



## WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

**News from PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP) – Fall and Winter 2012**

### **Fondwa School Reconstruction Advances Rapidly Toward Completion in 2013!**



The 2010 earthquake reduced the **St. Antoine School** in Fondwa to a pile of dust and rubble in a mere 35 seconds. Remarkably PIP's partners in the **Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)** were able to reopen the school that enrolls some 600 students in kindergarten through the last year of secondary school within 8 weeks, holding classes in transitional structures financed jointly by *Partners in Progress* (PIP) and another partner organization, *Family Health Ministries* (FHM).

Planning for the reconstruction of a permanent **St. Antoine School** began almost immediately and ground was broken in January 2012 for the new 16 room classroom complex. The pace of reconstruction accelerated in July and completion of the work is expected in early 2013. The anti-seismic complex consists of two stories at the main campus level and a lower level that will be anchored into the bedrock beneath the campus and look out into the Fondwa valley. Locally produced cement masonry blocks that meet international building standards will be used for the lower and first levels and weather-treated pine will provide an earthquake resistant second story at the main campus level.

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### **Hurricane Sandy Lashes Fondwa with Heavy Winds and Four Days of Rain**

Winds clocked at up to 115 mph and rains measuring 27 inches in 24 hours wreaked destruction as Hurricane Sandy tore across Haiti's southern peninsula resulting in more than 40 deaths. No deaths occurred in Fondwa, but crops were uprooted and heavy winds lashed the chapel of the **Little Sisters of St. Antoine** ripping it off its foundation, sending it crashing into their living quarters and leaving a gaping hole in the roof during the middle of the night. The Sisters took temporary refuge in quarters that were originally built as temporary housing for orphans and "at risk" children after the 2010 earthquake. *Partners in Progress* and *Family Health Ministries* are providing emergency funding needed for repairs.



### **Fondwa University Graduate Leads Sustainable Development Team Near Pignon**

Moussanto Dantil, a 2009 graduate of the **University of Fondwa 2004** (UNIF) – Haiti's unique “university of the mountains” – embodies the mission of the university “to educate the sons and daughters of rural Haitians to become leaders in Haiti's sustainable development” in the areas of veterinary medicine, agronomy, and business



management. Moussanto oversees veterinary services at a clinic based in St. Joseph's Parish in his home town area of Pignon. Additionally his development team operates a large-scale poultry and goat production center that serves area markets and provides employment to area residents.



Inaugurated in 2004, the **University of Fondwa 2004** was conceived as the “gift of the peasants of Fondwa

to the nation of Haiti to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Haiti's independence from France”. *Partners in Progress* (PIP) participated in the international planning committee that launched the university and continues to provide partial financial support for UNIF and a full “servant leader” scholarship for one student each year.

## ***Deslandes Parents Cheer New Classrooms / Propose Sustainability Strategies***



Students and teachers at the elementary school operated by PIP's Deslandes partners in the ***Centre d'Inspiration Jeunesse*** (CIJ or "Youth Inspiration Center") expressed great satisfaction with four, spacious new classrooms that were put into service at the opening of the school year in October, even before completion of the structure built of "compressed earth blocks" (CEBs), an environmentally friendly construction technology that uses locally available materials to make high-quality building blocks on site. Finished floors and the addition of an "earthen plaster" inside and out will complete the structure before the end of the year. A new roofing material with a layer of temperature-moderating insulation combined with an innovative "heat escape" design complements the temperature moderating property of the CEBs, producing an enhanced teaching and learning environment.

A "gwo mesi" ("big thank you") goes out to "***Anne Mullaney's Friends for Haiti***" for their continued strong commitment to raise the funds needed in memory of former PIP board member Anne Mullaney who initiated fundraising for the project before her untimely death in April 2011.

The parent association which helps to direct the school met in early November to consider strategies that can lead to increasing sustainability for the school. Enrollment in the CIJ school (and all schools in the area) has declined because an extended drought resulted in the loss of much of the region's corn crop which increased the economic hardship of most families in the area. The parents proposed reducing the initial size of a third, planned classroom building while allowing for later expansion and converting one classroom into a computer lab that will help attract more students to the CIJ School. Additionally the parents agreed to contribute locally available foods such as plantains, sweet potatoes, and jackfruit to support a school lunch program at little or no additional cost to the school!



## ***Deslandes Farmers Increase Resilience through Value Crops and Seed Saving***



The "***Deslandes Initiative to Improve Soil Health and Increase Food Security***" is entering its third year under the new name "***Konbit Vanyan Kapab***" ("Together We Can Succeed"). More than 40 farmers organized into traditional "konbits" (work-sharing groups) have continued to share knowledge inter-generationally and with other farming communities while implementing a methodology of "***Learn, Do, Improve***" that allows for low-risk experimentation on the "*jaden experimentasyon*" ("experimental gardens") shared by *konbit* members.

This year the *konbits* increased the diversity of crops planted by including varieties with a higher economic value than staple food crops. These included peanuts, which can be transformed into peanut butter, and "*masketi*" (or castor bean), from which an oil can be extracted and transformed into a high-value, hair product. Integration of other "agroecological" strategies such as the use of "green manures" or "cover crops" that retain soil moisture, increase organic matter and soil biology, and provide essential nitrogen are intended to increase resilience to events such as the extended drought that resulted in the nearly complete loss of the region's corn crop this summer. Farmers have also begun saving seeds from the cover crops so as to insure a continuing supply of "natural fertilizer" for their own use and for sale to other farmers in the region who want to reproduce the success of *konbit* farmers by imitating *konbit* strategies on their own farms!

