



MISYONNÈ NOUVÈL

The Newsletter of Life Connection Mission

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Letter from the President

Giving all we can to help others find hope for the future

Greetings in Christ! As we move into the hot summer months, things continue to go well at our mission in Montrouis. LCM continues to be greatly blessed.

As the school year starts to close, we are now turning our attention to planning another Summer Camp program similar to the one last year. The summer program is important in many ways. Not only does it keep the kids engaged and learning in the summer, but it also ensures our school employees continue

to have a desperately needed paycheck in the summer and our kids continue to have a meal during school days.

While our mission church in Montrouis is thriving and our medical clinic continues to grow and provide needed treatment to the community, you will see that this newsletter focuses quite heavily on our mission school, Institute Educatif d'Excellence de Montrouis, and our higher education program, Haitian Connection Network (HCN). I feel that as the school year comes to a close, HCN transitions into new leadership, and donors are being asked to consider an increase in sponsorship fees, it is important to share everything that we are doing at the school so that you are fully aware of the return on your investment in your sponsor child's education.

It is never an easy decision to ask sponsors to consider increasing their sponsorship payments. We all have a host of financial obligations as the cost of living continues to rise and incomes stagnate. So, first and foremost, I want to thank each of you from the bottom of my heart for anything and everything you do for and give to LCM. Our mission would simply not exist without your support and prayers.

Mark 12: 41-44 recounts the story of a poor widow who put two copper coins, worth only a few cents, into the temple treasury while the rich donated large sums. Jesus tells his disciples: "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

Today, just as then, many of you are giving all that you can to help support our work in Haiti. In fact, we have many sponsors who are still sponsoring children at our original \$25 per month amount. Thank you! Many others sponsor at \$30 or \$35 per month and will continue to do so. Again, thank you! Each person is giving what they can, and it all helps to enable our mission to perform God's life-changing work.

So as we ask those who are able to increase their sponsorship to \$40 per month, we are only doing so to keep up with rising costs and to make sure that the level of quality education we are providing at our school in Haiti can be sustained and improved. I also ask that you spread the word of what we are doing at LCM to your family, friends, business patrons, church members, etc. The more people we have involved, the less we have to rely so heavily on existing supporters.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and will share the news of everything we are doing to make a positive, lasting impact in Haiti.

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Giving Our Very Best by Craig Hardesty

An update on the mission's education program progress

It has been a while since I have updated everyone on the progress of the mission school. In light of the new changes with our higher education program, I thought it was time for an update.

Imagine that it is 2007. The LCM school was a small building with 7 classrooms and a courtyard. There was one preschool class and 6 over-crowded classrooms housing first through ninth grades. The students attended school for only a few hours a day. The school had no electricity or running water. There were no official records for any of the children, and most of the teachers were marginally qualified at best. Once students completed the ninth grade, they were pretty much on their own. That was all we could do for them at the time.

Now fast-forward to 2015. Our school building is now one of the largest and most attractive buildings in the town of Montrouis. We have over 25 classrooms, several with computers and internet capabilities. We have three levels of preschool and appropriately sized classes of students attending a full 8-hour school day for every grade up through grade thirteen. We have qualified and appropriately trained teachers in both the primary and secondary grades. We have upgraded restroom facilities, running water, and intensive after-school programs in English and computer skills for our second-



Our computer classroom.

ary students. All of our students have record files, including birth certificates. The Institute Educatif d'Excellence de Montrouis (our mission school) is now one of the largest single employers of Haitians in the area and, every school day of the year, is educating and feeding nearly 600 students. In short, what a difference 8 years has made!

Two years ago, as we were anticipating the first high school graduates ever from our school, we felt compelled to start investigating ways to help our students after they finished the public school curriculum. We decided to partner with an existing group located in Port-au-Prince called Haitian Connection Network (HCN). Their director, Kristen Hertzog, along with their Haitian coordinator, Lubin Charles-Fils, agreed to relocate

their entire program to Montrouis. They would be housed at our mission school and would become a higher education resource to both our graduating students and others in the community in need of higher education opportunities.

Earlier this year, Kristen left HCN to answer a call to pursue a new mission opportunity in Africa, and the entire HCN operation was finally absorbed into LCM. We are delighted that Mr. Charles-Fils has agreed to stay on as an LCM employee to administer the higher education program.

Starting this Fall, the HCN wing of LCM will be helping at least 15 students to achieve college degrees. There will be 5 students in last year's HCN program staying on to complete, five graduating LCM seniors

who will be starting their degree programs, and at least 5 additional students coming from within the community to work on a degree. Our program will be partnering state-side with University of the People, a low-cost, fully accredited online university based in Washington, DC. The students will be initially working on associate of arts degrees in either business administration or computer science. Our facilities will provide them with the necessary computers, internet access, facilitators, mentors, and scholarships to successfully complete the AA degree in 2 years. And as more and more of our LCM students graduate, we are anticipating significant growth in this program as well as partnerships with other higher education institutions moving forward.

The enthusiasm about our school and what we are accomplishing in Haiti is everywhere. Our school has gained so much respect in the community that the Haitian government has even chosen it as a designated testing location for its national exams in our region. For all the Haitians associated with our school, including our employees, parents, students, and community neighbors, it is a source of huge pride and a powerful presence of hope and optimism. Here is what our director, Lubin, says:

I am a Haitian national who is currently the Administrator of Education for LCM. I am so enthusiastic to work for this organization that has been doing an amazing job in Haiti and which is dedicated to bringing hope and opportunities to Montrouis. I collaborate with the LCM Board of Directors in planning, directing, and coordinating all aspects of education for the

mission and am directly responsible for the management of the HCN online higher education program.

My experience with HCN over the years has allowed me to witness how the demand for degree-awarding higher education programs in Haiti is consistently strong and substantial. Thanks to your generous donations, we provide a mini-computer lab equipped with reliable internet connection and other basic materials for young brilliant Haitians who want to pursue higher education online. Twelve of our students have just recently graduated with an associates degree in business administration. It is my goal that we could recruit twenty new students by the end of this year and give them all the support to pursue higher education.

As an extension of the ongoing LCM education projects, I created a Community English Class (CEC) in Montrouis where we mix online technology with the presence of local teachers to provide English language skills to young people wanting to learn English. Meanwhile, we provide basic computer and English classes to the LCM high school students in order to help them prepare for more higher education opportunities.

I am persuaded that emerging information and communication technologies, the worldwide presence of internet, and the rapid growth of distance education can and should be used to enhance the education system in Haiti and extend the capacity of higher education to a greater number of Haitians. This project has been working out very well, and I am optimistic about the future. I believe with your continued generous donations we will make a difference.

He is very correct. None of this would have been possible and will not be possible in the future without your prayers and financial support. Let's face it: the better you want to make something, the more it costs. It would be far cheaper to hire unqualified teachers, keep the school open for only short windows during the day, not offer meals to our students, and not enter into a higher education partnership. But why shouldn't we strive to be the best? Why should we accept a standard of anything less than what we would want for our own children?

It now costs us over 3 times what it did 8 years ago per child because we now offer so much more at such an improved quality. But it's worth every penny! Not only are we giving our students a top-notch primary and secondary education with the possibility of working toward a college degree, we are also providing desperately needed employment to our teachers and staff.

We fully understand that so many of you are already giving all you can, and we thank you immensely. But if you can afford to increase your sponsorship payment to \$40 per month or possibly sponsor another child (or perhaps a new college student), please consider it. And, most importantly, help us spread the word about the work we are doing. The more people we get involved in our sponsorship program, the more it relieves the burden on those of us who already contribute.

Thank you for all that you do! I look forward to giving you another update on our mission school and higher education program very soon.



Haiti *Pearl of the Antilles*

If you have been monitoring the news lately, you may have heard that French President Francois Hollande visited Haiti on Tuesday, May 12. This was only the second time a sitting French president has visited the island since Haiti gained their independence from France in 1804! Hollande was attempting to extend an olive branch to the Haitian people and possibly start a healing process in the relationship between the two nations that has been strained for over two centuries.

To recap, prior to 1804, Haiti (or Saint Domingue as it was known at the time) was a French colony. In fact, it was the most profitable of all the Caribbean colonies due to its high volume of sugar cane production. Back then it was known as “The Pearl of the Antilles” (hence the name of this column). In 1803, the African slaves in Haiti organized and launched a rebellion against the French colonists. It became the only successful slave rebellion in modern history and resulted in Haiti declaring independence on January 1, 1804.

In spite of the apparent victory by the Haitian slaves, France refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of Haiti

A Presidential Visit

as an independent nation. This caused many nations doing regular business with France to follow suit, including the United States. Finally, in 1825, France stated that it would officially recognize Haiti and start doing business with them if Haiti paid 150 million gold francs to France as compensation to French property and slave owners on the island for financial losses incurred by Haitian independence. Although this demand was eventually lowered to 90 million francs, Haiti spent the next 68 years slowly paying for their independence, finally making their last payment to the French government in 1893. This financial burden devastated the country economically during the 19th century. It is said that Haiti closed all of its schools just to make the initial payment.

In the late 20th century, the modern-day “impact” of these payments became more legend than fact. Although a huge portion of Haiti’s poverty has been a result of consistently corrupt leadership over the years (some estimates indicate that over 40% of Haiti’s current national debt was incurred under the Duvalier dictatorship), the money paid to France

was certainly a contributing factor and remains an easy target for blame.

The relationship between these two countries has remained so strained and deeply rooted in historical hatred that it was not until February 17, 2010, a month after the infamous earthquake, that Nicolas Sarkozy became the first French president to ever visit Haiti. Since that time, France has been one of the leading international donors to help rebuild. However, Hollande’s recent visit was not just a response to a tragedy. It appeared, at least on the surface, to be an honest attempt at trying fix the problems of the past. He acknowledged the mistakes France had made and pledged to help move the country forward, stating that “we can’t change history, but we can change the future.” Hollande stopped short of pledging to pay “reparations” to Haiti as most of the general population has demanded for years—reparations that, by some estimates, would be around \$19 billion. However, he did promise that France would fund a large-scale program to modernize Haiti’s education system.

Haitian President Martelly’s response to Hollande’s visit was very telling of the lingering bad feelings between the two nations. “No negotiation, no compensation can repair the wounds of history that still mark us today,” he said. However, he was more than happy to accept whatever assistance France may be willing to offer, stating “Haiti has not forgotten, but Haiti is not stubborn.”

We can only hope that France makes good on its promises for education reform and that it partners with organizations like Life Connection who are already on the ground in Haiti, working hard to offer high-quality education to the Haitian people.

Mission Board Meets



(L-R) Front row: Peggy Lucien, Christie Anne Short. Back row: Sebatien Lucien, Sandy Blake, Leon Martin, Dale Moyers, Jean Lucien, Kathleen Hardesty. Not pictured: Bonnie Huott, Robert Tobin.

This April, the mission board of directors gathered in Germantown, Maryland, to plan for the upcoming school year and discuss other mission goals and priorities. It was similar to a family gathering. Our board members enjoyed being together again (some having traveled hundreds of miles to attend), praying together, and sharing their passion for our ongoing work in Montrouis, Haiti.

The board was very impressed with the progress made in 2014 in all

areas of our mission—education, Christian ministry, medical assistance, community outreach, and job training/placement. They are all excited about the ongoing efforts to enhance and refine the new HCN program. They are also thankful for the outstanding leadership and dedication of our staff and volunteers in Haiti. We have an amazing team!

We hope you will join us in prayer for our leaders and our mission as we continue to grow and better serve our friends in Haiti.

Send a Child to Summer Camp!

Our first annual summer camp, held last year, was a blast! Now you have the opportunity to make this awesome program happen again!

Summer Camp offers vacation Bible school, games, learning, and other activities throughout the summer. Tutoring is available for students who have fallen behind or have special needs.

Summer camp also extends the school feeding program during the summer months while the kids are out of school. This ensures that our students continue to receive one vital meal a day.

The cost is only \$60 per child for the entire summer. What a great value our students would receive for a relatively small price! Please consider helping to make this program a reality and blessing all of our school children again this summer.



Sponsorship Fee Snapshot

Why has the mission raised the sponsorship fee? The answer is simple: because our costs have risen greatly. **Our current expense for one student to attend the mission school is \$47.42 per month.** If you can, please opt in to help us provide the best education possible!

Mission Updates

From Pastor Moleus, school director:

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to the progress of the church, school, and community. Your support helps enhance our spiritual, intellectual, and social living.

This year, 20 people have already accepted Jesus Christ as their savior and Lord through Biblical teaching at the school and the church. With all of your support, many children have received a good education. We have sent some pictures of the kids celebrating the feast of Haiti Flag Day during our event on May 18. They wear blue and red shirts in conformity with the flag color.

Currently, we are working on several projects for the school that could greatly use your support:

- Implementing a school library
- Renovating the kitchen
- Further renovating the toilets
- Purchasing a school bus to facilitate travel for both the students and church members

From Rebecca Cange, clinic nurse:

I have to congratulate all the donors on the way they help the community of Montrouis through Life Connection Mission. A lot has been done here at the clinic. We receive people from all around the area and give them the best care possible with the little we have. All of this is possible thanks to your donations through the mission.

The operations become bigger every day. More and more people are coming to the clinic, and sometimes we

are not able to serve all of them at one time. Your support is meaningful. With the little you can give we can do great. Alone, we might not be able to bring any change to the health issues of the people in the area, but together the outcome can be unfathomable.

Far away, you can't really see what is happening when you donate until you see the outcome of it. I am out of words to express all the great changes that have been done through your donations.

Though we still have a lot to get done, you have been doing great. I am praying that God will bless you abundantly so that you can do even greater than what would be expected. Thank you all so much for your support.



Students at the mission school celebrate Haiti's Flag Day on May 18.

Furniture Fund

As we continue improving our mission school with the goal of becoming the area's premier institution, we have established a new fund to help purchase:

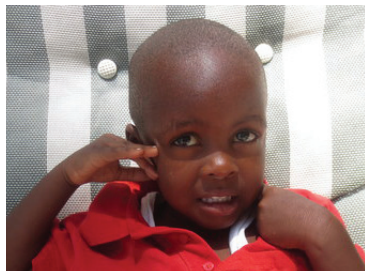
- Improved desks for our computer labs
- New furniture for the school director's office/main reception area
- Shelving for our school library

Please consider contributing to this important effort by noting "Furniture Fund" on your donation.

"... by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" - Acts 20:35

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Sponsorship Corner



Benaitch Godson Paltel, Preschool



Franceline Jean, Preschool



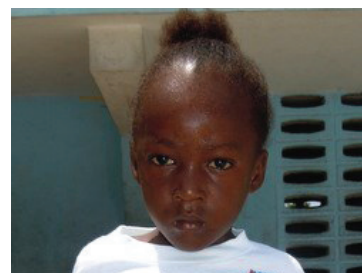
Peter Snipson Garcon, Preschool



Clichy Jean Baptist, Preschool



Oliver Thelismond, Preschool



Woodmaer Henry, Preschool



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Sponsorship Form

Date		Sponsor's Name	
Address	City	State	Zip
Home Phone	Cell Phone	Email Address	

Child Selection

Child's Name (if known)*: _____

Please Choose: ☐ _____ Boy(s) ☐ _____ Girl(s) ☐ No Preference

Please Choose: ☐ Age Range _____ ☐ No Preference

* For a list of unsponsored children, please visit
www.lifeconnectionmission.org

The sponsorship cost of \$40 per month is used to pay for the tuition, books, and uniforms for one child to go to school. The child is also given lunch each school day and medical care if required. Sponsors will receive at least one picture a year along with information about the child's progress.

Rewards Points Can Be Truly Rewarding

by Megan Silk

This past January I began nursing school. I had applied to school at the last minute after a summer trip to Haiti with Life Connection Mission. After spending a week in the clinic, I knew that God was calling me to change my career path and become a nurse.

As great as it was to get accepted, I now had a few more bills than were originally planned for the year. Before school started, I sat down to take a look at my finances and see where I could pinch some much needed pennies. My donations to LCM for my sponsor child came up, and I had to decide if I could still financially keep her. Without hesitation, I knew I had to find a way to make those donations happen each month.

That same day I checked the mail and had an offer from my credit card company to upgrade my current card to a rewards point card. After looking into it I began to realize this was the answer to my prayers!

For every dollar spent, I would receive points that could be cashed in for a PayPal gift card. A few paid-off bills later and I quickly had my first gift card, which covered the next few month's sponsorship donations.

Now I'm not a credit card guru, but I have to say that it's worth taking a look into possible rewards programs through your own credit card companies in order to help pay for your sponsor child.

While I hated paying my tuition bills this past semester, I loved knowing that I was getting rewarded for my spending, which in turn rewarded my sponsor child. That's a win-win in my book!

"Not all of us can do great things, but we can all do small things with great love."

- Mother Teresa

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In Photos



Above: Father Ken Gill and mission president Dale Moyers say "cheers" for Haiti at our annual Happy Hour event in Potomac, Maryland, on May 27.

Below: Pastor Moleus celebrates Haiti's Flag Day with the school children on May 18.

