

Haitian Project News

Celebrating 31 years of Louverture Cleary School!

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

Rising to Meet the Challenge

By Thomas Cody
(THP Volunteer '13-'14)

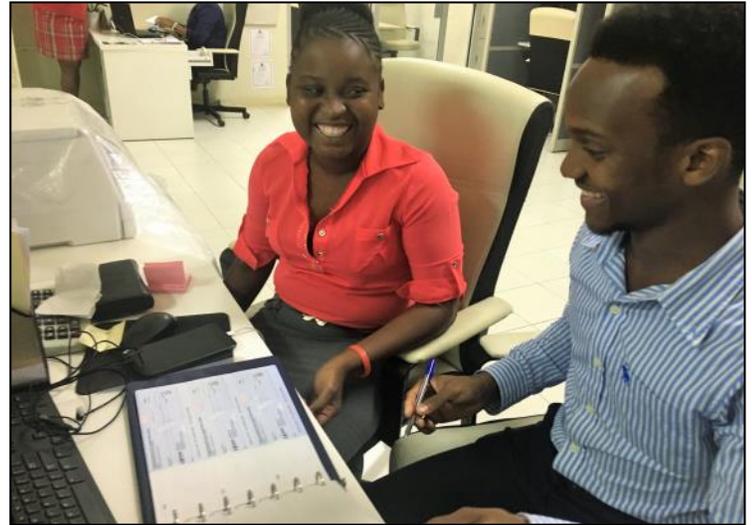
The *Let Us Be On Our Way Capital Campaign* (RISE) is complete! Thanks to the generosity of The Haitian Project (THP) community, the campaign exceeded its goal of \$2.9 million, marking the largest capital campaign in THP's history. "It was a great team effort with many individuals making it all work," said THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan. "The RISE Campaign goal was four times larger than past goals, making finishing this one feel that much more amazing!"

The over \$2.9 million raised in gifts, pledges and bequests will support three important initiatives: the General Endowment, the University Scholarship Endowment, and the Office of External Affairs Endowment.

The student body at Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) has doubled in the past decade thanks to key capital improvements and expansions of the

campus. In order to continue to accommodate the LCS community, \$1 million of the capital campaign has been designated to double THP's General Endowment.

In the fight for Haiti's future, helping LCS graduates to further their education in university is paramount. To support this effort, \$1 million from the RISE Capital Campaign—in the form of named scholarships—has helped bolster THP's University Scholarship Endowment. The University Scholarship Program supports over 100 LCS alumni in Haitian universities each year, including



Stèphanie Valcourt ('12) and Djim Guerrier ('14) assist alumni in the newly-named Frank and Jill Dulcich Center for Career Advancement.

50 percent of each graduating class.

It is THP's Office of External Affairs (OEA) in Haiti that manages the University Scholarship Program and provides career services to LCS alumni to help them secure gainful employment. The OEA also fosters relationships with

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HIGHLIGHTS

The Search Is On: THP's Site Evaluation and Advisory Team (SEAT) has begun the search for the location of the second Louverture Cleary! This group of volunteer experts has started visiting sites in one of the dioceses that has extended a warm welcome to THP, analyzing local economic activity, infrastructure, agriculture, and topography. They have also started connecting with the area's industry leaders and potential local partners to build relationships for collaboration in the future. Be sure to read how the LCS Network will be a platform to pilot innovative and sustainable energy and water solutions in this issue's back cover story.

A Fifth Language: Louverturians are extraordinary students in Haiti, not only because they pass the baccalaureate exam with flying colors, but they also graduate speaking four languages: Kreyòl, French, English, and Spanish. Now, our students are learning a fifth language: music! Take a walk around LCS campus this year and you might hear a music class playing the recorder—and quite well! This wonderful addition to LCS comes courtesy of LCS Director of Academia Ernst Viel, who has studied music since the age of 13. Knowing that our students are learning a fifth language is music to our ears!

Making History!: 2018 was a historic year for THP by many measures. Just one of those was surpassing our annual fundraising goal and growing our number of individual donors by 25 percent! The final push that made this achievement possible was a successful end-of-year campaign to bring in 100 new online donors. THP community members spread the word to friends, family, neighbors and colleagues via word of mouth, cards, phone calls, texting and social media. Witnessing so many community members, new and old, coming together to support THP's mission is reason to celebrate—and to keep the momentum going in 2019!

RISE Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

Haitian private sector partners in seek of both career opportunities for graduates and in-kind donations to support LCS. Of the campaign funds, \$1 million has been designated to establish an endowment to underwrite the OEA.

"I want to especially thank

Frank Dulcich and his family for bringing us home with the lead gift for the OEA portion," said Deacon Moynihan. To honor the Dulcich contribution—the largest single pledge in THP's history—and to reflect the OEA's future role as the flagship office working in coordination with three other regional offices as part of The Louverture Cleary Schools Network, the OEA will be renamed "The Frank and Jill Dulcich Center for Career Advancement."

Strengthening THP's endowments is a crucial step to ensuring the financial stability of THP. Louverturians will benefit from this initiative, and the country of Haiti will be stronger for it. Thanks to the Dulcich family, a key group of THP's original and longest funders, and hundreds of other donors, THP can now turn its focus towards the next ambitious project ahead: The Louverture Cleary Schools Network.

There's No Place Like Home

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

The Haitian Project (THP) has long recognized the importance of family in the lives of children and the health of a nation. When the Moynihan family came to live at Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) in 1996, Christina Moynihan became quickly in tune with the neighbors of LCS—families who occupied the "zone" known as Santo 5. There was one event in particular that set her relationship with the women of the zone into motion.

She heard the cry of a three-year-old boy who was left alone outside, locked out of the house by his mother who wanted to protect the house from robbers while she went to the market to work. Moynihan cared for the little boy, as she insists anyone would do. However, it was her response after his mother returned home that is unique and, sadly, not a well-trod path of action.

When the child's mother returned home, Moynihan wisely took the time and effort to learn her story. Because she had already begun to form relationships with women in the zone, she knew that this child was not the only one who was in need of a safe place to play during the day. Other children were routinely abandoned, and some children of school age simply

had no place to go. Moynihan knew what needed to be done. An early childhood education center was born.

The situation worsened when a major earthquake struck Haiti. Chaos ensued and nine children who attended



Christina Moynihan (back right) with solar expert and now SEAT member Mickey Ingles (back left) and the inspiration and motivation for a full-time development center.

the early education program at LCS daily were nowhere to be found. Moynihan visited their families and learned the missing children had been given to "orphanages." Many parents did not know the whereabouts of their children.

Utilizing help from a very wide cast of colleagues and friends, Moynihan located each missing child. She visited ten orphanages in total and what she found were heartbreaking examples of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. These orphanages were not legitimate or monitored by the state. Instead, they were "pop up"

operations set up on the fly to make a profit from the earthquake chaos.

Moynihan recognized that in each case, the parents of these children had been encouraged with a promise that their child would receive food, education, and a better life. While the children were being fed minimally, they were not

receiving education, let alone any element of nurturing. In a bold move, Moynihan, with the help of a trusted team, returned each child to his or her home.

In solidarity with the parents of these children, Moynihan asked them this question: "If our school (LCS) takes care of your child from morning until afternoon—if we feed them, bathe them, educate them, and let them play—will you keep your child?"

Each parent said, "Yes." As did Moynihan herself, and a whole team of Volunteers and staff who agreed to the nurturing of the children in what is now a formalized program at LCS called the *Koukouy Sen Kle*

(Fireflies of St. Clare).

The program continues strong today with 50 plus children attending every day. Several children who have attended the *Koukouy* program have gone on to attend LCS and university in Haiti because Moynihan took the time to understand the problems of the women of Santo 5 and address them in a manner that empowered both them and their children.

Once again, education proved to be an upstream solution to what seemed to be an overwhelming problem.

Volunteer Alum View: Anne Wilkinson

By Amanda Haluga (THP Director of Charism & Volunteers,
THP Volunteer '14-'16)

Having heard about Haiti in the news for many years, especially during the Duvalier era, Anne Wilkinson (THP Volunteer '01-'06) felt called to help, but as a young mother in England she could not see how she could effectively help. As years passed, that call stayed with her until a new minister at her church invited a group to accompany him



Anne Wilkinson (THP Volunteer '01-'06)

on a weeklong trip to the island nation. Wilkinson remembers, "After my [weeklong] experience I just knew I had to come back to help, but I also knew I had to be able to set aside at least five years to make any difference."

In 2001, the opportunity arose to do just

that. Newly retired from teaching, Wilkinson returned to Haiti for another visit and was put in touch with THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan. The two met at Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) and, after a brief interview, it was decided that Wilkinson would join the Volunteer Community for a month.

"The vast age gap with the other Volunteers and my total ignorance of the language could have been stumbling blocks, but I need not have worried. All the Volunteers were a delight to work with. My month extended to five years. I just wish I'd been able to come when I was younger and was able to stay longer." Wilkinson taught Mathematics and English and led the extremely popular knitting club—an activity that is fondly remembered at LCS years later.

Wilkinson recalls many happy memories of students and Volunteers, especially having enjoyed cooking for the community and leading morning staff prayers. "Haiti and THP are still very much a part of my life," she shares, "so much so that I was known as 'The Haiti Lady' throughout the town when I returned home."

Through her Ilkley Haiti Fund, she raises support for THP each year through a Vintage Afternoon Tea in September and Operation Ho Ho in December. "I'm afraid at 83 years of age I may not be able to do this for much longer," Wilkinson says. "I'll keep going as long as possible and Haiti will always have a special place in my heart and prayers. I will be forever grateful to Deacon Moynihan for taking the risk and giving me a chance to work at LCS."

Deacon Moynihan's response, "It was a risk that paid off handsomely. Anne was simply great."

Student View: Densvelt Yhann Désir

Hello, my name is Densvelt Yhann Désir and I am from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. In my family I have my mother, my father, and my sister. This is my first year at Louverture Cleary School (LCS) as a *Sizyem* student (US 7th grade). I learned about LCS from a member of the administration who told my father about the school. I learned that LCS was a school that receives students of 7th grade and this school is at Santo 5.

I think LCS is doing a good job in helping students who don't have economic possibility. Education is a good thing. And, LCS is giving an education that's better than the education of some other schools in Haiti. Some things are new for me at LCS, like staying at school during the week, studying Algebra, and helping with *Netwayaj* (school clean-up).

At LCS my favorite thing is the playground. I also like the languages of the school and the other students and the teachers. My favorite class is English because I think it is a beautiful language. I like to practice speaking English during my break and to earn language tickets to use in the Language Store.

When I grow up, I would like to go to University to study either architecture or medicine. Or, I would like to become a pilot. I think the one I would like the most would be architecture, though, because I know the most about this choice. My cousin is an architect.

It is my hope for the future to see the change of Haiti. With more LCSs, Haiti can change by having good education.



An Easter Message from THP President Deacon Moynihan

Dear THP Community,

The completion of the RISE Capital Campaign makes the prospect of this Easter seem brighter. Likewise, the start of the Network suggests that we are rising to a new level. All in all, we are feeling new life in The Haitian Project. Spring is most certainly in the air!

After 22 years in, I have not ceased being amazed by what God has in store for those caught up in the mission of making a new day, especially for those who have experienced a disproportionate amount of pain in past days.

I find believing in the resurrection all the easier for work in The Haitian Project/Louverture Cleary School community. I remember writing in a past Easter letter that every day feels like Easter on the campus due to the hope, energy, and relative youth of our students. There is so much promise in our students—promise of Haiti's full emergence, resurrection.

*I hope you will continue with us in our realization of the Network and a totally new day for Haiti. Jesus' ultimate promise of the new life won by his death and resurrection is assured to us all. Let us allow that promise to embolden and inspire our work together. **Happy Easter!***

Peace of Christ,

Deacon Patrick Moynihan

A Haiti Reflection

By Elizabeth Koskelowski, THP Accountant

This past February, I took my first trip to Haiti alongside THP Chief Financial Officer Reese Grondin to perform the annual audit of Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) for the 2018 year. The purpose of the audit was threefold: 1) review the books; 2) ensure adherence to established accounting protocols; and 3) make sure resources are being used effectively.

Besides working on the audit, one of my personal requests while at LCS was to sit in on a Spanish class. Having been a Spanish and Accounting double major in college, I have always been fascinated by language and how language is taught. After sitting in for a couple of minutes on a Spanish class being taught in the outdoor classroom, I realized how advanced the school's Spanish program is. Spanish is LCS students' fourth language; however, by the way they speak it in class, one would think they are as comfortable with Spanish as French.

I also had the opportunity to attend other activities while on campus. One afternoon, after classes were over

and prior to dinner, I participated in the Girls Volleyball Club led by Ms. Thelen. Since the girls were still learning how to play, it consisted more of chasing flying volleyballs than volleying, but it was still fun to interact with the students.

I also participated in Work Hour, working alongside students at the incinerator. I removed paper wrapping from cans and brought them to the incinerator while the students crushed the cans. I also loaded the incinerator with other waste from around campus. It was great to see the students and staff coming together to keep the school clean.

My favorite activities to attend were the *Ekol Ankourajman* (Encouragement School) tutoring and *Koukouy Sen Kle* (Fireflies of St. Clare) Early Childhood Development programs. During these programs, students from the neighborhood enter the campus



Elizabeth Koskelowski, THP Accountant, with Martin, a student in the Koukouy Sen Kle (Fireflies of St. Clare) program at LCS.

where they can also benefit from the educational resources available. I loved these programs because they reinforce the idea of education for all Haitian children.

After leaving Haiti and reflecting on my trip, I am now able to understand the importance of Louverture Cleary. LCS is a community that promotes intellectual and social growth along with environmental awareness. I cannot wait for LCS Number 2.

For Scordato Family, The Haitian Project Is Something on Which Everyone Can Agree!

By THP Staff

The eight siblings of the Scordato family have many things in common. They all attended the same parish elementary school and local Catholic high school. They all enjoy Italian cooking, good-natured debate, and value the importance of family—a gift given to them by parents **Joe and Mary Sue**.

Since being introduced to THP by President Deacon Patrick Moynihan (himself being from a family of eight siblings) in 1999 at Holy Family Church in Rockford, IL, the Scordatos have had one more thing in common—their mutual support for THP. “I felt immediately at home—the Scordatos had the right size and feel for family,” commented Deacon Moynihan. “They were generous from day one.”

Mary Sue, the matron of the family which now includes 31 grandchildren, speaks of THP tenderly, as a point of family pride. “You can see the success of the mission and a future for the students who graduate and become professionals. THP is an all-around good thing,” she says. Their own support started in 2000, when their daughter **Mary Jo**, number 6 in the family, spent a year as a THP Volunteer.

From 2002—2012, both Mary Jo and youngest Scordato sibling, **Tim**, have either worked or volunteered in THP’s Rockford Office. It was only natural that the siblings would join in their efforts. **Joseph**, the eldest sibling, and wife **Maureen** of Pewaukee, WI felt urgency to give after the 2010 earthquake. They decided to offer his salary from a part-time teaching position he had recently taken in addition to his full-time engineering career. He remembers how their kids cheered him on as he left home in the evening to “teach for Haiti.”

Nancy and husband Scott Chachula of Charleston, SC, **Peter and wife Angie** of Roscoe, IL, and **John and wife Suzy** of Davenport, IA have all said “yes” to Mary Jo and Tim’s requests on behalf of THP—doing anything from helping with Annual Report production, to spreading the word to their contacts in person and on social media, to giving



Mary Sue Scordato and her children gathered for a photo at Holy Family Catholic Church in Rockford, IL. From left (in back) Tim, Joseph, John, Ted (in front) Nancy, Mary Sue, Kathryn, Mary Jo, and Peter.

gifts to THP at Christmastime, and naming THP as a recipient of their workplace matching gift programs.

Ted and wife Khamby of Rockford, IL just might be the only couple on THP’s books to organize pizza and Laotian food sales out of their home to raise funds for the Project! With their four kids and a crew of volunteers, they draw upon their years of restaurant experience and temporarily turn their home into a well-run, mouth-watering, pizza and eggroll production center.

Katie and husband Jimmy Sartino of Rockford, IL understand the power of education and community to change lives. Jimmy, in his previous position of nearly twenty years as theology

faculty at Boylan Central Catholic High School, helped organize a Lenten giving campaign for THP that remains strong today. Recently, their family found an opportunity to give to THP from a little extra “wiggle room” created from using insurance money designated to fix their damaged roof. Katie believes, “THP is light years ahead of other non-profits in its approach to solving poverty.”

Tim, now an attorney in Geneva, IL explains, “Among many reasons, I give to THP because I know first-hand where donor money goes. I have yet to find a more excellent way to lift people and future generations out of poverty. I am proud my family has become a part of that process.”

The Haitian Project is currently accepting applications for Volunteers to teach at Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) for the 2019—2020 academic year. For ten months, Volunteers live and work at LCS, responding to the needs of the community.

In accordance with THP’s special charism:

Volunteers place a particular emphasis on work performed for the benefit of the community... Work joyfully, no matter the difficulty or simplicity of the task.—The Rule of THP Volunteers

For more information, or to apply, contact Amanda Haluga, Director of Charism and Volunteers, at a.haluga@haitianproject.org.

An Upstream Solution to Environmental Degradation

By Angela Mascena, THP Director of Institutional Advancement

There is a parable that is popular within social justice circles. The story goes that one day, bodies started floating down a river into a town. The townspeople were compassionate and took care of all those that flowed in—the sick were taken to hospitals, children were placed with families, and the dead were buried. As this went on for years, the town became very efficient at caring for the bodies and even expected a certain number to arrive each day.

However, even after years, no one thought to go upstream to see why the bodies kept coming. So, they kept coming.

While some situations call for sending help downstream to address an immediate issue, this story serves to remind us that if we want to *solve* a problem, not just treat its symptoms, we must venture “upstream” and address it at the source. As THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan points out, “Upstream solutions speak to the old Franklin adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

The Haitian Project (THP) believes that education is an “upstream” solution to many fundamental issues in Haiti—from poverty, to crime, to illness, to the “orphanage” crisis (see page 2). In recent years, as the issue of climate change has gained more and more attention, it has become increasingly evident that education is a powerful upstream solution to pollution and environmental degradation as well.

For over 20 years, Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) has taught students about the importance of environmental stewardship and equipped them with the skills to act on those values. For instance, while Haiti currently lacks the infrastructure to properly manage its waste, together LCS students, staff and Volunteers recycle, compost, bury or burn every piece of trash found on campus.

Through this practice and their environmental education, LCS students learn how caring for the environment benefits the world around them. LCS *Philo* (US 12th grade +1) student Guerlens Torchons explains, “The incinerator helps us remove our trash from LCS. The



The Go Go Go Compost poem decorates the compost pile at Louverture Cleary School.

ash from the incinerator helps the compost. The compost helps the growing of the plants. These two environmental practices at LCS change our trash into treasures. In this way, and others, LCS makes gold for the community and the country.”

Similarly, LCS *Secondaire* (US 10th grade) student Loudjine Philisthene reflects, “My favorite environmental practice at LCS is recycling, because I like when I am putting things in their assigned places and turning disorder into order. I don’t know any other places in Haiti that do clean up, recycling, and management like at LCS, but hopefully there will be.”

The LCS campus is also solar energy-efficient and has its own septic system—neither of which are the norm in Haiti. These features, along with the trash management system, will be incorporated at the nine new schools of The Louverture Cleary Schools Network. What will be new at the other schools are increasing opportunities for students to be exposed to emerging green technologies as a part of their normal maintenance activities. Solar microgrids, flywheel energy storage technology, and biogas solutions are just a few of the ideas under consideration.

In addition to significantly increasing access to quality education in Haiti, The LCS Network is a platform to pilot innovative and sustainable energy and water solutions that will turn the tide of environmental destruction in Haiti. Deacon Moynihan affirms that this will remain a priority as THP expands. “Environmental degradation is extremely hard to reverse. That is why we are dedicated to avoiding it from the get-go.”

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