

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.”

The View from the Ground: What Haiti Needs to Succeed

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

For over 20 years, Patrick Brun, private sector leader, has been The Haitian Project's (THP) key partner on the ground in Port-au-Prince, advancing the mission of the Project. He is currently the Vice Chair of THP's Board and head of the partner foundations in Haiti that manage Louverture Cleary School's (LCS) physical assets and educational programs. Brun's day job is being the President and CEO of Central Hardware and Building Materials S.A. He also oversees a major solar panel installation company he started with an LCS alumnus and THP Volunteer alum.

“A good vision can lay out an amazing future and the path to success, but it has to start grounded in the current situation,” noted THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan. “Patrick Brun provides both the grounding we need and the as-



Patrick Brun and Deacon Patrick Moynihan (center left and center) with THP's Site Evaluation and Advisory Team (SEAT) in Nippes, Haiti. More on this to come in the March '19 issue of HPN.

sistance to move forward step-by-step. He always has. We could not have a better partner or friend.” Brun agrees, “We not only share a first name, but the same vision.”

As THP embarks on its plan to

build a school in the other nine departments of Haiti, Brun's expertise is as important as ever. His newest role is leading a group of expert individuals who are choosing the locations for the additional

(Continued on page 2)

HIGHLIGHTS

Read All About It!: On September 10th, THP officially launched a national campaign to spread the word about The Louverture Cleary Schools Network, celebrate the Project's historic supporters and success, and encourage more people to join in the mission. By sharing the new Network video *Education Works*, increasing THP's online presence, and inspiring the publication of articles around the U.S., THP is bringing more people into the community who will support the movement to reimagine education in Haiti. Even after the official launch, THP continues to share and generate enthusiasm about The LCS Network—and invites everyone to do the same!

House of Friars: THP was pleased to accept an invitation to participate in the Providence College Career Expo this October. The Expo provided a great opportunity for THP's own PC alumni—THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan, Director of Charism and Volunteers Amanda Haluga, and Director of Institutional Advancement Angela Mascena—to connect with professors, other employers, and current PC students who might be interested in volunteering at LCS. As THP continues to grow its relationships with Catholic universities throughout the U.S., Providence College and the Friars tradition will always keep a special place in the Project's Volunteer community.

The FORCE in Haiti: Upon graduating from LCS this June, Claude Edmond Charles was one of two students awarded the Mark and Lynne Benioff Scholarship to study computer science in university. Charles is grateful to have received the scholarship, but also aware of the expectation to continue to work hard and keep LCS' values. He plans on attending Université Quisqueya to study computer engineering, specializing in telecommunications and networking. Feeling that many Haitian businesses and individuals struggle with poor telecommunications, he hopes to be an entrepreneur and create his own company to help alleviate problems and advance communications in Haiti.

View from the Ground

(Continued from page 1)

schools based on an in-depth analysis of local environmental, social and economic factors. “He has been essential to our success for over two decades,” Deacon Moynihan expressed. “Remarkably, he is going to be even more important to the next 20 years.”

We sat down with Brun to discuss The LCS Network and why he believes education is the answer to Haiti’s struggles.

HPN: When, how and why did you get involved with THP?

Brun: I got involved with THP a little over 20 years ago because I could see that THP’s mission offered a bright future for Haiti. Over the years I have

heard a lot of theories and seen all kinds of wheels being reinvented by other organizations with little improvement being made.

The beauty of THP’s success is in its simplicity: education works! I have seen LCS change the lives of hundreds of vulnerable Haitian families, helping them escape poverty once and for all. Embracing THP’s charism makes one a good citizen, a good spouse, a good parent, a hard worker and a good neighbor.

HPN: What would you say are the biggest problems holding Haiti back?

Brun: When citizens lack education, they are vulnerable and exposed. Haiti’s limited access to education results in the deterioration of our communities and values. This is one of the biggest problems we face today. It keeps our people from realizing their potential.

To prosper as a nation, Haiti

needs a new breed of citizens to guide us. Our Louverturians value life and the common good; they are forward thinkers and can improve the standard of living for all through their leadership. They carry the DNA for a new Haiti.

HPN: How will The LCS Network help Haiti succeed?

Brun: The LCS Network will bring THP’s life-changing education and charism to all of our geographical departments. At this scale, THP will have a greater impact on the entire country. With a critical mass of educated men and women focused on serving the greater good, Haiti will succeed as a nation.

I have seen firsthand how education can transform someone’s life. We must use the blueprint built at LCS and multiply it until every Haitian child has the opportunity to see his or her life transformed by education.

Odson Francois, a True Louverturian

By Connor Branham
(THP In-Country Volunteer Program
Mgr. & Liaison to Partner Foundations)

Most people are surprised to learn that Odson Francois is not actually a Louverture Cleary School (LCS) grad since he exemplifies everything it means to be a Louverturian. Francois grew up in the neighborhood around LCS and attended secondary school elsewhere. About five years ago, after completing secondary school, he started knocking on THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan’s door asking for a job. Deacon Moynihan recalls, “It was like the story of the old widow who kept knocking. I would like to claim that I hired Odson because I recognized his talent, it was definitely his outstanding persistence.”

Francois was hired as Junior Staff. Like his LCS grad colleagues, he worked and lived at LCS while receiving a university scholarship to pursue his degree in civil engineering. Completing his studies while running *Ekol Ankou-rajman* (LCS’ neighborhood tutoring program) and leading students in Work Hour required hard work and discipline.

Rising to the challenge, Francois quickly developed the character of Louverturian and became an exceptional role model.

Francois graduated from university in May of 2018 excited to begin his career. He also wanted to continue working at LCS because he believes so ardently in the school’s mission. Fortunately, Francois found a job working for Patrick Brun, who is the head of THP’s partner foundations in Haiti that manage LCS’ physical assets and curriculum. Brun said, “It is very satisfying to see Odson grow in maturity, to go from being a student to becoming a professional engineer.”

Likewise, Francois is delighted to be able to use his degree to give back to his country. He reflected, “It is great that I get to work for LCS because it does so much to help Haiti.”

For the past few months, Francois has overseen the construction of the new science building at LCS, which will house Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Computer classes. Given his own career path, he is glad to be part of the construction of the science lab. “LCS is one of the best schools in Haiti, and a science lab will help students’ perfor-



Odson Francois, alumnus of the university scholarship program and formerly LCS Junior Staff, oversees the construction of the science lab in his new job as civil engineer.

mance and improve the school even more,” he explained.

Equally, the LCS community appreciates having an alumnus of the university scholarship program manage a construction project on campus, because it shows students how alumni use their degrees in action.

LCS Alumni View: Godenson Antoine

By Christina Moynihan
(THP Director of Community
Development)

Godenson Antoine grew up in the Santo neighborhood near Louverture Cleary School (LCS) with his parents, four brothers and one sister. After graduating from LCS in 2000, he went on to Ekol Superior University where he received a degree in computer sciences.

After graduating from university, Antoine was able to secure several consecutive jobs, each one giving him more skills and experience in his field. He worked as a computer salesman, as an IT tech-



Godenson Antoine (LCS '00)

nician for a private Haitian business, and for the MINUSTAH (Haitian UN). In 2011, he was sent to Darfur and Sudan to work for the United Nations in an administrative capacity.

Remembering that his first job paid only 700 Hai-

tian dollars a month, which was less than \$100 U.S., he laughs but quickly adds, "It allowed me to help my family [with essentials] and to pay for my older brother's education."

One thing that Antoine emphasizes when he talks to people about the LCS community is the connections that he was able to make within the Haitian business world. "LCS gave me connections with people I would never, ever have been able to meet in Haiti. LCS has transferred knowledge, education and information to me." Impressively, even though he has had many opportunities to work outside of Haiti and receive considerably more pay, Antoine is committed to his country. He explains,

"What echoes in my mind is that all of this education must stay in Haiti as a hope for helping my people succeed."

Today you can find Antoine living across the street from the LCS campus in his newly-built home with his wife Edith and his four-year-old son. Antoine's life is filled with running two dry cleaning businesses and a printing service called EGA Solutions, named after he and his wife. He is looking for a quality school for his son (who would not qualify for LCS since his family *can* afford the cost of his education) and vows to gather together his fellow LCS alumni so they can establish a school for Haiti's new middle class.

Volunteer Alumni View: Meghan Gregus

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

Like many THP Volunteer Alumni, Meghan Gregus (THP Volunteer '12-'13) likens her answer to the call to serve at Louverture Cleary School (LCS) to Mary's *fiat*: saying yes. Gregus heard about The Haitian Project (THP) at her home parish of St. Thomas the Apostle in Crystal Lake, IL, which has supported THP since 2000. After graduating from the University of Dayton in 2012, she put her dual degree of secondary education and mathematics to good use at LCS, teaching *Senkyem* (U.S. 8th grade) math, as well as English and sport.

Outside of the classroom, Gregus participated in Work Hour, coached JV soccer, refereed varsity basketball and, of course, played basketball—a favorite Volunteer community pastime. Deacon Moynihan remembers, "I can vouch per-

sonally for her basketball ability and great soccer coaching. Also, her grit—definitely easier to oversee elections in Haiti than referee basketball."

When asked about her favorite aspect of her time in Haiti, Gregus reflects, "Living in community: it was just so natural, constantly sharing our experience, laughing, praying, eating and working together. At LCS, it was about putting order in the chaos. This gave me structure and purpose in my own life."

After returning from Haiti, Gregus took a job teaching math in a Catholic middle school. "The school was in a wealthy suburb and it couldn't have been more opposite from LCS. But I was able to take a lot from my experience in Haiti, like doing daily prayer with my 8th graders."

Gregus has since made the jump to high school where she has been for three years, still teaching math and coaching varsity volleyball. "As a teacher in the U.S. now, I get asked if it was sad to teach in Haiti," Gregus says. "No, it wasn't, because the students love to be there and learn. At the end of the day, it really rounded my vocation of teaching."



Meghan Gregus (at right) coaching soccer during her '12-'13 Volunteer year.

Gregus exemplifies how a Volunteer's participation in the mission is never truly over. "I think about my time in Haiti a lot and talk about it with my students. They love to hear the stories, like when one of my students memorized 160 digits of pi in French. Appreciating what you have, the reward of a job being done, I work that into my work and life now. It's a good mindset to have."

Trusted with the Big Things

By Colby Bowker (THP Vice President and CCO)

The Haitian Project (THP) is working diligently to wrap up the *Let Us Be On Our Way Capital Campaign* (RISE). To date, the only remaining goal is the creation of a new \$1,000,000 endowment to underwrite the operations of THP's Office of External Affairs (OEA), which is the office that administers THP's scholarship program supporting over 120 Louverture Cleary School (LCS) graduates in university annually. The OEA also helps graduates develop their professional skills and connects them with a network of employers excited to offer Louverturians professional careers.

With renewed focus from the Administration and generous support from a loyal mix of donors giving gifts both large and small, only \$547,210 remains at the time of publishing.

Like other near-term goals, completing this campaign has taken on renewed importance with the plans to create The LCS Network. THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan explains, "When approaching a partner capable of taking us from 1x to 10x, it is important to be able to show that we have been successful at each of our goals to date.

It's also a matter of confidence. As we know from scripture, those who are proven trustworthy with small things can be trusted with much larger things."

A defining feature of the RISE Campaign has been the number of people making bequests, contributions made through wills. This is a welcome trend. The United States is at the start of the largest transfer of wealth in its history as the baby boom generation (the wealthiest generation in U.S. history) retires and passes on its wealth to the next generation. In many cases, this transition point creates opportunities for individuals to make charitable contributions from their estate (in the form of a bequest) at a scale that would not necessarily be feasible to do today.

"I'm from a generation whose parents worked hard. Many did very well, and all were extremely frugal," Deacon Moynihan reflects. "For many, the largest gift of charity they will make will be from their estates. Having raised sizable families, extra money wasn't always readily available during their years of raising kids. Bequests are their last act of parenting, influencing the world they are leaving to their grandchildren. Their deci-

sions will be felt for years to come."

Whether it's a bequest planned for the future or a pledge made today, THP is especially grateful to its support community for their efforts to help complete the RISE Campaign as quickly as possible. And, for their commitment, there is a great payoff down the road.

Dr. Scott LeGrand, Chair of THP's Board of Directors, recently said that to achieve The Network, "All we need is for the general community to provide the day-to-day support. It is actually our loyal donors and the new donors who pitch in what they can that will keep us at the table long enough to secure the \$73 million gift to create The Network. The success of The Network will be to their credit as much as anyone."

Completing the RISE campaign is one very visible example of that day-to-day support that keeps THP in the game. THP's promise to those who make extra efforts to complete the campaign and to all its supporters: ***we're playing to win.***

As this edition of HPN went to print, a group of generous donors stepped up and completed the RISE Capital Campaign! Look for a feature story celebrating this accomplishment in the March 2019 edition of HPN!

This holiday season, there are several ways to give gifts that keep on giving!

- ***The Gift of an Education:*** When you make a donation to THP in honor of friend or family member this Christmas, THP will send your loved one a Christmas card notifying them of the gift given in their honor.
- ***Corporate Giving:*** Contribute through your employer's matching gift program.
- ***AmazonSmile:*** Donate to THP while you shop! Sign up at smile.amazon.com.



**CONTACT THP FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE AT:
1-401-351-3624 or development@haitianproject.org.**

VIEWPOINTS

Abigail Knapp

THP Volunteer

We're going to dig a hole," said Mr. Augustin, as he handed me the student Work Hour list. I had decided to join his Work Hour group in hopes of putting my rock-crushing skills to the test, but a new challenge arose. It was a hot September day; the dirt was hard. Despite this, the students had a positive attitude and were committed to the task at hand. I think that is one of my favorite aspects of living in the Louverture Cleary School (LCS) Community. New tasks can come from anywhere, but we accomplish them as a team.

My name is Abigail Knapp and I am from Tampa, Florida. I studied business at the University of Dallas before I applied to be a Volunteer for The Haitian Project (THP). I believe THP's approach to education and service is grounded in an idea that works. THP places an emphasis not solely on academic development, but on the formation of character as well. The students understand that the education they have been given is a great asset for rebuilding their country.

Activities are in full swing now that we are approaching our halfway point in the academic year. The courses I am teaching include English, Catholic Social Teaching, Economics and Sport Class. Outside of classes, I work with the children in the *Koukouy Sen Kle* (Fireflies of Saint Clare) Early Childhood Development Center. I teach them different songs or games in English. A few weeks ago, the roles were reversed and they taught me "tic tic boom" (essentially "hot potato"). There was lots of laughter in the air that day. It's safe to say these young students have certainly stolen my heart.

During *Netwayaj* (daily Clean-up Hour), I offer Garden Club. During Play Hour, I have Dance Club and run the Language Store. Many of these clubs have become a great foundation for conversation with the students. They'll stop by the Language Store, intending to stay a minute to peruse the merchandise. Yet, somehow, we'll end up having a good, long conversation about any array of topics.

I have always believed that manual labor is good for the soul and being at LCS has reinforced that belief. In all the activities at LCS, work is done with a purpose.

Derival Makenley

LCS Student

My name is Derival Makenley and I am from Las Caolas, Haiti. I learned about Louverture Cleary School (LCS) from my father. His friend talked about it and my father told my mom. My mom sent my brother Schneider and me to *Koukouy Sen Kle* (Fireflies of Saint Clare) Early Childhood Development Center at LCS. In *Koukouy*, I was a good and intelligent student, but I didn't love to play. I learned how to read and write in *Kreyòl*. *Koukouy* prepared me to be a leader so that I can help my family and my country. After *Koukouy*, I received a scholarship to go to an elementary school. My favorite class at this school was French. These classes helped prepare me for LCS. Now, I am back at LCS and in *Katryem* (U.S. 9th grade).

At LCS, I am studying to prepare for my future. My favorite subjects are music class with Mr. Viel and computer



Abigail Knapp, THP Volunteer, and Derival Makenley, Katryem (U.S. 9th grade) student at LCS, stand by the school's motto: what we receive for free, we must give for free. Mt 10:8

class with Mr. Benoit. I like music class because this is my first time learning an instrument and I enjoy it so much. One day, I would like to learn piano and guitar. I like computer class because I am learning how to type and use the internet. During Play Hour, I do many things. Sometimes I sleep; sometimes I study or do my homework. Other times I play with my friends. We like to play cards, dominos, or practice flute for music class. Mostly, we like to joke around and enjoy spending time with each other. Also, I am in Fitness Club with Ms. Thelen.

In my future, I would like to become a lawyer or a doctor. I would like to become a doctor because I see that there needs to be more doctors in Haiti. Then I can help at the hospital. For me, education is very big. It is the biggest gift in the world. This is because we cannot have a good environment if we cannot give education to the people. This is their first need. I cannot help my country if I am not educated first.

The Gift of Being Present: Christina Moynihan on Tour

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

This fall, THP Director of Community Development Christina Moynihan began a speaking tour at Catholic parishes and schools around the United States. Named *Living Life Deliberately—A Missionary's Journey with Christina Moynihan*, the tour has a clear objective: to nurture and revitalize the parish and school communities that support The Haitian Project (THP) and, in true missionary style, spread THP's message of "Education First" far and wide.

As THP enters into a time of expansion with The Louverture Cleary Schools (LCS) Network, Moynihan's missionary spirit is being utilized in a whole new way as she travels to communities, both familiar and new, to tell the stories of the students, graduates and neighbors of LCS and galvanize support for this grand initiative. Colby Bowker, THP Vice President of Communications, is delighted to see Moynihan in her new role. He explains, "Christina's more than two decades of experience in Haiti complement an already amazing ability to connect with people on a human level. She is a powerful ambassador for the Project, and we plan to keep her busy nourishing and growing our many support communities across the country."

Why embark on a speaking tour in an era of digital communications? Moynihan explains, "When I travel to a parish or a school, I am able to meet with people face-to-face. Sometimes I meet old friends and sometimes I make new friends. Person-to-person is the most rewarding and powerful way to remind people about the realities of Haiti and that education is the key to unlocking its future."

Moynihan has several presentations that all have one common theme: living deliberately. Choosing to live in this way means really noticing the people around you and making a conscious choice to respond to them with love. It was this attitude that led Moynihan to encourage her family to choose a missionary lifestyle.

THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan also appreciates having "the family's best missionary" on the road again. "Christina brings a very personal perspective



Moynihan explains the dynamics of education in Haiti to students at Holy Family School in Rockford, IL in September, one of the first stops on her community tour.

gained from living and knowing the women and families in the school neighborhood." He smiles, "I also hope her being out there clears up one question. It was Christina and God that took me on mission; it was not my idea."

Nourishing and growing support communities is, of course, no easy task, but Christina's background in education helps her deliver THP's message to every audience from a kindergarten class to a Knights of Columbus council. She holds a M.Ed. and is a life-long educator, though it is her life experiences that give her the fire to draw more people into understanding and helping THP.

She explains, "Without our friends' spiritual and financial support from the U.S., we would not be able to provide the safe and serene educational community of LCS. We know that education helps people thrive, not simply survive. Parishes especially must keep us in their prayers and intentions, so our communities can forever be connected in a way to allow the Holy Spirit to unite us and help us grow as One Body in our mission."

For more information about the "Living Life Deliberately" tour, visit www.haitianproject.org. To invite Christina Moynihan to present to your parish or school, please contact THP at 401-351-3624 or development@haitianproject.org.

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