



## WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from *PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)* – Spring 2012

### **Fondwa Mourns Death of Se Kamel, Beloved Religious and Community Leader**

“Orevwa, Se Kamell!” – “Goodbye, Sister.Carmelle!” came a message from Fr. Joseph Philippe, CSSp announcing the untimely death at age 49 of **Sister Marie Carmelle Voltaire**, beloved co-foundress of the **Little Sisters of St. Antoine** and a key leader in the Fondwa community for nearly two decades. Following several months of illness and a diagnosis of metastatic liver cancer, Sr. Carmelle was brought from Haiti to Kansas City thanks to the intervention of the **Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, KS**, whose community has had a long-term “partnership” with the Sisters of St. Antoine.



Sister Carmelle was “mother” to more than 20 younger sisters in the community and “mothered” every visitor to Fondwa with a warm, Haitian hospitality that made visitors feel not only welcome but special. Besides hosting visitors and volunteers in Fondwa, Sr. Carmelle was trained as a nurse and provided primary care in the Fondwa Medical Clinic to hundreds of people. Pregnant women and malnourished children were a special focus of her health-care ministry, a service that flowed naturally from her caring personality. Likewise many of the youngest, “at risk” or orphaned children who came to live in Fondwa’s Fatima House orphanage were special recipients of her maternal care.

A funeral service, attended by friends and family of Sr. Carmelle, representatives of *Partners in Progress* and *Family Health Ministries*, as well as professed members of the Sisters of St. Antoine, was held on March 20 in Leavenworth. Her body was laid to rest in the Sisters of Charity cemetery. Special thanks to the **Providence Hospital** in Kansas City and most especially the **Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth** for the excellent and compassionate care Sr. Carmelle received at the end of her life. May Sr. Carmelle rest in peace and may her indomitable spirit live on in the religious community she founded and in the lives of the many hundreds of people who knew her and loved her!

### **Second “Earth Block” Classroom Building Nearing Completion in Deslandes!**

Construction of the second, “earth block” classroom building is progressing rapidly at the elementary school operated by PIP’s collaborating partners in Deslandes, the *Centre d’Inspiration Jeunesse* (CIJ). Construction of a third building - set to begin in November - will complete the classroom complex and provide additional training opportunities to equip both men and women with the skills needed to build affordable houses. “Earth blocks” are environmentally-friendly and reduce the need for expensive, imported materials while providing a more earthquake and hurricane resistant structure than conventional cement block masonry.



Funding for the CIJ school construction project has come largely through the efforts of “**Anne Mullaney’s Family and Friends for Haiti**” and both PIP and our CIJ partners owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Before her untimely death from cancer in April 2011, Anne Mullaney joined the PIP board because she wanted her life “to make a difference” and because she believed that serving the mission of PIP would make a BIG difference in the lives of children in rural Haiti and in particular the village of Deslandes. Carrying on her work through *Partners in Progress* on behalf of children in Deslandes is both a tribute to and a celebration of Anne’s life and her incredible spirit!

## **Ground Broken for Construction of a Permanent St. Antoine School in Fondwa!**



“Education provides the foundation for escaping misery” has long been a guiding principle of PIP’s Fondwa partners in the *Association of Peasants of Fondwa* (APF). The **St. Antoine School**, which enrolls some 600 students in pre-school through the end of high school, is an embodiment of their commitment to education. The massive earthquake of January 2010 completely destroyed the former St. Antoine classroom complex, but classes resumed already in March 2010 in transitional buildings financed jointly by *Partners in Progress* and another partner organization, *Family Health Ministries* (FHM).

After two years of planning and steady progress ground has been broken for construction of a new, 16 room classroom complex that will house both the elementary and secondary schools. The complex will be anchored into the bedrock beneath the campus and built on a foundation of stone obtained from nearby locations. Locally produced cement masonry blocks that meet international building standards will be used for a first level. An upper level made of imported, pressure-treated and termite-protected pine is planned. September 2012 is the current target date for completion of the new **St. Antoine School!**



## **“Soil Health” Initiative Exhibits Rapid Progress and Sparks Increased Interest**

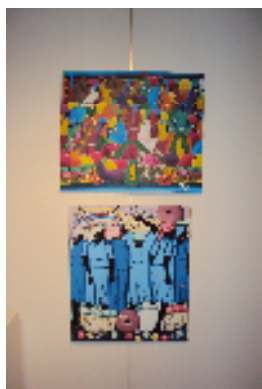


The **“Deslandes Initiative to Improve Soil Health and Increase Food Security”** enters its third year under the new name **“Konbit Vanyan Kapab”** ( *“Together We Can Succeed”*). Last year more than 40 farmers organized into traditional *“konbits”* (work-sharing groups) tested various sustainable agriculture *“strategies”* and found that several of these innovations increased plant growth substantially over more conventional, local methods. *Konbit* members have implemented these effective strategies in their own fields and their evident success has sparked increased interest among their neighbors!

In the current phase of the project farmers will test the production and sale of *“specialty crops”* – various vegetables, legumes, grains, and herbs that have high nutritional or economic value or cultural significance – for use in local school lunch programs. This *“farm to school”* strategy will allow farmers to explore the ecological and economic benefits of crop diversification and will serve to increase the nutritional content of school lunches. *“Konbits”* will also have opportunities to participate in *“seed saving”* training and have access to *“seed saving”* supplies as a means of conserving genetic crop diversity and of lowering production costs.



## **“Pittsburgh Artists for Haiti” Event Raises Both Awareness and Funds for PIP**



More than a dozen Pittsburgh area artists came together on Sunday, March 25, 2012 at the **Fr. Ryan Art Center** in McKees Rocks, PA to present their work in a gallery exhibit and art sale in order to aid the people of Haiti by advancing the mission of *Partners in Progress* (PIP) to *“promote and support sustainable community development in rural Haiti”*. Organized by **Fr. Don Fischer**, an accomplished Pittsburgh potter, with help from PIP administrative assistant, **Becky Newlin**, and many other friends of PIP the event attracted more than 100 local art enthusiasts and PIP supporters.

Original Haitian art contributed by friend-of-PIP and **Pittsburgh Regional Haiti Solidarity Committee** member, **Jim King**, and a raffle basket of Haitian crafts, coffee, vanilla, and rum complemented the gallery pieces presented by local artists.

*Partners in Progress* sends a *“gwo mes!”* (*“big THANK YOU”*) to **Don Fisher** and all the artists, friends, staff, and board members who contributed to this successful event!

### **Partners in Progress**

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