it has been two or three years since any teacher formation has been done, the Hinche diocese would like to have 15-day sessions for the Lower Plateau and for the Upper Plateau of the diocese. At the moment, however, it is uncertain how this would be funded.

SUMMER GATHERING

The annual Diocesan Educational Gathering will be held on the grounds of the Normal School in Papaye on July 30, and the Haitian Education Fund will provide financial support for it as in previous years. Richard Joseph, Director of Education, expects about 600 teachers, principals and pastors to attend. The theme for this year's gathering is: "A New Education for a New Haiti". We wish them a very successful event!

NEW BOARD MEMBER

At its June 22 meeting the HEF Board of Directors welcomed its newest member, **Dr. Pamela McKinney** of Virginia Beach. Recently retired from her position as Director of Elementary Education, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Pam has been an assistant superintendent, principal and teacher, and brings all of that rich experience to the Board. She is also a member of the Haiti Committee of her parish, Holy Spirit, Virginia Beach. Welcome!

BUDGET ADOPTED

The Board at that same meeting approved the amount that we will be able to provide to the diocesan Office of Education, Hinche. Thanks to your contributions, we have budgeted \$20,011 for salary and expenses for the diocesan office and the supervisors of schools. This increased amount will enable them to hire an additional supervisor for the schools in the parishes of the Lower Plateau part of the diocese. Thank you for making this possible.

WELCOME VISITORS!

We are delighted to be able to welcome Richard Joseph and Msgr. Jéthro Noël from the Hinche Office of Catholic Education to Virginia this summer. They will be here August 5-17th for meetings with the Haitian Education Fund Board and for visits to twinning parishes. We look forward to having them back and to this opportunity for planning more effective collaboration.

SHALOM/HAITIAN EDUCATION FUND CONTRIBUTORS

July 2009-June 2010

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