



Ohio Haiti Wisconsin Spring 2017

Connections

On the ground in Haiti

by Kay Schumacher

In March of this year, Hilarie Rath and I traveled to Haiti to meet with our partners in mission.

FRIDAY, MARCH 17

Flights uneventful and on time. Fr. Leveque met us at the airport in Port au Prince and we drove to Mirebalais. Two parishes in the diocese were celebrating the patronal feast of St. Joseph. A religious rally was held in the square every evening from 6-9pm. So loud it was deafening!

SATURDAY, MARCH 18

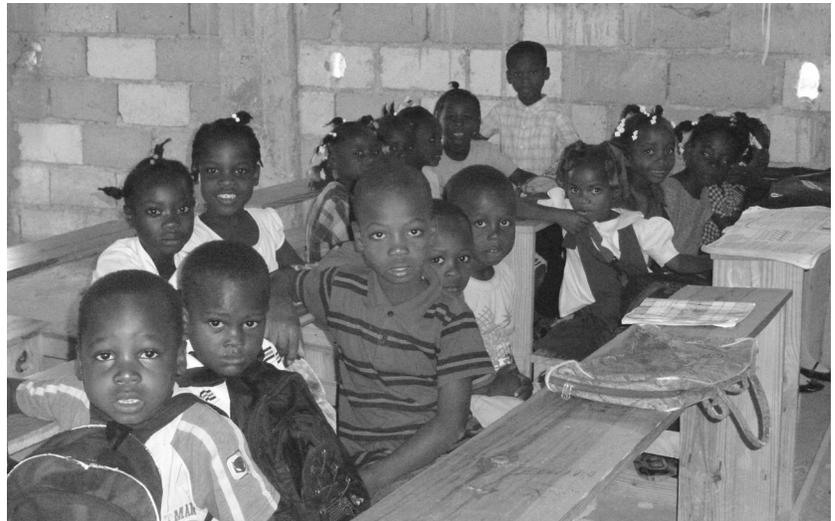
We went to the patronal feast in a small rural parish. The bishop was the presider.

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

Goldsmith Joseph, Hilarie and I met with the women's group. Each of the women told about their small business. The dignity and self confidence they show is a testament to the micro loan program and Goldsmith's work with them. She is training Linda one of the women, to manage the micro-loan "business." In six months if loans are repaid in full, she returns the savings and they reinvest it in their business.

MONDAY, MARCH 20

St. Joseph feast at Thomonde. The feast Masses are lovely with the singing/music, liturgical dance and offerings.



Even the poorest parishes go all out with decorations, wearing their best, etc. As Fr. Leveque said, "They are a dignified people."

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

The visit to Msgr. Augustin Remy School was great! Each grade prepared a program in their unique way. They had music, art and Haitian foods. They gave us two pieces of art to bring back — one of the flag of Haiti and one depicting the fight for independence. POWERFUL!

Met with the teachers and they told us that they need electricity! They need a generator in order to make use of the computers.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

Visited the elementary school in Noyau. Five classes are crowded into Our Lady of Deliverance church — 134 children. They sang

to us in English and two 4th grade girls danced for us.

The teachers told us that their greatest need is space, followed by the opportunity to take classes on field trips. We affirmed them for their dedication and assured them that HHH is working hard to raise the money to build them a school.

Later in the afternoon, we went to see the land for the new secondary school in Mirebalais and then to meet with members of the parish in the new chapel of Boyer.

THURSDAY, MARCH 23

After sightseeing in Port au Prince with Fr. Leveque, we returned to Matthew 25 and said farewell.

FRIDAY, MARCH 24

Home again, home again, jiggety jog.

A rookie trip to Haiti

by Hilarie Rath

On my first trip to Haiti, I was accompanied by veteran sojourner Kay Schumacher, and benefited from her experience in visiting Haiti. As I got to know the people in Hands and Hearts with Haiti, I was impressed with the partnership. We have Haitian people working with us throughout the year who are excellent communicators and organizers.

I went because it seemed to me that any country in such close proximity to the United States deserves to be treated like a neighbor, just as we would be there if a neighbor close to us needed help.

Haiti will be able to solve her own problems, but at this point, the country is suffering greatly. Those of us who have the Spirit of Love in our hearts cannot stand idly by.

We met with teachers at the elementary school in Noyau and the high school in Mirebalais. The needs of these teachers and the children are incredibly basic.

At the school in Noyau, the teachers need tables and chairs

for little ones, storage so they can keep books in school, and space so they can hear themselves think! The church is serving as a one room school that is bursting at the seams!

At the high school, we met students with big dreams. They want to be connected to the larger world electronically, but to have online access, they need a generator for electricity. This school, too, is more than filled to capacity with eager learners who realize that a plastic tent is not optimal in wind and heat.

One of the highlights of my trip was to hear the enthusiastic response to a video my students from Green Bay had made in Creole and English. All the Haitian students loved it and responded with "Mesi anpil!" (thank you very much). They also gave us gifts of music, food and artwork.

I feel that the journey to Haiti was both a privilege and a responsibility. May we all, through our prayer and spirit of caring, make a difference. I will be praying for you, dear reader, and for the people of Haiti.

Espwa provides HOPE for the people of Haiti

The women of the Hands and Hearts with Haiti ministry group "Espwa" were extremely busy in the final days of preparation for the March 20 shipment to Haiti. Espwa, in Creole, means Hope and the women of Assumption do indeed bring hope to the rural families of Mirebalais, Haiti.

A total of 84 boxes were prepared by these busy hands. Donations from our parishioners of school supplies, soccer balls, new and gently used shoes, personal hygiene supplies and fabric help make the ministry of Espwa thrive.

Donated fabrics are used to make infant layette kits for new mothers, while brightly colored cottons are made into lovely sundresses for toddlers and teens. Boys receive shorts and tops, some new and some refurbished.

New items in this shipment were 200+ drawstring backpacks designed by Espwa member Eva Zabrecky. These were filled with donated school supplies for distribution at the primary school in rural Noyau and the high school in Mirabalais.

Lots of prayer and love are shared in the sewing and packing of each item. We welcome new members and donations of travel size shampoo and lotion, new washcloths, cotton & flannel fabrics, tooth brushes, toothpaste and school supplies.

For more information about making donations or joining us, please call 440-823-2717.

