



SHALOM HAITIAN EDUCATION FUND NEWS

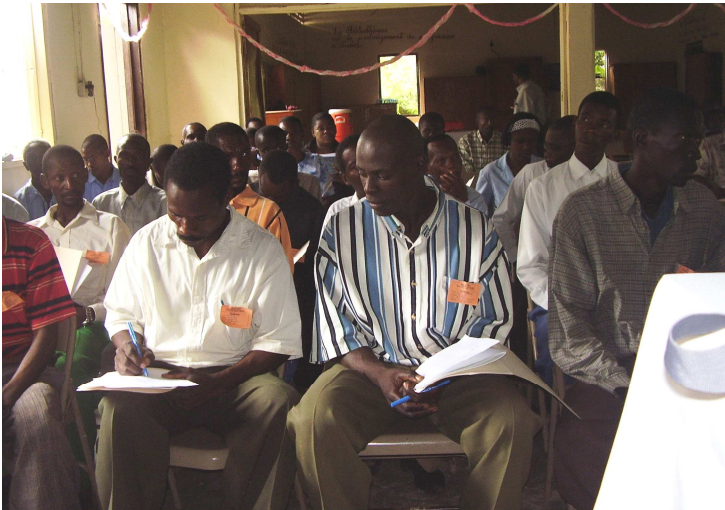
An occasional bulletin to provide information on our partnership with the Office of Education of the Diocese of Hinche, Haiti. It is also available on our website: www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti.

November 2008

GUSTAV CUTS DOWN ATTENDANCE AT EDUCATIONAL GATHERING

From Richard Joseph, Director of Education for the Diocese of Hinche, we have this report.

As you know we planned a diocesan Educational Gathering on August 27 at the Normal School [teacher-training college] in Papaye. As a result of tropical storm Gustav, however, we had bad weather--for two days we had too much rain, but nevertheless we gathered at the Normal School at 7:00 in the morning. By 8:30 only the members of the diocesan committee had arrived. We began to think that we would not be able to go ahead with the Gathering. At 8:50 three teachers from Angoman (Los Palis) came so we started the registration and gave out the documents for the event. From time to time some others came, and finally at 9:50 we asked everybody to have a seat, and Msgr. Jethro Noel, Vicar General of the diocese, led us at opening prayer.



Some of the teachers at one of the general sessions.



Small group discussions.



Sr. Janann, director of the Normal School, giving instructions to the group. (Americans will notice that most teachers in Haiti are males.)

Then Fr Leveque Bien-Aimé, diocesan Vicar for Education, welcomed everybody, explained the goal of the Gathering and thanked the people for coming in spite of the difficulties in getting there. Those attending included Fr Guy Casseus, Chancellor of the diocese; Fr René Blot, Pastor of Saltadère; Fr Delathou Pierre, Vicar of Cerca-Carvajal; and representatives from Lascahobas, Roy-Sec, Cabestor, Dos Palais, Mirebalais, Cerca Carvajal, Colladère, Hinche, Maissade, Papaye, Los Palis, Layaye, and Pandiassou - 89 participants in all.

The majority of the schools in the diocese were not able to be there—those from parishes such as Dubuisson, Saut d'Eau, Trianon, Marché Canard, Thomassique and Baptiste. Boucan Carré had a good excuse: Fr Alphonse called me at 4:00 in the morning to say that they left but couldn't cross the river in that area!

We focused on the plans of the diocesan Education Office for the school year. We asked each school, for example, to include:

- Mass to Holy Spirit at the beginning of the year.
- An Easter-Sharing (to ask the children during Lent to collect funds to share with poor children who can't pay the school fees).
- Education for respecting and protection of the environment.
- Banishment of physical punishment at school.
- Encouragement of dialogue with the children instead of merely lecturing.
- Giving pre-exams in the sixth and ninth grades to

prepare them for the national exams they take at these levels.

- Work to increase the level of education in the diocese.
- Encouraging the schools to plant gardens to grow food.

We formed some small groups and gave them some questions to answer regarding how best improve the quality of education in our schools.

At the end we thanked everybody for coming, and Msgr Jethro and Fr Leveque took the opportunity to thank me for the job I was doing as diocesan education director. I also thanked Fr Leveque and Msgr Jethro for their support and encouragement.

I also want to thank the Haitian Education Fund Board of Directors, because without your help we could not have this gathering.

THE WORLD FOOD CRISIS SERIOUSLY AFFECTS HAITI

Board member Bill Sigler prepared this report.

The world food crisis has been felt especially hard in Haiti. Soaring food prices have made staple foods prohibitively expensive for a large portion of the nation's population.

Front Lines, a publication of the U.S. Agency for International Development, reports in its June 2008 edition that rice prices have increased nearly 70 percent since September 2007, while corn has increased by nearly 35 percent in the same period. These increases have seriously affected school feeding programs in the schools of the Diocese of Hinche. Unless additional support is given by twinning parishes of the Diocese of Richmond that support school feeding programs, or unless other sources of food can be found, the quality of education will suffer badly as school lunch is often the only full meal school children receive each day.

Front Lines reports that the popular independent station Radio Metropole in Port-au-Prince asked Haitians in the street how escalating food prices in May had affected them. Their responses follow:

"Things are so hard...I cannot speak anymore, I am hungry...I do not know what to do," said one person.

"Things are hard for us, we cannot live anymore," said another.

"With 50 gourdes, one could buy stuff; now 100 gourdes is nothing; you cannot eat, your children cannot eat, school is expensive, food is expensive, house is expensive...," said a third person.

In response to this crisis, the U.S. Government recently announced that it is increasing emergency food aid to Haiti by \$25 million to a total of \$45 million for fiscal year 2008. The money is programmed for the World Food Program, Catholic Relief Services, and World Vision and will supply 36,000 tons of beans, rice, vegetable oil, and other food to 2.5 million Haitians. This food aid over the next 12 months will target the sick, disabled, orphans, mothers, children, and the elderly; and will support "food for work" which will put Haitians to work repairing irrigation systems, roads, and land to boost crop production.

To try to assist the Diocese of Hinche maintain and expand school feeding programs in diocesan schools, HEF board members recently researched international food assistance programs to Haiti. On their recent trip to Haiti, board members Kathy Gross and Patrice Schwermer provided this information to diocesan officials and accompanied them on visits to the offices of World Vision, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and PNCS, which is the Haitian arm of the World Food Program (WFP).

Discussions centered on the plans of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for expansion of school feeding programs. Diocesan and HEF representatives were very encouraged by the welcome they received and the willingness of the NGOs to share information. HEF will continue to work with our colleagues in the Diocese of Hinche's Office of Education to assist them in their attempts to access NGO school feeding programs.

A CHILD IS BORN

Richard Joseph and his wife Roseline just became the proud parents of a daughter (they already have a young son, Larsen, who is now a "big brother").



Rosa Linda Nightingale Joseph

THE CEP RESULTS ARE IN!

Board member Kathy Gross sends us this good news. To get information about your twinned school, you may contact her at haitikathy@gmail.com

The Haitian Education Fund Board has received CEP results for most of the schools in the diocese of Hinche. The CEP is the government test that all 6th graders must pass in order to move up to the 7th grade (which is the first year of the secondary school's "fundamental" level). This, then, is a very important threshold for the children. We have received the percent passing rate for each of 53 schools, and the range is huge, from a low of 10% passing to a total of seven schools where all of the students who took the exam passed. Our special congratulations to the following schools:

Location of Parish/ locality	School	# passing CEP	# taking CEP	% passing
Baptiste/Dos Pâques	Presbytérale de Dos Pâques	3	3	100%
Lascahobas/Gros Moulin	Presb. Cœur de Jesus de Gros Moulin	3	3	100%
Saltadère	Saint Michel	41	41	100%
Saut d'Eau/Laboule	Saint Benoît Laboule	2	2	100%
Savanette / Corosse	Notre Dame d'Altagrace de Corosse	6	6	100%
Thomonde	Pres. Petit Décoste	24	24	100%
Thomonde	Marie Auxiliatrice	31	31	100%
Cerca la Source	Saint François d'Assise	47	49	96%
Savanette	Notre Dame de la Nativité	29	32	91%
Dos Palais	St Jean Baptiste	23	26	88%
Baptiste	Père Thomas J.Quinlan	18	21	86%
Hinche/Labègue	Presb. Pape Jn XXIII	28	33	85%
Saut d'Eau	Notre Dame du Mont Carmel	32	38	84%
Boucan Carré	Saint Michel	41	50	82%

The HEF is working hard to collect the data to report to our donors and twin parishes. We are working with the BDE to determine how we can best help to improve education for the many thousands of students in the diocese of Hinche.

SHALOM/HAITIAN EDUCATION FUND CONTRIBUTORS

July 2008-June 2009

DIRECTOR LEVEL (\$5000 or more)

SUPERINTENDENT LEVEL (\$1500-\$4999)

PRINCIPAL LEVEL (\$1000-\$1499)

Alfred & Kathleen Gross

MENTOR LEVEL (\$500-\$999)

John & Martha Beall
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DONOR LEVEL (up to \$500)

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Noah & Jennifer Merritt
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I am enclosing a check for \$ _____ payable to: **Catholic Diocese of Richmond**).

I would like to designate it for (please check one):

- Improving the schools
- Endowment Fund (long-range support for projects)
- Support for Hinche diocesan Office of Education,
- Motorcycle Fund (motorcycles for supervisors)

Name

Address

City

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