

## **December Update**

**Dan and Madel “On a Mission”  
LaCroix Technical School**

**12/1/18**

### **Alo... zanmi m ‘yo**

It is with great pleasure we finally are able to write to all of you. It is hard to believe but, we have been in His service here in Ayiti for more than two months. We apologize for not writing sooner, but settling in and beginning our work has often seemed a blur of one day into the next. While there are still long lists of tasks to complete, as well as continual obstacles to overcome, maybe, just maybe we are beginning to sense a rhythm to it all.

As we write the sewing classroom is complete and furnished, the computer classroom will be complete and furnished on Friday, 11/30. The new Classroom Building, (80’X26’) has the foundation and concrete slab in place. Steve Hill and Mario Caracas installed underground electrical service to the new building while Crosspoint Church was serving here, 11/3-17<sup>th</sup>. Our Haitian carpenter team built the roof trusses in early November. We will begin the completion of the Classroom building on 12/3 and hope to be under roof by 12/14. The footings are dug for the Lab Building, (40’X96’) and our concrete contractor will begin pouring concrete soon. We will be utilizing LCTS, (La Croix Technical School) funding to provide a new 14HP Kohler diesel engine for the existing cement mixer. This mixer will allow for a better, stronger concrete mix and it will be used in the Masonry Lab after.

At the instructional level we are making progress. Pastor Pierre has called and assembled an Executive Team to shape the Technical School’s programs, staff, and development. The team consists of Pastor and Madam Pierre, Executive Director; Kerby Pierre, Senior Pastor; Saloman Evens, Superintendent of La Croix Schools; Me. Altenor, and Education Administrators; Madel and Dan Beck. We had our first official meeting on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, and plan to meet weekly to provide continuity to the process of opening and completing certification of LCTS. Our first meeting was productive. An opening plan was formulated. Classes begin instruction on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Evens and Me. Altenor will be going into all the communities... reaching parents as well as potential students as we assemble our first semester class rolls for the disciplines in Carpentry, Computer Technology, and Sewing. These disciplines should be the focus of our initial funding. Following the outreach for potential students we will have an “Orientation Day” where questions will be posed and answered about the disciplines as well as a more in depth conversation around the expectation of enrolled students, costs, creating different avenues of sponsorship and scholarship, and what might a successful graduate of a LCTS program expect in terms of career opportunities, standard of living, as well as any help in creating job opportunities.

Dan continues to work daily on building and the furnishings construction, and Madel has been busy with the school particularly the preparation of the Sewing discipline. She is still making sewing machine repairs, set-up, and organizing the accessories and fabric. We continue to integrate ourselves into the community...what a joy and a blessing. We are met with open arms. Madel has joined the Women’s Group and the

Choir so when you come to La Croix you can hear her with all the other voices praising God at the church on Sunday mornings. Madel also started teaching English class early on after our arrival. She teaches with Begelet Anelus “Bman”, an interpreter, as well as works in the child sponsorship office. They conduct two classes each afternoon with a total of 60+ students 7-12 grades. After class there are many opportunities to practice English as excited students seek out English speakers to demonstrate their new speaking skills. It is a blessing you can see the progress daily! Begelet has expressed interest in seriously seeking a teaching career. Begelet and Madel are also interpreting the entire Technical School curriculum into English... what an amazing team. We want those that come from the states as teachers in a specific area of expertise, or as one who can help in any way at all to be able to understand the core requirements. Yes, the intellectual treasure that God may invite you to share with the school or its administration.

We were so grateful to share time here with some very special friends of ours as well as meet others for the first time. The mission field is a very exciting and interesting place to meet people from all walks, different life experiences, and directions of thought. One thing we have learned over the years is there is something magical that happens when people come together to love and serve others as well as one another. There is nowhere else in life where friendships are cemented together so quickly with a deep and lasting bond. What exactly is that bond? Well... Our Father in Heaven, Amen! It was great to spend time with The Hickory United Evangelical Presbyterian Church Team... Our brothers Dave Errett, Ron Caltumo, Jim, Frank, Joe, and Phil... Wow ... what an organized, dedicated, and focused team. These guys are responsible for many of the community wells, training individuals to maintain them in their absence, and keeping us solar powered at La Croix and other communities. What a great time it is to serve with them. We were blessed to spend time with our church team, Crosspoint Church from NY, and Elizabeth Callaham from Virginia. They labored on the LCTS classrooms painting, final electrical, service entrance, as well as reached most all the communities sharing the love and words of Jesus. Thank you Anita for leading the trip this year, as well as Malissa for coordinating our Child Sponsorship, Darby, Sam, Mario, and Steve Hill for sharing knowledge as an Electrical Engineer! We were thankful to have time with our good friends, Jim and Bonnie Miller who arrived to “de-worm children” along with Jim’s sister Kris, Haley, and Sofia. This is a fun crew; lighthearted yet very serious about tackling what is in front of them in the day. At last our Sister Laurie Adams came down from the north after a successful mission there, reaching out to some new people and new opportunities to serve. We again met some new friends to us in Liz,, a medical researcher and Dr. Martha, we enjoyed their experiences, sense of humor, as well as their dedication to their profession and to helping Haiti gain a better prepared, and serving Healthcare system.

Sooooo... what if this Christmas we all did something just a little bit different? What if we turned away from some of our usual inclinations can bring excessive expectations and gifts to those closest to us. What if this year we encouraged our families, our churches, our friends to change the lives of others than ourselves... We are asking all of you who read this letter to talk with your families and friends and join together to make a lasting difference. We believe the best way to provide “food distribution” to a hungry

population in the third world is through, OPPORTUNITY ! I couldn't help but notice as the word opportunity hit the page the word UNITY is within it. Unity is the key to create the change required. The Technical School is a God sized task, it will take all of us responding in unity to accomplish His purpose. Our Haitian brothers and sisters do not lack incentive, they are certainly not lazy, and there is no shortage of intellect. What is missing is simply opportunity. The opportunity to gain career skills, skills that can dramatically alter the projection of one's life. Statistically, you will earn a 65% greater livelihood in Haiti with a professional technical trade certificate and a job opportunity. Sixty-five percent... that is a game changer! Can you imagine what 65% greater income would do in your household? The reported unemployment rate of **unskilled** labor in Haiti is truly an undefined amount, if you were to research it you would find numbers between 40% - 80%, it all depends on how you discern the statistics. A couple of facts that help define it... 53% of the population is under 24 years of age... in the last five years the exchange rate has increased from 45 gdes to 1 USD to the current rate of 72 Gdes to 1 USD... 15% inflation rate... over 60% of the population live under the poverty level in Haiti... and two thirds do not have formal employment. Business is severely hampered by weak infrastructure and a severe **shortage of skilled labor**. Let's face it there are pieces of this problem we may never be able to impact in a manner that leads to the significant solution required... but we are hopeful you can see that with the success of the La Croix Technical School and future job creation there is much we can do to overcome the crippling effects that poverty can have on a community.

Sooooo... This Christmas can we do something a little bit different? This Christmas time let's all join together in a magnificent way to provide for God's purpose as He fulfills part of the vision He prepared for Pastor Pierre. "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day... Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime." As Pastor Pierre says..."this is not my Mission, this is God's Mission to La Croix and the communities that surround it." So if we are God's kids... Please join together in providing for His purpose. To do this, please go to [friendsofhaiti.org](http://friendsofhaiti.org), Pittsburgh, Pa. Scroll down the "**Homepage**" to "**La Croix Technical School**" all the information you need to share your gift, your piece of the puzzle is right there. Please read the "**Funding Guidelines**" and **Letter from the Director**".

What about giving this Christmas to someone who may never be able to give back? But, to be sure we know One who can and will through your love, faithfulness, and obedience. God has given many of us a piece of the puzzle, as was addressed at this year's Haiti summit... it takes every last piece to complete the puzzle, the bigger picture, or in this case...God's purpose... What will you do with your piece? Will you help complete the picture?

<sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Luke 12:33-34

Together in His service, Peace to you this Christmas... Dan & Madel

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