



# Haiti Outreach Newsletter

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15119 Minnetonka Blvd.  
Minnetonka, MN 55345  
www.HaitiOutreach.org

Phone: (612) 929-1122

Email: [info@HaitiOutreach.org](mailto:info@HaitiOutreach.org)

Fax: (612) 216-3777

## Fundraisers Bring Excitement to Winter

While it's been one of the most brutal winters in Minnesota on record, supporters of Haiti Outreach have not been deterred from getting out there and raising funds for building the next public school for the children of Haiti. Sixty people braved the cold by plunging into the frozen Fish Lake in Maple Grove on January 15, raising nearly \$15,000. In great contrast, in the warm confines of the Minnehada Country Club in Minneapolis on February 25, nearly 100 people sampled fine wines and cheeses and raised nearly \$5,000.

The Maple Grove Rotary Club sponsored the second annual Deep Freeze Dunk (pictured below) in January. The City of Lakes, Uptown, and other Rotary Clubs had participants there, while many other people not connected to Rotary went into the cold water in a hole cut in the thick ice with a chainsaw. Volunteer firefighters were in there with them the whole time, making sure everyone got out quickly and safely. A wood-fired sauna awaited the Dunkers. Congratulations go out to Shaun Irwin and Judy Johnson for raising the most money, and to Tom Tamura for best costume. We thank Tony Kieffer and Olaf Minge for leading the volunteers who put this successful event together and the sponsors: First Class Mortgage, Arbor Lakes Dental, and CCG Creative Studios.



Courageous Dunkers Leap into Icy Fish Lake for New School

This was the kick-off fundraising event for our effort to raise \$225,000 for a new public secondary school in the town of Rankit. You can see fun videos and photos of the Dunk on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Deep-Freeze-Dunk/251959979477?v=wall>. Or find links on our web site or [www.RotaryPartnershipforHaiti.org](http://www.RotaryPartnershipforHaiti.org). Join us next year for the third annual event!

The Minneapolis Uptown Rotary Club sponsored their third tasting fundraiser for Haiti Outreach in February. The theme this year was wine and cheese; in the past it was wine and chocolate and scotch and chocolate. Executive Director and Uptown member Dale Snyder made a presentation on the development work of Haiti Outreach and showed pictures of the finished La Victoire secondary school which we built in

2010 with funds from this and other events and donors over the past two years. A fun silent auction was included, with a Colorado condo, Twins tickets and many other items being auctioned. As with the Deep Freeze Dunk, donations for this event will go toward building the next public school in Rankit. Thanks go out to the volunteers, led by Rotarian Chris Dokken, and the participants who had a wonderful evening, making a difference for the children of Haiti. ♦



## Fun Opportunities to Support Haiti Outreach!

A variety of interesting and entertaining events are being held this spring, summer and fall to increase awareness and raise funds for our community development projects in Haiti. Please mark your calendars, keep an eye on our website for the details, and join us for some great fun, food, and entertainment.

**The first is our annual Spring Free Luncheon and Fundraiser, held on Wednesday, May 11 at noon.** The theme is "The Rugged Road to Development", not only a metaphor about the difficulty of doing sustainable development work in Haiti, but also a commentary about the roads there, the toll they take on our vehicles, and progress being made to make them better. This event will take place at the BayView Event Center in Excelsior, MN. Country Director Neil Van Dine will be here to update us on our many exciting development projects that are truly transforming parts of Haiti. This lunch is free, and we encourage our supporters to bring their colleagues, friends, and relatives to find out about our work in Haiti.

**On Thursday, June 2, we will be holding a Launch Party Fundraiser for Sustainable Agriculture with our partner, Mindful Generations ([mindgens.org](http://mindgens.org)),** to roll out our new permaculture project in Haiti. Funds raised will also be shared with Mindful Generations' other project in Africa. This event will be from 6:00 – 8:30 pm at Old Arizona at 2821 Nicollet Ave. S. in Minneapolis. It will feature heavy hors d'oeuvres, drinks, music, a live and silent auction, and a

very interesting and informative program about this new project. We have begun this effort to empower farmers in Haiti to grow their crops sustainably for the benefit of the topsoil and to increase yield, without incurring needless additional expenses for chemical fertilizers. It will be a free will offering for the food, and there will be additional opportunities to donate. Details, including how to RSVP, will be announced on our and Mindful Generations web sites, and through our e-newsletter. or contact us as listed on the top of page 1.

**Join Supporters on Sunday, June 5 in Morristown, NJ for an 8 mile F.S.O.T.L. (Fine Stretch Of The Legs) Challenge.** This is a R.O.G.A.I.N.E. (Rugged Outdoor Group Activity Involving Navigation and Endurance) style trail run competition with proceeds benefiting Haiti Outreach. Check out our website to find out more and to register!

**On Saturday, July 23, from 4:00 – 7:00 pm, the Second Annual Taste of Haiti will take place at the National Guard Armory in Roseville, MN.** Led by our great Haitian-American volunteer Daphnee Pierre and her friends, you will be able to taste a variety of authentic Haitian dishes and drinks while listening to Haitian music. There will be a brief talk at different intervals, updating you on our many community development projects. Details on our website and in the e-newsletter that will be emailed out. Hope you can make it!

**On Saturday, September 17, we will be holding our Annual Fall Fundraising Gala from 6 – 9:30 pm at the Airport/MOA Hilton Hotel in Bloomington, MN.** Invitations will be mailed in August. We expect to have our greatest event yet. You won't want to miss it! Save the date!

If you and your friends, church group, or social club would like to hold events like these in support of the people of Haiti and the community development work of Haiti Outreach, please call Executive Director Dale Snyder at 612-929-1122, or email him at [info@haitioutreach.org](mailto:info@haitioutreach.org). He will be happy to work with you to make it happen! ◆

## **Water Pipes Laid as Town of Pignon Gets Paved**

As the Haitian government is working to improve the infrastructure throughout the country, several towns are getting paved- Pignon, the home of Haiti Outreach, included. While National Highway 3 from Port-au-Prince to the northern port of Cap Haitien is slowly being paved for the first time with concrete and tar, towns like Pignon will have most of their streets topped with locally-made concrete pavers. Having pavers will allow easy replacement when repairs are needed.

However, the laying of pavers presented an issue for the town of Pignon, population 8,000, as they, with Haiti Outreach leadership, were also in the midst of improving their water system using our community development model. Under the current system, built initially in 1984, water flowed intermittently every 3 or 4 days. The elected Water Committee was implementing a plan designed by the engineering students at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Progress was being made to improve the water source and then lay pipe throughout the town in preparation for additional hand-pump kiosks and private connections for all residents who were willing to pay for that service. The problem was that the streets where pipe would eventually be laid were ready to be paved, but funding had not been secured to purchase and lay

the pipe. The cost of the water system project would increase dramatically if pavers had to be removed and then re-laid.

Haiti Outreach submitted detailed plans of the water distribution network to the Haitian Ministry of Planning, and the proposal was approved. They would fund the cost of the materials and labor to lay the pipes as the road was being



*Haiti Outreach's apprentice engineers Raynold Bernard and Dessalines Guildernes inspect the Pignon water project.*

paved, as well as part of the solar pumping system. This is just a piece of the overall scope of the project which is to create a distribution grid (44,000 ft. of PVC pipe), a 24 hour solar pumping system with a supply line running from a well to the town cistern, and initially 400 house connections.

Haiti Outreach animators have worked with the town to reorganize the Water Committee to include one member from each of 11 geographical sectors. As a street is about to be paved, that sector's committee members supply Haiti Outreach engineer Sarah Ocwieja and Apprentice Engineer Raynold Bernard with a list of people who want to be hired to dig the trenches and lay the pipe. Sarah and Raynold supervise the project street by street and have easily been able to keep ahead of the paving contractor.

As news spread of Pignon's water project to the town of St. Raphael, they too asked Haiti Outreach to help them with a water system, laying the pipes prior to their streets being paved. The Haitian Ministry of Planning approved that project as well, and the laying of pipe will start in St. Raphael this spring with Sarah and Raynold managing that project as well. ◆

## **Update: Cholera Outbreak Slows**

While details are difficult to come by, reports that have been made public state that the cholera outbreak in Haiti has been substantially contained. There has been a strong and consistent effort by many groups, including Haiti Outreach, to get the word out about the cause and prevention of cholera. Apparently that effort is paying off. USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, which has been monitoring cholera programs, reported an "ongoing decrease" in cholera caseloads. It reports that one medical group, which initially had as many as 140 severe cholera cases per week, has recently reported just 10 moderate to mild cases per week. In late January it was reported that there were over 209,000 cases of cholera, resulting in 2030 deaths. ◆

## Well Inauguration a Highlight for All-Womens Trip

By Mary Fenwick

A Haitian proverb states: "Piti,piti,wazo fe nich li." Little by little the bird builds its nest. I witnessed the truth of this saying on a late February visit to Pignon. This was my first trip to Haiti. As I am a middle school teacher, I was most interested in soaking up the culture, visiting schools, and studying the well building of Haiti Outreach. I have written a set of lessons on water as a global issue and was eager to learn more about getting clean water to people who need it most. In the amazing days I spent in Haiti, one experience is symbolic and most representative of the learning I did.

After lunch, on a Friday afternoon, we were invited to a well inauguration in Bay Nikola. The day was hot, dry, dusty, and clear. We climbed into the back of the truck and headed out. Little did we know of the drive we would face-a rugged, mountainous road of boulders, holes and ditches. It was steep going and magnificent in beauty. We pulled up to a colorful reception. Every space was decorated with paper chains and scarves. The well house was painted yellow and covered with a pink drape. Two tables sat at the front of the seating area, one for the presentation items and one for the generator-operated sound system. Popular songs were playing and people were swaying to the music. The townspeople were seated on benches around the perimeter.

The program lasted two hours and included speeches, welcomes, introductions, prayers, dancing, singing, and a short skit. There were admonitions to the community to care for the well. Roge Michel, Haiti Outreach's Community Development Manager, told a story. He said that the people of the village had been given a bag of rice. They ate it all up and asked for more. Today, they are given a goat. They can choose to kill the goat and eat it or they can take care of it and it will be a cow. This story refers to the villagers being given a well which they didn't take care of, and it became unusable. Now, they were given a second chance, and they should care for the well and they will prosper.

In the final part of the inauguration, the well committee members gathered inside the well house, said a blessing and ceremoniously pumped the first drops of water from the well. They cupped their hands and drank joyfully. Roge then



*Community of Bay Nikola Celebrates New Clean Water Well*  
cupped some water in his large hands and threw it out over the people. They shrieked and cheered. Their lives are changed forever. They can get clean water every day! It is clear that water is the basic need and right of all. The building of this well has brought a community together and brings them hope for further development in their future. ◆

## Busiest Year Yet for Haiti Outreach Development Work

Our community development work increased by more than 60% in 2010, thanks to the great support of our donors and partners. We anticipate additional opportunities for growth in 2011. The story on the second page of this newsletter is just one of many stories we could write about these exciting projects, creating water management committees and bringing clean water to rural communities and towns in different parts of Haiti. Here are the highlights of some projects that are underway right now.

We are working with the community of Pwent a Raket developing the water management committee which will sustain the project and rehabilitate their dysfunctional water system. This is the second largest town on La Gonave island, one of the driest and most fresh water deprived populated areas in the world, according to geologists. In addition, we are partnering with V3 Companies of Chicago to rehabilitate up to 30 broken wells on La Gonave, do geological studies, and develop the water management committees for each of those 30 wells. This project is expected to be completed later this year and will bring clean water to thousands of people on this island.

We are also partnering with the Engineers Without Borders students at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago who are developing a plan for a new water system in the town of La Victoire. The existing system was built in the 1980's, with no management system to keep it repaired and maintained, and is dysfunctional, like the one in Pignon. Once the plan is finalized, we hope to get the funding to build this system and create the water management committee that this time will keep it working properly. The EWB students are also designing an electrical system for the public secondary school that we built in 2010 in La Victoire. We hope to have that system in place within the next year.

Our partnership with Water.org for rehabilitating approximately 40 dysfunctional wells and drilling about 20 more, as well as implementing a sanitation education project, is entering its 4<sup>th</sup> quarter with great success. This two-year project will bring clean water and create water management committees for an estimated 30,000 people in the Pignon and San Raphael areas. And we hope to soon begin a 7 well project in partnership with the Rotary Safe Water Plus Program in Minnesota and the Cap Haitian Rotary Club. This is in addition to drilling more wells in the Central Plateau being supported by Safe Water Plus.

We are also beginning the fundraising for our next public secondary school in the town of Rankit. As soon as the funds are raised, that school will be built, providing this community with a way to educate their teenagers beyond 6th grade. The Haitian Ministry of Education has agreed to hire the teachers and administrators to run this school.

These are the highlights of our work underway, but it is not a complete list of everything we are doing this year, or hope to have accomplished by the end of 2011. We look forward to growing and expanding our services to other communities, especially as the new Haitian government gets organized. We appreciate the support of our many donors and partners. It is with your help that all of this work has been made possible, and we hope that your support will continue to grow as well. ◆

## Coming Events with Haiti Outreach

Check [www.HaitiOutreach.org](http://www.HaitiOutreach.org) for details.

**Wednesday, May 11 – Noon - 1 pm (Free) – Twin Cities Spring Luncheon and Fundraiser.** RSVP: Call 612-929-1122 by May 4 or email [info@haitioutreach.org](mailto:info@haitioutreach.org).

**Thursday, June 2 – 6 - 8:30 pm - Launch Party Fundraiser for Sustainable Agriculture.** Food, Drinks, Music and Fun! Partnership: Mindful Generations and Haiti Outreach

**Sunday, June 5 - 8:30 am - 1 pm - Morristown, NJ - “Fine Stretch of the Legs” Challenge - see the website for details**

**Saturday, July 23 – 4 - 7:00 pm - Taste of Haiti Fundraiser.** National Guard Armory, 211 McCarrons Blvd., Roseville, MN

**Saturday, September 17 – 6 - 10 pm Annual Fall Gala.** Airport/MOA Hilton Hotel, Bloomington, MN

## New Haitian President Elected

On November 28, Haiti conducted a nationwide election for President and members of their national parliament. The results of the presidential contest immediately were in dispute, even before the votes were all cast, with accusations of significant voter fraud and irregularities. However, the process of counting votes continued.

The Haitian constitution requires candidates to win by a majority of all votes cast, or there is a run-off election between the top two candidates. On December 8, the results were announced. With no one receiving a majority vote, former first lady Mirlande Manigat was declared the top vote getter, and current President Rene Preval’s ruling party’s candidate, Jude Celestin, was in a very close second place position. Musician Michel Martelly and his supporters disputed his third place position. There were demonstrations in the streets and civil unrest for about a week following this announcement.

To settle the argument, the Haitian government and the Organization of American States announced the creation of an outside OAS group to reexamine the ballots and determine who should receive the second place position and share a run-off ballot position with Ms. Manigat. The results of that investigation, announced on Feb. 3, declared that Martelly and not Celestin received the second highest number of votes. The date for the run-off election was set for Sunday, March 20.

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, the Presidential election council announced that Mr. Martelly, known as “Sweet Micky”, had won by a landslide of two-thirds of the votes cast. As this newsletter goes to press, it appears that Ms. Manigat will not dispute this result, in which case it will become official on April 16. Martelly, who has never held political office, clearly represents the kind of radical change that so many in Haiti believe is needed. He is expected to take office in May. Candidates of President Preval’s party won the majority of seats in the Parliament. It appears that Deputy Hidson Nelson, who has represented the Pignon area where Haiti Outreach is based, has won re-election to his second term. There is hope that, once the new government takes office, it will be in a position to coordinate the international aid that has been held up since the earthquake of Jan. 12, 2010. ♦

## One Person Can Make A Difference

*Excerpt from Bob Skomars’ Speech,  
Haiti Outreach Fundraiser at Ruttger’s Resort - May 8, 2010*

I remember my first trip down to Haiti. I was in the hotel lobby the morning we were leaving West Palm Beach and getting ready to go to the airport. Dave Potter, Paul Lendobeja and I were chatting and Paul said to me “You’re not going to change Haiti.” He was right, in a way. I mean, Haiti still has enormous issues with which to deal. So, in a larger sense, we haven’t changed the *country* of Haiti. But for local communities, this group has done such an incredible amount of work to improve the quality of lives of the Haitian people, it’s truly amazing! Schools, wells, houses, and numerous other projects have all made a tremendous difference in the lives of many Haitians in their local communities. It is **wonderful** that you’re all here tonight to show your support for the **excellent organization**.

But you know, at the end of the day, going down to Haiti, and even supporting this group, are not really about building schools, wells, and houses. While these are all very fine endeavors, the real amazing thing that happens when this group goes to Haiti is that they’re building relationships. They’re telling the Haitian people “I’m here for you. How can I help you?” When you think about it, can you imagine any better form of service? I’d like to share with you what I mean about building relationships and the kind of **beautiful people** that the Haitians are.

I was working on a roofing project in Haiti. We had built the trusses for two school buildings, and now we were nailing the purlins on the trusses so that the Haitians could come along after us and nail some corrugated tin to the purlins. It was another hot day in Haiti. I was up on the roof working side-by-side with a Haitian gentleman. He didn’t speak English and I don’t speak Haitian Creole. Throughout the day we kept trying to teach each other the names for the various tools we were using, like “hammer” and “saw”. Someone working on the ground below threw a bottle of Coke up to us, and we took turns quenching our thirst. While my Haitian co-worker was taking a sip of Coke, I started to tickle his toes, which in not-uncommon Haitian fashion were sticking through the ends of his shoes. Two things I recall about that little incident: (1) the skin on the bottom of his feet was like leather; it’s amazing he could feel me tickling his toes and (2) the laughter that we shared between us was a language **neither one of us had to teach to the other**. It was one of those moments that stay in your mind with such clarity.

**One person can, even in a little way, make a difference. All we need to do is place ourselves in a position to be able to help.** By either going to Haiti, or if you’re truly unable to do so, supporting Haiti Outreach, **YOU CAN** make a difference. The last thing I’ll leave you with is this thought: one of the definitions of the word “hero” found in Webster’s dictionary is “a person admired for his **achievement and noble qualities**”. By that definition, when you support Haiti Outreach, **you are, in a real way, a hero!** I believe one person **can** make a difference. Mother Teresa did. All of the Saints did. You can too! Please support Haiti Outreach in any way you can. Thank you very much! ♦