



Haitian Project News

The Louverture Cleary Schools Network, Transforming Haiti through Education

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Ground Breaking News: Construction Begins on LCS 2

by Jimi Grondin (THP Director of New School Construction)

In June, a long-awaited and highly-anticipated event occurred: The Haitian Project (THP) officially broke ground on its next school in Haiti's Plateau Central region in the Diocese of Gonaïves.

On June 17th, Patrick Brun (head of Fondation Haitian Project, THP's partner foundation in Haiti) and THP Director of New School Construction Jimi Grondin placed the first stones in the perimeter wall; within hours, an entire section of foundation had risen out of the ground. Since then, the wall at LCS 2 (the "Model Campus") is nearly complete, security cameras have been installed, and solar powered lights are illuminating the grounds.

(continued on page 2)

A New School Year Begins at LCS!

by Amanda Haluga (THP Director of Charism and Missionary Program)

Louverture Cleary School Santo 5 (LCS) is often seen as an oasis, its orderly environment standing in stark contrast to the country outside its walls. Parents trust LCS to receive their children each Sunday. When the bell rings, students move enthusiastically and promptly from class to class. Teachers are present and ready to instruct. Meals are prepared on time to nourish the community, and everyone takes part in *Netwayaj* (clean-up) after school to prepare for the next



LCS Dean of Students Myriam Jean Baptiste (left) stands with students at the flag raising ceremony on opening day.

day. Consistency and accountability allow Louvertureans to learn, grow and thrive.

Political unrest, natural disasters, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have now impacted multiple school years in Haiti. Throughout, LCS has prudently and diligently continued to provide a top-notch education and support to its students and community. This school year follows a summer that saw the

(continued on page 3)

THP Highlights

Hold the Presses, the Results Are In!

The results are just in and THP is excited once again to report a 100 percent pass rate for the *Katryèm* (U.S. 9th grade) state exams! Passing the *Katryèm* state exam allows students to progress from the *Fondamentale* (middle school level) curriculum to the *Secondaire* (high school level) curriculum for their final four years at Louverture Cleary School. With these results, LCS celebrates a long tradition of excellence that has led to its reputation throughout Haiti as a leading education program. Look for the results of the *Philo* (U.S. 12th grade + 1) exam soon!

Garage Sale Hits a Grand Slam:

After having to cancel the popular Madeleine Parish Garage Sale of Portland, OR in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Madeleine community came back swinging this summer and hosted one of the biggest and best garage sales yet! Photos captured local shoppers in line down the block waiting to enter the sale to peruse second-hand treasures and share in community. The much-anticipated annual sale once again raised over \$25,000 to support THP and local parish programs. Many thanks to Fr. Mike Biewend and the dozens of dedicated volunteers who made this event a success once again!

A New Foundation of Support:

This summer, THP was awarded a two-year \$125,000 grant from a new funder, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). Based in Greece, SNF is one of the world's leading international charitable foundations whose mission is to empower humanity through education, health, art and culture. As a newcomer to THP, SNF was moved by the Project's track record of success, the culture of service embodied by LCS students and alumni, and plans to create the LCS Network. They were also motivated by history: Haiti was the first country to recognize Greece's freedom from Ottoman rule in 1821!

LCS Community

Ground Breaking News

(continued from page 1)

The Model Campus will be replicated in each of the remaining eight dioceses of Haiti to create the 10-school Louverture Cleary Schools Network (LCS Network), increasing access to quality education outside of the nation's capital. The \$7.4 million Model Campus project represents Phase One of the LCS Network plan and encompasses site development and construction of the Model Campus, as well as the development of the sites and initial buildings for LCS 3 and 4.

Although still a ways from welcoming the first classes to the Model Campus, the LCS Network is already beginning to fulfill its goal of positively integrating into the local and regional economy, providing resources and socioeconomic support to stimulate the community's natural development. Dozens of people are working on the site and creating an economy 70 miles from Port-au-Prince (a "world away" in terms of Haiti). As Patrick Brun opined during the groundbreaking, "If only we had started this 20 years ago."

The next step will be to build one of the two residences, which will eventually house THP Missionaries and LCS residential staff. For now, the building will serve as a base of operations during construction. In the meantime, the details of the Model Campus continue to be refined by the LCS Network design/build team (Patrick Brun, Jimi Grondin, architect Scott Hill, and Gilbert Hippolyte and Claude Delpé of Technique et Construction, the Model Campus' general contractor), paying close attention to the dynamic social and environmental

needs in Haiti and at the specific site.

Despite recent challenges that the country has faced (gang violence, the assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moïse in July, and the August 14th earthquake that was immediately followed by Tropical Storm Grace), construction has continued on this initial phase of the LCS Network—an investment in Haiti's own ability to weather future disasters.

As THP President Reese Grondin remarked on this exciting time in the Project's history, "Breaking ground on the Model Campus has been nothing short of momentous. It makes the Network vision concrete. And it affirms a brighter future for Haiti, built by and for Haitians themselves. Education is the long-term solution to break the cycle of crises, and there could not be a more exciting time to join The Haitian Project community and invest in the future of Haiti!"



THP Director of New School Construction Jimi Grondin assists in placing the first stones in the foundation of the perimeter wall of LCS 2.



Above: Workers install solar-powered lights to illuminate the grounds at the building site. Above right: Workers construct the front perimeter wall of LCS 2. Right: Patrick Brun, head of THP's partner foundations in Haiti and Haitian private-sector leader (kneeling, center), with workers laying stones for the foundation of the perimeter wall of LCS 2.



New School Year

(continued from page 1)

assassination of the nation's president and a devastating earthquake about 80 miles west of LCS. Despite continued uncertainty and the ongoing pandemic, LCS has opened on time, equipped with experience and determination to continue its mission of forming the future leaders of Haiti.

This academic year is a special one with more new students entering than ever before. Nationwide interruptions prevented the addition of new students to LCS in the fall of 2020. Consequently, this September the school is admitting a new *Sizyèm* (U.S. 7th grade) class and a new *Senkyèm* (U.S. 8th grade) class. The whole community is thrilled to welcome double the usual number of new Louverturians and committed to helping them succeed, especially the oldest students in *Philo* (U.S. 12th grade +1) and *Rhéto* (U.S. 12th grade)—known as Guides and Monitors, respectively.

"I am very excited to be their Guide," says *Philo* student Choumika, "because I will be helping others as I was helped."

"I hope that the new *Senkyèm* students will work very hard so that in January [after Christmas break], it will be like they were with us

in *Sizyèm* too," adds *Philo* student Emmanuel. "We will be a good example for them until we graduate and go out to help our country."

The LCS Administration, led by Head of School Ernst Viel, is dedicated to the challenge of forming and guiding their students in the new school year, beginning with the summer *Rhéto* and *Philo* Leadership Seminar. Monsieur Viel reflects, "This new school year will be different from my first three years. The entire team has been motivated with the arrival of 110 new students. Commitment and involvement from everyone are needed to meet this challenge. The staff participation during the New Student Orientation and the Leadership Seminar has been a sign that everyone is ready for the work of transmitting to the students



Señor Toussaint Espana teaches Spanish, one of the four languages taught at LCS (along with Kréyol, French and English) on opening day of classes.

the fundamental values of our Charism and of being a Louverturian."

The new students will be in good hands while navigating life at LCS. "They are the ones who will replace us," reflects *Philo* student Sarah. "It's not easy to be a leader of the community because you have many people expecting so much of you, but I feel ready for it. I promise I will give my all so when it is their turn to lead, they will follow our steps and take part in the rebuilding of Haiti."

Earthquake is a Tragic End to a Challenging Summer

After an already challenging summer that saw unrest and the assassination of the country's president, on August 14th a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southwestern Haiti. The epicenter of the quake was on the southern peninsula, about 20 miles northeast of the city of Les Cayes and about 80 miles west of the capital Port-au-Prince. The devastation was significant, with over 2,200 people killed and many more injured or missing. The quake also severely impacted the region's infrastructure, damaging or destroying numerous schools, parishes and health facilities.

The physical impact on Port-au-Prince was minimal and LCS Santo 5 was undamaged. There was also no damage to the LCS Plateau Central site (the "Model Campus"), which is currently under construction in the Diocese of Gonaïves.

Meeting the immediate needs of any tragedy is important, which is why The Haitian Project is contributing 20 percent of

the Project's fall *Back to School* campaign to earthquake recovery in the most affected region (more details on page 4), *but it is equally important to invest in Haiti's own ability to weather crises*. The Haitian Project remains focused on Haiti's long-term development and will continue to educate the future doctors, nurses, engineers, and civic leaders who will lead their nation to a future where the loss of life from disasters can be far less and the country is no longer dependent on aid.

And, with a site identified and plans drawn, The Haitian Project is working to build a Louverture Cleary School in Les Cayes as part of the region's long-term recovery, because education—and especially a Louverture Cleary education—can help restore people's hope for the future.

Thank you for keeping Haiti, especially those in the directly affected areas, in your thoughts and prayers.

Haitian Voices

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

Instability in Haiti has been in the spotlight since the country's president was assassinated earlier this summer. Former THP Volunteer Thomas Cody ('13-'14) recently interviewed members of The Haitian Project's community in Haiti to hear their thoughts. Here are some of the responses:

Q. How do you think the current political turmoil will impact economic development in Haiti? Does President Jovenel Moïse's assassination in particular undermine private sector investment and growth by introducing too much risk?

A. Djim Guerrier (LCS Economics Department Head, LCS '14):

The theories about the relationship between political stability and economic growth are very clear: the more political issues there are, the slower the economic growth. Political stability is a pillar to economic progress. Based on historical data, no country has ever been able to grow its economy in times of internal social conflicts and political turmoil. Haiti is not exempt to this principle. The few moments of real economic growth in Haiti are only when the country is politically stable. Haiti owes its current situation mostly to the conflicts between social classes and the many political coups we have had in our history.

President Jovenel Moïse's assassination is a problem for the economy of the country. The situation before the assassination was surely very bad, but it has now created more uncertainty for the future of the country and gave an amplification to the gangs' campaign to control as many

territories as possible. This has multiple impacts on the economy: less investors want to start or continue their business in the country due to too much risk; the workforce, the educated, and the artists are fleeing the country in search of a safer environment; and the government is dealing with so many political issues that it has abandoned efforts to improve the economy.

Q. How has the political unrest in the past few months impacted LCS Alumni?

A. Stéphanie Valcourt (Accountant, LCS Dulcich Center for Career Advancement, LCS '11):

In the past few months, the political unrest had a huge impact on the life of the people of Haiti. People are afraid of the chaos and the terror of the gangs in some key areas. There is no gas, and transportation is generally paralyzed because the gang operations block all the roads that go to the gas terminals. It is difficult for people to circulate, to go out for their work or their business, etc. It is very challenging right now.

The situation may be chaotic, but as Louvertureans we have a strong mind set. Today we are even more conscientious of the fact that we have to work harder and make more sacrifices to achieve something in our country. It is the reason why we keep our head up, no matter the tough challenges we are exposed to daily. In this impasse, the country demands that we think about strategies that will have a positive impact on the whole society.

Q. How does the political unrest and

President Moïse's assassination differ from past political crises in Haiti? Do you think there will be any long-term consequences?

A. Patrick Brun, head of Fondation Haitian Project, The Haitian Project's partner foundation in Haiti:

Political instability should not completely consume our attention. It is one part of a vicious cycle that is driven by extreme poverty and precarity. Our economy is too small and not in sync with the size of our population.

There is an absolute lack of education. The Haitian state has never invested substantially in education to make it accessible to all, to create social mobility and elevate the debates within the different fringes of the Haitian population. What's more, very little charity and aid is directed towards education. Without education, we will never be able to create a real economy and restore the nation of Haiti.

Today, the assassination of our president and the country being taken over by heavily armed and organized gangs have consumed our innocence and have opened our eyes to the reality that there will be no limit to greed once we let it in. We know today what is really important to build our nation...**education!** This is what has worked, this is what will work. As a Haitian, my vision today is: "Let's not talk about anything else and get distracted... let's talk and do education first." It works and will take Haiti out of its horror to set us on a promising track towards nation building, citizenship and development.

Join THP's 2021 Back to School Campaign!

After an especially difficult summer in Haiti, The Haitian Project is celebrating the return of students to Louverture Cleary School with a *Back to School* campaign! Invest in the future of Haiti by visiting haitian-project.raisely.com to launch an online fundraiser to share with friends and family, or simply donate to help meet the goal of 150 donations in 30 days! THP will donate 20 percent of the Back to School proceeds to our partner Chibly Cardinal Langlois and the Diocese of Les Cayes for earthquake recovery.

LCS Leadership Series: LCS Principal Marjorie Mombrun

by HPN Staff

The Haitian Project is proud to introduce the amazing Haitian faculty and staff who work every day to ensure that Louverture Cleary School is one of the very best secondary education programs in Haiti. The first of this series features LCS Principal Marjorie Mombrun (LCS '07).

Marjorie Mombrun is a strong educator both in and out of the class-room, a spiritual leader through faith formation and all-school liturgical activities, and a role model for all, modeling a commitment to giving back and putting education first.

After graduating from LCS in 2007, Madame Mombrun studied education in university at the Centre de Recherche, de Formation et d'Intervention Psychologique. In 2009, she returned to LCS as junior staff, receiving a scholarship from the Dulcich Center for Career Advancement for her university studies while working at the school.

Madame Mombrun grew as an educator and community member, becoming dean of academics and ultimately principal, a role she has held since 2014.

HPN: What do you love about your role at LCS?

MM: I love putting my hand in the dough to educate the future generation in so many aspects of school life. As a religion teacher, I teach them to become great Christians, to make better choices, and grow in dignity. And as an educator, I discipline them to become good citizens for the country.

I also love forming the Guides (*Philo* students, U.S. 12th grade +1) and Monitors (*Rhétò* students, U.S. 12th grade) to be mentors to support the youngest, and to represent the Direction (Administration) in their groups and in the dormitories. When students enter in the *Sizyèm* (U.S. 7th grade) class, everything about the students' style of life changes as we include them. For

example, they are taught how to treat the trash in the compost and in the incinerator, supported in the language program [practicing and learning in the school's four languages: Kreyòl, French, English and Spanish], and helped to work hard and excel in class. In return, they will be able to teach others and become leaders.

HPN: What's the most important thing you believe LCS does to encourage leadership skills in its female students, and why?

MM: Encouraging the leadership of female students at LCS is so important because in the family in Haiti, it is common to put women and girls in the back. Women and girls are still taught that their place is in the kitchen, to not look at men in their eyes, and so on. But at LCS, we encourage girls to do what boys can do. [And, in turn, boys are taught to support their female classmates.] The leadership skills are equal for male and female students. With that, we will have better families and a better society.

HPN: How do you see your role at LCS paving the way for other women in Haiti?

MM: My role creates a foundation for the female students to lead and succeed in Haiti. It shows them, too, that they could take my place as a leader and educator in the future. They can be whatever they want to be.



LCS Principal Marjorie Mombrun speaking at an LCS graduation.

HPN: What role do you believe LCS and the LCS Network have to play in Haiti's future, especially given recent events?

MM: LCS is playing an important role [in Haiti's future] by giving a quality education to Louvertureans. The education we give at LCS helps to train future leaders for the country. Those alumni will be able to spread the great culture of LCS to others throughout Haiti. Haiti will change when we put education first and change our mentality and the way we are doing things in the structures and administration of the country.

Contact The Haitian Project to learn how the options of **planned giving, corporate matched gifts, recurring gifts, and gifts of stocks or mutual funds** can provide talented young men and women at LCS with a top-notch, tuition-free, secondary education steeped in service and civic-mindedness!

LCS: A Transformative Education

By Abigail Knapp (THP Volunteer '18-'19)

Because human beings are created with dignity, every person deserves the opportunity to receive the kind of education that enriches the entirety of the person: intellectually, physically and spiritually. In Haiti, the Louverture Cleary Schools Network makes this possible.

When Louverture Cleary School was founded, the applicants were overwhelmingly boys. Only 15 percent of the student body was female, as most girls did not apply to or attend schools. Cultural biases still exist in Haiti and make it difficult for girls to receive an education. If a family can only send one student to school, they typically choose a boy over a girl. Unfortunately for many girls, not attending school means that they are subjected to some form of domestic slavery. Recognizing this problem in Haiti, The Haitian Project instituted an affirmative action program for female students in 1996. Now, female students consistently outnumber male students at LCS, where they receive an education of mind, body and soul that is transformative for themselves and for the greater community.

The curriculum at LCS is rigorous. The students juggle advanced courses in mathematics, science, English, and other subjects. They learn to fluently speak four different languages (Kreyòl, French, English and Spanish). And, 90 percent of graduates remain in Haiti and use the education they have received to benefit their country. This is especially critical for girls. Having well-educated, female graduates in the workplace promotes a shift in the current cultural biases surrounding women in Haiti.

Education at LCS does not just foster the intellect but also focuses on the body. Students take PE classes and participate in daily work activities. This is important for a plethora of reasons. Particularly, for the girls, this is an opportunity to build confidence. Many girls enter the school having never

played a sport and lack the confidence to think they can. While working at LCS, I watched the growth of a girls' soccer club. Most girls looked at the soccer ball as one looks at an enemy. As the weeks went by, the girls improved, and the confidence they gained on the soccer field flowed into their classes and work.

LCS is a Catholic school, which means part of education is the formation of the person in the image of God. Delving into the Catholic Church's rich teaching on morality and ethics happens daily in the classroom. For the girls, the teaching on the dignity of women is a new message. As Catholics, we have a deep history of females who exemplified this teaching: St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Joan of Arc, Mother Teresa, and of course, Our Lady!

For both male and female students, learning to live a moral, purposeful life is fundamental. Living in a community that encourages the student to grow in relationship with Christ is a blessing, and having leaders who live up to this standard really instills this in students.

LCS Director of Operations Esther Paul commented, "All students at LCS, boys or girls, receive the same quality of education. I think it is the main thing that encourages the female students. Because receiving the same level of education gives them self-confidence and makes them believe it is not about male or female, but that a human being can achieve whatever he wants with a good education."

Receiving this all-encompassing education teaches our female students to strive to be servant-leaders at school and in the community. LCS has not needed its affirmative action program since 2006. A large part of this is due to the strong female alumni who are bringing the education they received out into Haiti, ensuring that potential female students and their parents line up bright and early to take the LCS entrance exam.

Not surprisingly, they excel.

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Mission Statement

The Haitian Project through its support of Louverture Cleary Schools, a national network of tuition-free, Catholic, co-educational secondary boarding schools in Haiti, provides for the education of academically-talented and motivated students from Haitian families who cannot afford the cost of their children's education in order to maximize their potential and enable them to work toward building a Haiti where justice and peace thrive.

To donate, visit

www.haitianproject.org, Venmo at [@TheHaitianProject](https://www.venmo.com/TheHaitianProject), or mail checks payable to The Haitian Project.

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