

# Haitian Project News

*Celebrating 30 years of Louverture Cleary School!*

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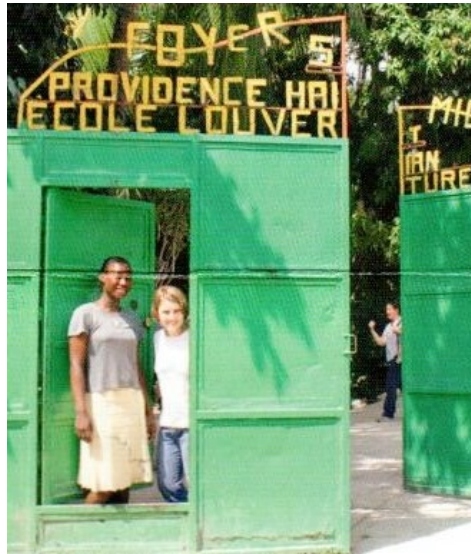
*"A Louverture Cleary education can change a life, and through that life, a thousand more."*

## Still a Gateway, Not a Barrier

By Amanda Haluga  
(THP Assoc. Director of Community Development)

Back in March 2010, Christina Moynihan, then THP Director of Community Outreach, wrote an HPN article about Louverture Cleary School (LCS)'s main gate on Santo 5. She wrote: "Here, people come and go, bringing things in and taking things out. Some neighbors enter to sell their home-cooked snacks. Other visitors may be coming in to look for a job opportunity or for a quick basketball/soccer game, or just a seat to watch it all. All sorts of people come and go; no one is a stranger when he or she leaves."

"In Haiti, we commonly use the French term for gate—*barrière*. When a foreigner hears us talk about the green barrier, they probably imagine some obstacle or barricade that separates Louverture Cleary School from the rest of the world. Yet in reality, the green barrier is a gateway: 'Your gates shall always be



Members of the LCS community in the LCS gateway in 2010 (left) and 2017 (right).

open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings (and queens) in procession' (Isaiah 60:11)."

In that same 2010 article, Christina went on to talk about the "faithful and honest" Esther Paul (LCS '02) who,

"following in the footsteps of the real queen in the Bible," returned to LCS in 2007 as a staff member in the accounting office. Today, Mme. Paul remains a pillar of the LCS community, now THP Director of Operations—Haiti. Her firm and hard

*(Continued on page 2)*

## HIGHLIGHTS .....

### Education Gives an Edge Even in a Storm:

In the aftermath of Haiti's 2010 earthquake, LCS students were a stabilizing factor amid the chaos, translating for visiting medical teams and constantly working in service to the local community. This hurricane season again reminded us how education helps a country manage and recover from natural disasters. Through education—a long-term solution—we help individuals move up and out of poverty and Haiti build its capacity through institutions and structures. We can't take our eyes off the prize: a country that one day can weather inevitable storms on its own.

### Network Vision Adopted:

THP's Board of Directors has officially adopted the comprehensive two-decade vision to create "The Louverture Cleary Schools Network": a national network of ten schools in Haiti. Seeing the impact LCS has had on individuals, the economy and the greater society in Port-au-Prince, THP intends to build nine more schools—one in each district. Creating immense growth and opportunities in Haiti, The Network will be a strong, global example that education is the surest way out of poverty. We look forward to making The Network vision a reality and putting Education First in Haiti!

### Preparing for Confirmation:

LCS' student-run Catholic Club provides extracurricular learning about the Catholic faith. With LCS Principal Marjorie Mombrun (LCS '07) and 3<sup>rd</sup> year Volunteer Brendan Kelly, Secondaire 3 (US 12th grade) student Renancia Privat is facilitating 13 students' preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Privat reflects: "There are so few students at LCS that have all of the sacraments of initiation, including myself. The sacraments are such an integral part of the Catholic life and it is our responsibility to work together to prepare." The Sacrament is planned to be administered by a local priest in the spring.

## Still a Gateway

(Continued from page 1)

working demeanor still sets an example for LCS students, inspiring many to strive to work in education after university and be just like her to their own students. THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan says, "History has proven everything right that was said about Esther in Christina's article from 2010. She has grown from being a great student and a talented mid-level manager to an indispensable colleague at the highest level of leadership of our effort in Haiti."

Each day, 47 staff members and 33 teachers join Mme. Paul and the 362 LCS students at school. As the students line up on the basketball court for their morning meeting, prayer and flag-raising, the children in the *Koukouy Sen Kle* Early Childhood Development Program (formerly known as LCS's *Ti Moun* Program) come through the gate and

join them. The program was expanded in 2010 by Christina who recognized need to open up the doors of the safe secondary school to small children in the neighborhood as a way to combat the impact the earthquake that occurred in January of *that* year.

Today, the *Koukouy* program serves over 61 children. Edline Monclair (LCS '15) is a Junior Staff member who teaches in the program while attending law school. Edline enjoys being a part of such a unique program. Asked why, she replied, "Caring for the *Ti Moun* means a lot to me because I can help them build many skills and improve their self-esteem. Since I started volunteering in *Ti Moun* as a *Twazyem* student, the program has better books and school resources, more students, and has gotten many students into good schools (including LCS)." (Read more about Edline in the LCS Alumni Story on page 3.)

Every day as the children in the *Koukouy* Program pass back outside the

gateway, a different group of children and young adults enter for LCS's student-led *Ekol Ankourajman* after-school tutoring program. Also larger than ever before, 30 LCS student teachers spend their clean up and play time to tutor around 90 peers from the neighborhood, a true testament to the school's motto, "What you receive for free, you must give for free" (Matthew 10:8).

Seven years after Christina's original story and 30 years after the gate opened for the first time to what we know as LCS, the barrier is still a gateway to community and to success. Every person who enters LCS through the green barrier is not only a friend but a part of the community, and the wealth that is brought and shared is the wealth of education. And when every community member—student, *Ti Moun*, Volunteer, neighbor, staff member—brings the wealth of education they acquire at LCS to their own homes, they will make not only Haiti but the world a better place.

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## Past Volunteers: Present for the Future

By Mary Jo LeGrand (THP Assoc. Director of Parish & School Development)

This fall, the first-ever THP Volunteer Alumni Summit took place at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Crystal Lake, IL. This groundbreaking event, developed specifically for Volunteers who spent one year or more as teachers within the heart of THP—*Louverture Cleary School*—brought Volunteer Alumni from a number of years together and affirmed the value of THP's Volunteer program and charism.

The Summit sought to celebrate THP's charism (an expression of a unique, God-given, spiritual identity) as it is lived out among the Volunteer Alumni community. THP, which has been canonically recognized as an Association of Lay Faithful within the Diocese of Providence, RI, has had an official charism statement since 2010. Summit participants discussed ways this charism has been lived out—in Haiti, and in the U.S. (Note to reader: THP's Charism Statement can be found in the "About" tab at [www.haitianproject.org](http://www.haitianproject.org).)

For those present, it was an

opportunity to continue friendships developed in Haiti and meet other Volunteer Alumni for the first time. Meghan Gregus (THP Volunteer '12-'13), found it was worth rushing from coaching volleyball in Chicago to arrive in Crystal Lake just in time: "I loved sharing stories with other Volunteers from different years. It was interesting how we could relate to each other having just met for the first time. It was wonderful to hear all the positive things happening at LCS."

Brian Rhodes (THP Volunteer '04-'05) of CA serves on THP's board of directors. Like Gregus, he enjoyed the chance to connect and reflect on his time as a Volunteer, which he explains as "one of the most defining times of my life. My experience in Haiti has armed me with the skills, compassion, love, fire, and water to nurture my spiritual and emotional life. I am who I am because of



*Volunteer Alumni at the first-ever Volunteer Alumni Summit: Adam Osielski, Kristin Soukup, Meghan Gregus, Betsy Bowman, Amanda Haluga, Rebecca Fernandes, Reese Grondin, Mary Jo LeGrand, Brian Rhodes and Katie Kruger.*

my Volunteer year in Haiti and for that I am forever indebted."

The Volunteer Alumni Summit will take place quarterly in conjunction with the THP Board of Directors meeting, each in a different region of the US. All Volunteer Alumni are welcome to attend. In the words of Rhodes, "We are a part of something unique and special and we need to keep that fire burning. Haiti has made us better people. Let's hold onto this love."



# Moving Forward, Giving Back

By Connor Branham  
(THP In-Country  
Program Manager)

**E**dline Monclair (LCS '15) graduated from LCS two years ago, but still remains a prominent member of the school community while actively pursuing challenging academic goals. After graduation, Monclair accepted a position on junior staff to remain at the school working with the *Koukouy Sen Kle* Early Childhood Development Program, the education program for young children from the neighborhood. In this position, she receives a full scholarship from The Haitian Project's Office of External Affairs (OEA), with which she is studying Law and Political Studies at *Université Quisqueya*.

Monclair says that her time at LCS has prepared her well for post-graduation life.

She said, "I was not only well-prepared with solid study habits, but I was also advanced relative to other students in many subjects." She

on campus. Her colleague in *Koukouy* Christie St Croix (LCS '16) said, "Edline developed a strong sense of responsibility during LCS and is continuing

In addition to her studies, Monclair holds service as a critical value. She exercises this with her work with the *Koukouy* where she educates, plays with, and is there for kids who need it. She started working with the *Koukouy* program as a student at LCS and knew it was important and something she should continue doing. St Croix said, "Edline cares so much. That is why she creates such a good environment for the kids."

In the future, Monclair plans to continue taking her social responsibility seriously. She said, "I will work on spreading the rule of law in Haiti to create a more just country. Few people in Haiti know either their rights or their obligations to the state." We are excited to see how Monclair uses the tools she has gained from LCS.



*Edline Monclair (LCS '15) teaches the children in the Koukouy Sen Kle Early Childhood Development Program at LCS during the day, while studying law at Haiti's Université Quisqueya.*

has maintained many of the good habits that she was taught at LCS and continues to demonstrate good habits

to build on that." She brings those lessons with her to *Quisqueya* and uses them to succeed in school.

## Volunteer Alumni Spotlight: Emily Marquet

By Tara Kingsley  
(HPN Managing Editor)

**E**mily Marquet (THP Volunteer '11-'13) currently lives in London and is earning her Masters in Filmmaking at the London Film School. A leap across the pond may seem like quite a jump; however, moving to new places a pastime for Marquet.

After graduating from NYU in 2011, Marquet, who had already visited Haiti twice before, became a Volunteer. In the two years that she spent at LCS, Marquet used her undergraduate studies in theatre to found LCS' theatre club. "It was amazing how Emily could guide the students through the school's four languages to produce adapted Shakespeare and other classical works," remarked Deacon Moynihan. "Emily not only coached the students into entertaining the school—some of the best fans were from the neighborhood."

Marquet says, "I knew after



*Emily Marquet behind the camera during her studies at the London Film School.*

volunteering and creating the theatre program at LCS that I wanted to transition over to film from theatre. Eventually, I want to tell stories from my time in Haiti. I think Haiti is my biggest source of inspiration and I am constantly thinking of ways to celebrate Haitian storytellers."

The experience of living at LCS and developing a successful theatre

program with limited resources has well prepared Marquet for film school. She is accustomed to working long hours – a staple of a film set – and she understands collaboration and teamwork. Marquet reflects, "As a Volunteer, creating a group vibe and dynamic was important, but I always felt like I had been chosen as a Volunteer for a specific reason, something I could bring to the group. That has been something I've worked on discovering here as well."

Marquet is currently developing a script set in Haiti that she would like to be her graduation film, a thesis project that will be sent to film festivals. Emily confesses that she will talk about her time in Haiti to anyone who will listen: "I loved living a life with no distractions. I loved getting to know the students and learning from them, making art with them, watching them go on to university and do amazing things....It was an amazing time in my life that I think about every single day."

# Dedicated to Catholic Education, Near and Far

By Christina Moynihan  
(THP 2nd Assoc. Director of Parish &  
School Development)

It all started in the late '60s when Theresa Marie met Thomas Albin Pierce. They realized they had a lot in common. They both loved teaching the sciences at Xavier High School (XHS) in Middletown, CT, and they were both devoting their lives to Christ, Tom being a Xaverian Brother and Terri having recently left the order of the Bernadine Sisters. A decade later in 1971, Tom and Terri were married. They continued to teach at XHS and live in Portland, CT. Soon, they were blessed with two daughters, Stacey and Michelle. They taught together at XHS until they retired.

It was during their tenure at XHS that Patrick met the Pierces. Soon the Pierces would become our pre-Canan couple and help with our preparation for marriage in 1988. The Pierces along with a lot of other members of the XHS community helped us celebrate our wedding

in August of that year. Patrick is quick to point out that their work—worked!

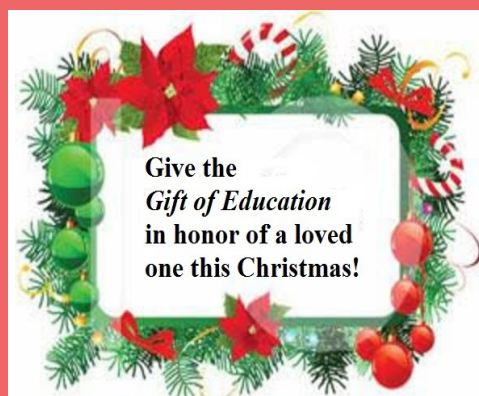
When in 1996 the Pierces heard about the Moynihans' choice to move to Haiti, they wanted to learn more about The Haitian Project. Tom and Terri became active members of our community in 2007. Since then, Terri has looked forward to each newsletter and has saved each one.

"Tom had been a missionary in Kenya when he was active with the Xaverians. We knew we would not be travelling. I am not that brave. We just couldn't do it ourselves," says Terri. The Pierces then began to contribute to THP both monetarily and spiritually. They had dedicated themselves to teaching for over 50 years between them. "Education is so important to success. Everyone should have an opportunity to succeed. So it was natural to support a project whose mission was to educate those who would not otherwise have a chance to pay for their education. With education, you make a difference in the students' lives. You expand their lives and give them the world."

Tom and Terri have seen the benefits of their teaching efforts in re-meeting their students. Some of their graduates have become science teachers and doctors. (This is a wonderful reflection of the Pierces' talents. They have encouraged their students to love the sciences as well.) "My cardiologist is a former student of Tom's," laughs Terri.

Even though Tom has passed away, Terri knows that this is their family's mission. "THP is a part of my family. I would never forget a part of my family." And even though Terri knows she will not be able to meet most of the THP community, she wants the Volunteers and members to know: "First I feel they are doing God's work. Second, I believe Jesus would say: 'Good job. Finally...somebody is listening to Me. I hope they keep it up.'"

Patrick is fond of saying that a mission is only as strong as the community that sends it. Since our mission work is a fruit of our marriage, the Pierces have a double claim to being part of our work. I am glad to give Terri and Tom the credit.



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## A Mission is as Strong as the Community that Sends It

By Tim Scordato  
(Former THP Staff)

Louverture Cleary School (LCS) graduates are ending the cycle of poverty as a result of communities like St. Thomas the Apostle (STA) Parish in Crystal Lake, IL. This is not an exaggeration. LCS graduates, who come from the poorest areas of Haiti, make 10 to 15 times the per capita income of Haiti.

Combined with formidable Catholic social teaching and spirituality, LCS graduates have the strength to love their neighbor, raise families, build and support businesses, infrastructure, community and government, and lead others to do the same. It is the kind of strength that is passed from generation to generation and community to community. It is the kind of strength that fuses STA and LCS.

Since 2001, when Msgr. Daniel

Hermes transferred from Holy Family in Rockford, IL to STA, the parish has raised more than \$140,000 for the school, through parish tithes, mission trips, special fundraisers and community gatherings like the Big Get Together (BGT).

This fall, the parish hosted their fourth BGT, this time to raise funds for a multipurpose truck for LCS. Their efforts continue toward this goal even after the event is over, look- (Continued on page 6)

# STUDENT VIEWPOINTS

## Daïka Lumia Brunache

**M**y name is Daïka Lumia Brunache. I am from Port-au-Prince. I am 17 years old and am currently a Philo student at Louverture Cleary School. At LCS, when we are in Philo, we become Guides. Guides are leaders for the younger students. We lead prayer groups, dorm rooms, and workgroups. We are guides because we have more experience than all the other students. We are here to help all students.

As a Guide, I want to be a good example for other students. I want to help them in their times of need, help them to do good things and have them walk in the right direction so when they become guides themselves, they will do the same. If this happens, the light of LCS will continue to shine. When I am helping people, I feel happy. It's a pleasure for me to help the youngest students because our system and way of life is so new and different to them.

Being a Guide is challenging at times, well, most of the time. While working with members of the administration, we must plan work projects and groups as well as study for our regular classes. I constantly remind myself that this is only the beginning of my life and the work now will be nothing compared to life after LCS. It will be worth it to work hard now and get the results later. My life now is preparing me for after. I will be more organized and taking new responsibilities will be second nature.

## Coetzer Medilien

**H**ello, my name is Coetzer Medilien. I am in the 8th grade at Louverture Cleary School. Before I came to LCS, I was in the *Koukouy Sen Kle* (Early Childhood Development) Program, also known as the *Ti Moun* Program (which was expanded in 2010 by Christina Moynihan into the program it is today). *Koukouy* is the organization at LCS that gave me the opportunity to



*Philo student Daïka Lumia Brunache (left) and Senkyem student Coetzer Medilien (right) pause between classes at Louverture Cleary School to share what their Louverture Cleary education means to them.*

finish my elementary school. My mom told me that I would be put into the *Koukouy* program. I was so happy to join the program. I learned about God and I was also able to play soccer and basketball.

After the 4th year with *Koukouy*, I received a scholarship to attend *Jolly Garden*, a local elementary school. I studied there, and then took the test to enter LCS. I was chosen as one of the 60 new students accepted into the *Sizyem* class at LCS that year. I know that Jesus was with me the whole time and it was

only by grace that I came to LCS. It was his grace that the *Koukouy* program worked with to support me and my sister, who also went through the program. She is currently in the 5th grade at *Jolly Garden*.

I think the *Koukouy* Program has changed my life because today I can be who I want to be and realize my dreams, thanks to my education. It has made such a great difference in my life and my family's. I have been through so much, but I have so much more to do. I owe it all to the *Koukouy* Program.

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*Members of the community gathered in Crystal Lake, IL for the “Big Get Together” at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in September: (from left) Volunteer Alum and Board Member Betsy Bowman, community member Carol Brauneis, Volunteer Alum Meghan Gregus, Board Chair Scott LeGrand, and Board Member Smith Vioselin.*

*(A Mission as Strong, continued from page 4)*

ing forward to filling this need for the LCS community.

Parishioners, led by Barb Wheeler, secured and coordinated all the resources needed for the BGT, STA School’s eighth graders and parishioners supplied the service and cleanup, and the Haitian artwork at auction was underwritten by parishioner Jeff Fox, who is also a major supporter of STA’s mission trip activity.

Since 2011, the parish has taken nine mission trips to LCS, sending 56 parishioners to date. John Donovan, STA mission trip formation co-leader, said that the mission groups meet about every other week, starting four months ahead of the trip to discuss concepts of solidarity, subsidiarity, the seven themes of Catholic social teaching, and the shared history and wealth disparity in the Americas. “As His children, we embark on a process whereby we discuss accepting God’s will, then obeying God’s will. From there, we begin an exploration of poverty. Who is poor, where are the poor, and why are some countries poor?” he said.

THP Associate Director of Parish and School Development Mary Jo LeGrand says of Donovan, “You can tell that he and Fr. Jerome Koutnik have contemplated the reality of the situation. They think about poverty a lot and are personally invested.”

When asked what makes STA

such a strong community, LeGrand and many members of the STA community unanimously point to the leadership of Msgr. Hermes and Fr. Koutnik.

“Our priests are very supportive,” said 2015 mission trip participants Bob and Carolyn Grzelewski. Donovan agrees, “We have been blessed with great priests.”

Msgr. Hermes was previously the pastor of Holy Family in Rockford, the first parish assignment for THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan. Deacon Moynihan said, “Msgr. Hermes continues to impress me as to how he can motivate a whole parish to fulfill the Gospel call to love thy neighbor. We are fortunate to have St. Thomas the Apostle and specifically those that visit us and advocate for us as our neighbors.” LeGrand receives an excess of volunteers from STA for giving rides, housing, event assistance, community outreach, and other services. There are too many volunteers to name here. But the community does an excellent job at loving their neighbors, building community, and leading others to do the same. Sound familiar? It is because their strength flows from a common spirituality shared with LCS, understood implicitly by Fr. Koutnik, who says that “the strength of the STA community is influenced by the goodwill and interest of the pastor and associate pastor invested in spirituality. LCS cannot be possible without that common spirituality.”

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