



## WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from **PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)** – Summer 2010

### **Deslandes Community Collaboration Restores Threatened Water Supply**



Still recovering from famine conditions brought on by the disastrous hurricanes of 2008 and coping with an influx of “earthquake refugees” that flooded the region following the massive quake that shook Haiti in January, PIP’s partner community of Deslandes faced yet another crisis when the community water supply was disrupted by a broken pipe in a decades-old system that provides water to some 7000 residents. Community leaders in PIP’s partner organization – the **Centre d’Intervention Jeunesse (CIJ)** or **Youth Intervention Center** – organized a very successful collaboration to restore service by bringing together residents of Deslandes to provide

labor, technical experts from the **Albert Schweitzer Hospital** in nearby Deschappelles, and financial support from *Partners in Progress* (PIP). Funding for the renovation came from Western PA **Rotary clubs**, individual donors, and **St. Margaret Mary Church** in Lower Burrell, PA. Rotary District Governor **Cynthia Sakala** of Lower Burrell spearheaded and coordinated the fundraising.

To accomplish the project some 90 men and women – including 30 volunteers – labored for two months. They carried dozens of rocks and more than 60 sacks of cement to the water source in the mountains above Deslandes where they constructed a new “spring house” to protect and preserve the source and built a new public fountain to provide convenient access to nearby residents. Workers laid almost one mile of new pipe over rugged terrain between the source and two giant cisterns that supply water to Deslandes. They replaced broken valves and sections of pipe throughout the town and reburied pipes that had become exposed by erosion. A new water line was extended to the CIJ school and a new public fountain installed in the neighborhood of La Bord. Congratulations and thanks to all for this successful, international, community-wide collaboration!



### **St. Antoine School Takes Beginning Steps Along a Steep Road to Recovery**

Masses of rubble still cover much of the campus of the former St. Antoine school, but more than 200 students are continuing their education in temporary, wooden structures built by volunteers organized by **Family Health Ministries** (FHM) and financed jointly by FHM and PIP. Since the January earthquake that completely destroyed the former school building, FHM and PIP have continued monthly support to our Fondwa partners in the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa** (APF), enabling them to continue paying teachers even when the school could not operate. PIP and FHM funding for the school lunch program also resumed after the school reopened in March. Construction of additional temporary structures is planned for August after the current school year ends. **Sr. Simone Achille**, principal of the St. Antoine school, is hopeful that enrollment will be able to return to near normal levels during the coming academic year.



APF has contracted with Philadelphia-based Green Microfinance (GMf) to create a “master plan” for the rebuilding and expanded development of the Fondwa community. An initial concept for the transition from temporary school structures to a permanent school has been proposed and some potential sources of funding have been identified. Creation of a detailed architectural plan for an appropriate and seismic-resistant school building and of a timeline for its implementation will be the next step in a long process of recovery. Some 80% of the schools in Haiti were destroyed in the January earthquake. Many will never reopen, but the St. Antoine school continues to “defy the odds”. “*Bay chapo yo*” – “*hats off*” to Sr. Simone and the St. Antoine school teachers and staff!

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## First “Earth Block” Construction Nears Completion – Training Center Planned



The use of “compressed earth blocks” (CEBs) is an ecologically friendly, “green” building technology that makes use of locally available materials and offers thermal and seismic advantages over conventional cement construction. The first of three CEB classroom buildings in PIP’s Deslandes partner community is nearing completion. These will provide a permanent replacement for the current open pole and corrugated metal building that houses the elementary school operated by PIP’s Delandes partners, the CIJ (“*Centre d’Intervention Jeunesse*” or “*Youth Intervention Center*”). The school enrolls almost 400 students and is a focal point for community meetings and cultural activities. It is also a key component of CIJ’s vision for an environmentally sustainable, economically self-reliant and vibrant community.

Consultants **Jim Hallock** and **Adriana Duran** from the **Tierra y Cal Institute** in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, have trained a nine member crew in the use of an Auram (manual) block press to manufacture more than 20,000 earth blocks for this pilot building. A hydraulic Adopress, manufactured by Ital Mexicana and donated by Ecoblock International, will be used to produce blocks for the remaining school buildings. Consistent with broader CIJ vision of sustainable development for Deslandes, the knowledge and experience of earth block construction acquired in building the school is expected to become the basis of an “earth block” training center that will disseminate CEB technology as part of a “Village to Village Sustainable Development” project.



The “Village to Village Sustainable Development” project would pilot a model of training Haitian engineers, skilled builders, apprentices and ordinary citizens in CEB construction as a way of meeting the long-term, post-earthquake housing and other construction needs in rural Haiti while generating alternative economic opportunities and increasing the capacity of rural communities to organize and meet their own needs. Teams of builders, engineers, and young builder apprentices would be certified in seismic and hurricane resistant construction and trained to apply earth block and other components of sustainable construction in other projects throughout the region.

## University of Fondwa Students and Staff Committed to Building a New Haiti



Recovery from the psychological trauma and massive destruction of infrastructure – brought on by the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that devastated the Fondwa community last January – will take years. However, the reopening of the **University of Fondwa 2004 (UNIF)**, Haiti’s only “university of the mountains”, dedicated to the sustainable development of rural Haiti, is a powerful sign of the commitment of PIP’s partners in the *Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)* to contribute to Haiti’s “building back better” in the decades to come!

Immediately after the earthquake PIP provided emergency financial support to UNIF and is continuing to fund the “**Servant Leader**” scholarship, a full scholarship covering all expenses associated with the university and awarded this year to Jocelyn Mozar (pictured at right with PIP executive director, Rich Gosser), a first year agronomy student from Nippes. PIP is also providing partial support for Monise Pierre, a fourth year veterinary medicine student from Pignon in Haiti’s Central Plateau. Additional grants to UNIF from *Partners in Progress* – funded by members of the **Holy Spirit Society** in Houston, TX – and from Kansas-based *Heart to Heart International* will finance the purchase of several “sea containers” to be repurposed into classrooms and student housing.



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