



WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from **PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)** – Spring 2014

Fondwa School Inauguration Highlights Continuing Earthquake Recovery



On January 10, 2014 – within a few days of the fourth anniversary of the earthquake that destroyed more than 20 years of infrastructure development by PIP's collaborators in the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)** – the Fondwa community celebrated its continuing recovery from the devastation of the earthquake with the formal inauguration of a new **St. Antoine School** classroom complex.

Within weeks of the 2010 earthquake, **APF** and several of its partner organizations identified reconstruction of the **St. Antoine elementary and secondary school** as the “flagship” project that could drive the community's recovery and symbolize its commitment to a better future through the education of its children. Restoration of the Fondwa infrastructure to its pre-2010 state will take decades, but the inauguration of the new school building marks an important milestone on the long and steep path of continuing recovery and reconstruction – a path marked by other significant achievements including: restoration of the community water supply; construction of transitional buildings to house the **Fatima House Orphanage**; renovation of an existing building to replace the former **APF Guest Center**; and installation of a temporary “clinic in a container” to replace the **APF Primary Care Medical Clinic**.

At the inauguration **Fr. Joseph Philippe**, CSSp, founder and coordinator of the APF, and the school principal, **Sr. Simon Achille**, presented plaques of “honor and merit” to representatives of **Partners in Progress (PIP)**, **Family Health Ministries (FHM)**, **Heart to Heart International**, the **Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)**, and **FONKOZE** – the partner organizations that provided funding for the school reconstruction: .



Deslandes Community and Pittsburgh Friends Celebrate School Dedication



A Pittsburgh, PA delegation, representing the family and friends of former PIP board member Anne Mullaney, joined children and parents from the Deslandes community on February 24, 2014 to celebrate the dedication of the new **Ecole Gamaliel de Deslandes (EGD)**. Following the untimely death of Anne Mullaney in 2011, the “**Friends of Anne**” (FOA) continued the campaign she began to secure for **Partners in Progress** the funding needed for the EGD construction.

The Pittsburgh delegation presented to the EGD school director, **Mr. St. Geste Charles**, a plaque “*in loving memory of Anne Mullaney*” and “*in recognition of the people of Deslandes Haiti and their commitment to sustainable development*”. In turn the school community presented **Partners in Progress** with a plaque of “honor and merit” in recognition of its support for rural development in Haiti and, in particular, for supporting the school construction and for introducing “compressed earth blocks” (CEBs), the “green” building technology used in the school construction. Construction of two additional EGD classrooms is set for 2014 and will include a solar-powered computer lab and a resource center for education and formation in agroecology, the science underlying sustainable agriculture. This final phase of “earth block” construction is intended to launch an “earth block” business that will continue to provide jobs and livelihoods for local workers and generate income to help support the EGD school.

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Agricultural Innovation and Experimentation Improve Livelihoods in Deslandes



More than 50 Deslandes farmers organized into 3 “konbits” or traditional “shared work” groups, through the **Konbit Vanyan Kapab** (KVK or “Together We Can”) project are finalizing designs and budgets for their 2014 “trial plots” and will begin implementing them at the onset of the growing season. The designs focus on improving the “agroecology” strategies that have already proven to benefit “soil health” and increase crop yields and on new innovations such as intercropping lima beans and corn and diversifying the species of native trees used to make “hedgerows” to improve the “timed release” of nutrients to crops planted between the hedgerows.

The **Konbit Vanyan Kapab** farmers are not only advancing their own knowledge, but are organizing a “*pot ouvert*” or “open door”, knowledge-sharing event for Deslandes and surrounding

communities to demonstrate proven strategies and techniques adapted to the local terrain and growing conditions. Additionally KVK farmers are experimenting with new income-generating opportunities through “value added” products such as production of “*masketi*” (castor bean) oil used in hair products and “*mamba benz*”, a nutritional supplement made from locally produced peanut butter and the micronutrient-rich leaves of the *moringa* or “drumstick” tree (*moringa oleifera*)).

PIP provides technical support for the KVK project as well as financial support derived from individual donations and partnership with the **Harvest for Haiti** program of **Mt. St. Peter Church** in New Kensington, PA

Local Students “Mark” New Friendship and Raise Funds for Deslandes School

Students at **St. Bede School** in the Point Breeze section of Pittsburgh, PA “marked” a new relationship with elementary school students at the **Ecole Gamaliel Deslandes** (EGD) by hand-crafting bookmarks for children in Deslandes. **Ray Werner**, granddad of St. Bede students, **Hannah, Jack, Charlie and Lilli Werner**, participated in the dedication of the new EGD classroom complex with other members of the **Friends and Family of Anne Mullaney** (FOA) on February 24 and distributed bookmarks to each of the EGD students.



After learning more about the needs of the Deslandes school, St. Bede students and their teachers used a very-popular “dress down” day to raise more than \$800 to purchase equipment for a proposed school computer lab that will also serve as a community cyber-center.

St. Vincent College (SVC) Students Combine Service and Learning in Haiti



Six students from **St. Vincent College** (Latrobe, PA) spent their “spring break” in the Haitian village of Jacsonville working “*men nan men*” (“hand in hand”) with Haitian youth to make improvements to the “*Kay Misiyone*” (“Mission House”). The Mission House, operated by the **St. Rose of Lima Community** organization, houses visitors and volunteers wanting to learn about rural Haiti and be of service to the local community.

SVC service learning coordinator, **Jessica Adams**, and PIP executive director, Dr. Rich Gosser, accompanied the students who are enrolled in an international service learning course taught by Gosser. The course, **Haiti: Window on Our Worlds**, “combines academic learning with critical reflection and relevant international service while enabling students to grow in an awareness and understanding of self and contribute to building a global ‘culture of solidarity’ and engaged citizenship at St. Vincent College”.

Partners in Progress

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