

Haitian Project News

Celebrating 29 years of Louverture Cleary School!

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

Prometheus: Sharing the Light

*By Brendan Kelly
(THP Volunteer)*

In classic Greek Mythology, Prometheus is a Titan greater even than the gods of Olympus. Prometheus, seeing that the Zeus was greedily keeping fire from humanity, stole it from Zeus to share with humanity.

Four years ago this year's graduating class read this story and identified with it. They decided then to name their class Prometheus. They realized that their mission at LCS and after was to share their light with the people outside of the walls of the school. Their light is their education.

In anticipation of life after graduation, the class knows that what lies ahead will not always be easy. Lormina Alphonse says, "Life in Haiti is not nearly the same as it is at LCS." Her classmate



Deacon Patrick and Christina Moynihan present Ramcesse Meon with her diploma at the June 17, 2017 graduation ceremony, LCS' 22nd.

Jacob Woodson adds that LCS is a "haven from the outside world." Among the nerves, however, there is determination to bring that haven to the outside world.

Chebert Chevalier looks forward to an opportunity to give back to Haiti

what he learned, and improve his community where it is lacking. He plans to "stay in touch with my classmates so we can rely on each other as we encounter challenges. There are just some things in Haiti that hap- (Continued on page 2)

HIGHLIGHTS

Parish Family Support from A to Z: Last year, St. Bernard (North Kingstown, RI) parishioner Alex Overly spearheaded a garage sale as his senior high school project to benefit the parish and THP. Last month, Alex's brother Zach followed his brother's example, and with his parents' help, ran the second successful annual yard sale! Zach collected and organized a plethora of donated goods and with the generous help of supportive friends and family, the weekend event provided not only financial support to worthy causes, but an opportunity for parishioners to mingle and build community as numerous donated items became treasures to others. Thank you, Zach!

Education First... In May, THP got an indirect mention on CNBC's Squawk Box. After an email exchange with Deacon Moynihan, co-host Joe Kernan put this to Bill Gates: "I promised I'd ask this question for a gentleman who runs a school in one of the poorest parts of the world...His point is that you get a better return from education, than from health care." In response, Gates listed the priorities as health, education, and then government. MIT economist Daron Acemoglu tells us that it is government and education, then health. Or, as Deacon Moynihan puts, "Irish immigrants were hungry and not in perfect health when they escaped the ghetto thanks to education."

Great Northwest: Father Kenneth Haydock (Archdiocese of Seattle) expands our Seattle base of support by adding his new parish St., Bridget. This is the second parish Fr. Haydock has brought into the THP fold. Deacon Moynihan assisted and preached at the parish Masses on May 12 and 13th. "Fr. Haydock has an amazing way of finding a way to bring the marginalized to the center," Deacon Moynihan stated admirably. "He is a witness to the wholeness of the Church." Along with Seattle, THP receives support from parishes and individuals in Lynnwood, Woodway, Everett, and Edmonds, WA. Go Mariners!

Prometheus

(Continued from page 1)

pen that we disagree with and just cannot accept or allow to happen, like littering. Something must be done.” Equipped with their knowledge of what is right and the skills to put it into practice, something will be done. Chevalier, with classmates Woodson and Jean Michel Petit-Frère (see Page 5, Student View), plans to make a free community incinerator near their homes to keep their community clean. They plan to share a literal fire and the truth to raise up their community.

‘There are just some things in Haiti that happen that we disagree with and just cannot accept or allow to happen, like littering. Something must be done.

-Chebert Chevalier ('17)

share the value of her knowledge and objectives with those who do not see it. Despite resistance, Méon and her classmates plan to persevere. Reading the LCS’ religion capstone text, Fr. David Knight’s *His Way*, the class of 2017 learned how John the Baptist was persecuted for his mission of spreading the truth of Christ. Prometheus met a similar resistance in his mission. Edwine Estinfil says, “We must be like John and Prometheus in Haiti no matter the cost. Many will not like that people can now be empowered by the light of LCS, because then it is no longer a select few that have it. But we must carry out our mission.”

This class graduates with the goal of setting an even higher bar than was set for them. They want to inspire next year’s graduating class to then surpass them, continuing LCS’ tradition of excellence and consistent improvement. There is no doubt this class is going to succeed as an example of sharing the light, bringing the message of education and of Christ with everyone they meet.

Ramcesse Méon, who lives in the immediate neighborhood outside the school, wants to help people that come from a similar background to her own. “We have to get the kids off the streets and into schools.” She knows that what is right is not always the easiest path and wants to



Left — Salomon Asmath and Patrick Brun, partners at Energy Central. “In a country like Haiti the only one thing we need is better Education at all levels” – Salomon Asmath (LCS ’98). Right — Mackenzie André (LCS ’99) and Gilles Rousseau of Topco Haiti, a company that regularly employs LCS graduates.

Breaking the Poverty Vacuum in Haiti

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

Salomon Asmath (LCS ’98) is team manager and part owner of Energy Central, a Port-Au-Prince solar panel company. His customers are shocked when they learn he is from Cité Soleil – a deeply impoverished area near Port-Au-Prince and home to many LCS students. Typically, Cité Soleil is tapped for factory labor at best, but Asmath and LCS grads are earning positions and payrolls previously out of reach for their families, thanks to their LCS education. THP President, Patrick Moynihan describes graduate success as something physical, like breaking the vacuum seal off a jar: “People living in poverty are often isolated and kept from full participation in society. Education, specifically a Louverture Cleary education, is the force that breaks the vacuum created by poverty, enabling the individual equal and uninhibited participation throughout all sectors and economic levels of society.”

“When you look at Asmath, you see a guy who has been continuously employed since the time he graduated,” explains Moynihan, “When he left a job it was only because he was offered something that would be a better use of his skills.” In 2012, Asmath co-founded Energy Central along with Patrick Brun (Haitian private sector leader and THP



Board of Directors) and Adam Osielski (THP Volunteer ’02-’04). The company is highly recognized on the market, contracting with clients like the US Embassy. “Thanks to Salomon, we deliver a level of perfection rarely seen in Haiti and acknowledged even by our US competitors,” reports Brun.

Asmath credits his success to his LCS education: “Employers want LCS graduates they know they can be trusted. The only people I have seen from Cité Soleil who have management positions are graduates of Louverture Cleary.”

Mackenzie André (LCS ’99) is another graduate breaking the poverty seal. He is sales manager and representative at Topco Haiti, a leading distributor of consumer goods; and regularly helps recruit new LCS hires for Topco. André believes LCS’s specific brand of education, community, and service helps grads earn and keep jobs: “I know people from other schools who have very good jobs, however, they are missing something. People do not know how to work with others like Louveturians do.”

Today, THP’s Office of External Affairs supports university scholarships for more than 100 graduates every year with a steady network of companies that hire LCS grads, sometimes up to 10 at a time. Of Louverture Cleary’s more than 600 graduates, 90% are either in university or employed in Haiti. The vacuum seal has been broken. Imagine the possibilities.

LCS Alumni Story: Francesca Noel

By Andrew Hrycza
(Former THP Volunteer)

“Since I was a young student at LCS, I knew I wanted to study medicine,” says Francesca Noel, LCS ’11. “I like taking care of people and having direct contact with others.” After her seven years at LCS, Noel went on to study medicine at UNIFA.

Having just completed five years of medical studies, the first two consisting of classroom studies such as mathematics and anatomy and the latter three incorporating hospital experience, Noel is embarking on her first of two years of hospital rotation, the first to earn a certificate and the second to fulfill the standard year of social service. She will be assigned to different specialties within a hospital.

A final exam will conclude these two years and begin the search for resi-



Francesca Noel (LCS '11) graduated from LCS with the goal of becoming a pediatrician, and has since completed her five-year medical study. She looks to carry on LCS values into the healthcare field.

dency programs—of which there are far too few—in hopes of specializing. “Since I was younger, I have always wanted to work with kids. I want to be a pediatrician.” The oldest of two siblings and alum of the LCS community where she enjoyed mentoring younger students each day, Noel is no stranger to having a positive impact on younger lives.

Studying medicine is a challenge in itself, but as Francesca has gone through the last few years gaining hospital experience, she has gotten an inside look at many of the difficulties within the healthcare system and practicing medicine. “The biggest difficulty,” she says, “is a lack of materials. We do not always have what we need. We can make all the effort possible, but we are not God.” The limitations will not hold Noel back, however. Her love for her field and her patients makes it worth it to her. “Sometimes it can be difficult to talk to a patient. You have to encourage them. It is a sacrifice to go through this. You have to love it.” It is clear she does.

Volunteer Alumni View: Andrew Hrycza

When I returned to LCS my second Volunteer year, the familiarity of the daily routine was immediately evident. Each day started and ended with the Gospel, and in between, students studied, worked, and played. I thought often about a conversation with THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan my first year, two years previous. He emphasized that one of LCS’ strongest qualities is its consistency each day, each week, and each year. Returning my second year, I only appreciated this so much as it allowed me to get back to work easily.

I returned to LCS as a guest this past March, and I came to better understand what Deacon Moynihan said. During my visit, I saw underclassmen from my first year now taking on leadership roles. Then, it became clear: LCS is consistent but not like a hamster spinning its wheel. It is a group of marathoners moving steadily towards the finish line.

I was struck by the purpose with which things were done. Work hour

was done not because it was scheduled, but because it needed to be done. Evening study hour takes place not because it is a nice way to end the day, but because students need to study. The Gospel is read twice a day not because it is pleasant to do, but because the words of Jesus inspire the daily actions of the community.

LCS is consistently moving forward. There is no greater proof than its graduates. Since 1995, LCS has graduated young men and women as future leaders of Haiti. There was no great miracle cure. Each day they got up, prayed, studied, and worked to build their school. They got there because Volunteers, Haitian staff, and THP community members are committed to helping them. LCS’ ability to be consistent day in and day out is a sign of



Former THP Volunteer Andrew Hrycza, pictured teaching Secondaire I English during his second Volunteer year.

health. I can see LCS is doing very well.

Andrew Hrycza (THP Volunteer ’13-’14, ’16-’17) is currently attending Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine. Fulfilling a lifelong dream, he will begin his second of four years in the fall. Unsure yet of what specialty he will adopt, as God led him twice to THP and then to medical school, he is eager to trust in what God has planned for him.

Unexpected Joy

By Tammy Townsend Kise
(THP Community Member)

My travels in other parts of the world prepared me for the garbage and chaos in the Haitian streets and the cold water showers, but nothing prepared me for the joy, gratitude, and simple pride among the Haitians I met when I visited Louverture Cleary School.

I write for a living. I form messages and find the perfect combination of words to tell a story as the communications director for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Yet, as I stood in a country where the annual per capita income is only \$850, I could not find a single word. Where was the joy coming from?

“Happiness is a choice,” said one LCS graduate, now staff member.

With no words, I began asking the Haitian staff for theirs. I asked what I should tell the people in the US who ask me about Haiti. “Many people only hear about the bad things in Haiti,” said another LCS graduate and staff member. “Tell them that there is a lot of good in Haiti.”

One afternoon, along the mud-filled streets beyond the school’s walls, THP President, Deacon Patrick Moynihan,

‘Nothing prepared me for the joy, gratitude, and simple pride among the Haitians I met when I visited Louverture Cleary School’

-Tammy Townsend Kise

introduced our group to two cooks from the school. Standing inside their cinder-block homes both women glowed with pride. One of the women, her warm, wide smile filling the room, explained in Kreyòl how she had expanded her home with money she earned working at the school.

In the simplicity of her home, in the care she provides her family and in her daily labors at the school, she lives THP’s charism. Through her hard work and the opportunities at LCS, she has contributed to her own well-being.



Tammy Townsend Kise (sitting center) and other visitors from St. Thomas the Apostle, Crystal Lake, IL join THP Volunteer Brendan Kelly’s Secondaire II religion class.

Similar pride showed on the faces of the LCS students. They have the same hopes and dreams and interests my children have – hopes and dreams filled with opportunity and built on a solid foundation of education.

On my last evening at LCS, I sat in the LCS chapel among women and children from the neighborhood outside of the school. I still struggled to understand Haiti as Fr. Jerome Koutnik began our final daily Mass. As the LCS choir sang, I couldn’t take my eyes off Mary’s maternal mourning face gazing peacefully at the body of her Son in the Pietà painted on the wall of the garden below. Beyond

the Pietà, I stared into the poverty that stretched endlessly into the distance. Words finally came to me: God is in Haiti. Back home in the U.S., I thought about the faces that beamed with joy and peace in the harshest conditions I’ve ever experienced. Tears of gratitude began to pour down my cheeks. Katherine Patterson wrote in *The Bridge to Terabithia*, the book being read in the Karyem English class we observed, “You never know ahead of time what something’s really going to be like.” I agree. There’s no amount of intellectual study that would have prepared me for the spiritual joy and peace I found in Haiti.

Let’s work together for Catholic Education!

How To Get Your Parish Involved:

1. **Gather** – Form a group within your parish that is motivated to help promote Catholic education both in Haiti and locally. THP will provide formational materials.
2. **Invite** – Bring THP to speak at your parish.
3. **Host** – Hold an event to raise funds for THP and your local Catholic School(s).
4. **Grow** – Spread the word, encourage continued giving, and be a force for positive change.

Email us at development@haitianproject.org to get started!

Education First! It works!

STUDENT VIEWPOINTS

Jean Michel Petit-Frère

Hello, my name is Jean Michel Petit-Frère and I am 19 years old. I come from Port-au-Prince, where I live with my family. I have two sisters and two brothers and we live with my father and mother. I had a very difficult time getting educated as a child, as many in Haiti do. I believe this changed when God led me to Louverture Cleary School.

I have now spent seven years here and am graduating. I love my school in almost every way. So many things that are special to me comes from LCS and the education I have received here. LCS helped me grow in my interests and skills. I have always loved to play soccer, and I still do, but since I came to LCS seven years ago, I have also become a musician, a singer, and a painter. I love to paint the school and help make it more beautiful.

I look forward to going to university after LCS, but I am still deciding what I want to study because I find myself interested in many subjects including medicine, computer science, economics and engineering. Regardless of what I end up studying, my ambition is to help Haiti to be all it can be. I want to fight for and help develop the country but I cannot do it alone. I love Haiti and its citizens because it is part of God's creation.

Michel Marquez Karagounis

Hello, my name is Michel Marquez Karagounis. I am 12 years old. I am a Sizyem student at Louverture Cleary School. I am from Cayes, in the South Department of Haiti, but I am now living in Port-au-Prince. I live with my mother, father and my sister. I started my education when I was three years old when I started Kindergarten. I went to fundamental (elementary) school for four years and eventually came to apply to attend LCS.



LCS students (left to right) Michel Marquez Karagounis, Ruth Stephen, and Jean Michel Petit-Frère pause during their participation in Netwayaj, after-school clean-up.

After many tests, I was accepted and came to school. When I first got here I was very nervous. I was scared to talk to anyone or even play because I did not want to be embarrassed. In time, I was able to become more comfortable. This is because of the community at LCS. I worked very hard and was able to get good grades. I was very happy. I did well after the first and second terms. I am making my parents very proud. I want to continue to do that for my parents and for my country. I know I need to continue to work hard so I can eventually achieve my goal of becoming a surgeon and helping my country.

Ruth Stephen

Hello, my name is Ruth Stephen, a normal girl like all the other girls. I am 16 years old. I am in Secondaire I at LCS. I live with my parents, brother and sister in Butle Boyer. I am the middle child. I first came to LCS four years ago and have learned so

much along the way. Of the many classes that I have taken, I love biology, economics and mathematics the most. I also love the languages. It is fun to be able to speak two more languages than I did before coming here, and I know that it will help me in my future. I teach in the Ekol Ankourajman after school program which tutors local kids from other schools for about an hour and a half every school day. LCS taught me that what I have been given for free, I have to give to other people for free, and I enjoy sharing my education. They are giving me this dream education for free, with everything that comes with it, like knowledge, clubs and basketball. LCS is my dream school. It helps me realize my dreams and make them reality and I want to help others realize theirs too. I do have three more years to go at LCS so I am not sure what I want to do after I graduate, but I do know that I want to continue to work hard so that I can help the people of my country.

NE Revs and THP Win Big on Haitian Heritage Night

By Angela Mascena and Timothy Moynihan (THP Staff)

On Saturday, June 3, Major League Soccer's New England Revolution hosted its first Haitian Heritage Night. The game at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, MA against FC Toronto celebrated Haitian culture and contributions to the New England area. One of the ways that the Revolution honored the Haitian community was by donating a portion of ticket proceeds from the game to The Haitian Project.

In addition to the usual mass of Revolution fans, THP community members gathered at Gillette to watch a great game of soccer and support THP's growing relationship with the Revolution. A number of people of Haitian heritage from the Boston area attended as well to take part in the recognition of Haitian Heritage and enjoy one of Haiti's favorite pastimes.

Before the start of the game, there was an opportunity for spectators to mingle in the Revolution Fan Zone, which was sporting some Haitian representation. The Massachusetts chapter of the Haitian American Chamber of Commerce displayed a beautiful spread of Haitian art. The Haitian flag was hung as spectators enjoyed a live performance by a local Haitian Rara band. The band quickly recognized the dance talents of THP President Deacon Patrick Moynihan and LCS alumnus Dr. Theony Deshommes, who was in town from Haiti for a medical conference, and invited the dynamic duo to dance on stage with the band. Fans were in for a treat during the game itself. The Revs controlled the field for the majority of the game and were able to finish with a 3-0 upset against the first-place FC Toronto team. Those who purchased tickets to Haitian Heritage Night were also invited onto the field to meet a Revs player at the end of the match.

This partnership came about when the Revolution approached THP in 2016 looking for opportunities for their home-grown Haitian player, Zachary Herivaux, to reach out to the New England Haitian community. After learning about the success of THP's mission, they were inspired to get involved with something that has a sustainable, lasting impact in Haiti: education. THP staff members worked with the Revolu-



THP community members (from left) Angela Mascena, Theony Deshommes, Mikhaila Moynihan, Deacon Patrick Moynihan, and Timothy Moynihan snap a picture with the Haitian flag in the Revolution Fan Zone.

tion's Cultural Marketing Coordinator to plan and promote the event to Boston's Haitian community, the THP community and all people in the New England area.

THP is thrilled that the Revolution chose to get behind THP, an organization that supports advocates for education. Recognizing education as the surest route out of poverty, Haitians living abroad direct the majority of remittances to fund education for their family and friends back in Haiti. Deacon Moynihan said of the event, "It is both exciting and vital that the Revolution chose to support an organization that, above all else, supports education in Haiti as the route out of poverty and the foundation for building a stronger nation."

Haitian Heritage Night provided a great opportunity for the Haitian community in the Boston area to learn about THP and vice versa, and THP's budding relationship with the Revolution will better enable THP to stay connected with and grow its base in the Boston area. THP board member Smith Vioselin says, "The relationship with the New England Revolution means a lot to THP because it gives us the opportunity to grow as an organization. We are very fortunate to have established this new relationship and I pray that we continue to develop a healthy relationship for the support of education."

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