

The Organization of the Development of Haitians in Samán (ODHS)

What is the ODHS?

The Organization of the Development of Haitians in Samán (ODHS) is an organization that works to give order and opportunity to Haitians living in Samán, an impoverished neighborhood in Montellano, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. The ODHS began by the initiative of the Haitians living in Samán and has worked together with and continues to work together with groups of volunteers from different universities in the United States in order to complete projects that benefit the community of Samán.

History



2003 – Yliomon Joce Francisco, Assistant Coordinator of the Organization of Haitian Workers in Esperanza, Dominican Republic, came to Montellano, Puerto Plata, along with his family.

2005 – Peralta (Yliomon's more commonly known name) and his family came to live in Samán, a marginalized barrio in Montellano. Peralta saw that Samán had, "no call and no answer" - it lacked principles and a system to help the community with problems it faced. Peralta met a pastor of a church in Samán named Pastor Feliciano Martinez and he talked to him about an idea he had to organize the people of Samán to begin a governing organization in the community. He already had experience working with an organization that does that in Batey Libertad in Esperanza.

2005 – They began a women's group with 57 members. The women's group made candles to sell as a fundraiser for ODHS.

2006 – ODHS founded a Men's soccer team.

2006 – Peralta asked colleagues Batey Libertad in Esperanza if any of their university volunteers could help with the development of ODHS.



January 2007 – The Batey Libertad Coalition sent a volunteer that was working with an HIV prevention program called Futbol Para la Vida (Soccer for Life – www.futbolparalavida.org). Zak Kaufman, a student of Dartmouth College at the time and a Tucker Fellow, came and spent 3 months in Samán. He met and planned with

ODHS. Zak and his girlfriend Elise Braunschweig returned to the United States with candles and paintings made by Samán artisans to sell as a fundraiser.

January 2007 – Zak introduced Peralta and other members of ODHS to Caitlin McHale, director of Project Esperanza, an organization that at this time was just beginning to work with Haitian children in the streets of Puerto Plata, along with Haitian schools in Puerto Plata. ODHS presented Project Esperanza (www.EsperanzaMeansHope.org) with their plan to meet the needs of the children of Samán. Both organizations agreed to work together in the future. Peralta's son, Freddy Jean-Piet (more commonly known as Fefe) came and lived at the Project Esperanza house voluntarily in order to help when the organization first started accepting boys from the streets.



2007 – The Futbol Para la Vida project provided HIV prevention education to nearly 300 youth in Montellano and Puerto Plata, led by trained coaches from the Samán Football Club.

2007 – Zak and Elise sent the money they had raised selling candles at Dartmouth. ODHS used the money to buy 45 ceramic water filters from AguaPur, which ODHS distributed to 45 different families in Samán.

2007 – ODHS formed a men's group in order to work toward developing the community. At first, they didn't have a meeting place so they met in Pastor Feliciano's church.

2007 – The men's group began to rent a house as a meeting place. The members put their money together in order to pay \$1,300 pesos (\$37 USD) monthly. When they were unable to continue paying this rent, they met in or in front of Peralta's house. As community groups lacked a meeting space, ODHS prioritized the construction of a community center where meetings could take place – a space that could be used for gatherings.

2007 – An organization at Dartmouth College's Tucker Foundation donated 30,000 pesos (about \$900 USD) toward this project. Zak and Elise used this money to purchase paintings made by Haitian artists in Samán under the agreement that the art would be resold in the US and the proceeds would support the community center's construction. They held two Haitian Art Shows at Dartmouth, supported by the Tucker Foundation. These events served not only to raise funds but also to educate the Dartmouth community about Samán and the challenges facing Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. The events raised about \$5,000 USD profit which was used to purchase two pieces of land and the materials needed for the construction of the community center and a small park.



December 2007 – Zak returned along with Elise and another Dartmouth student, Chris Han, in order to prepare the new building to house a group of volunteers that were planning on coming in March 2008.



March 2008 – Using funds raised by the Dartmouth events, University of Vermont bought a piece of land for 30,000 pesos (about \$900 USD) in Samán. Supported by the Tucker Foundation, a group of 13 volunteers from Dartmouth College spent 10 days living in Samán and worked with community members to build the community center and a little park on the two pieces of land.

June 2008 – A group of volunteers from Virginia Tech with Project Esperanza came and spent 45 days in the community center of Samán. 33 volunteers came in two week intervals. They did activities with the kids of Samán, ran two clinics in the community center, and donated jerseys for the soccer team, along with mattresses for the community center. They also worked in other communities in Puerto Plata.

September 2008 – Pastor Feliciano founded a school for the Haitian children of Samán in his church. They began without any money to pay the teachers. A few volunteers and visitors in neighboring communities donated materials. Pastor Feliciano is the director as well as one of the teachers. Three other teachers work along with him to educate 45 students. Pastor Feliciano asked the ODHS for help with the school. Peralta suggested that they make the school a part of the ODHS, which Pastor Feliciano agreed to.

January 2009 – A group of 18 volunteers from the University of Vermont came and stayed in the community center. They bought a piece of land for 57,000 pesos in order to use it for gardening. ODHS separated the land into seven plots. They designated six of the plots for six different families to use for gardening for one year. The families using these plots will rotate annually. The seventh plot is for the University of Vermont to use for gardening when they come. The group also donated school materials and a wheelbarrow to ODHS.



February 2009 – Peralta returned to talk with Caitin McHale, director of Project Esperanza, about ODHS and its activities. He came along with Pastor Feliciano and his son Fefe. They agreed that the two organizations had developed to the point where Project Esperanza can now provide more support for the ODHS. Anyone wishing to

support ODHS can now make a tax-deductible donation to Project Esperanza, a registered non-profit in both the United States and the Dominican Republic. ODHS and Project Esperanza plan to make ODHS function as envisioned and then go to other Haitian communities in Puerto Plata to help them to create a development organization and governing body as well.



March 2009 – A second group from Dartmouth came and stayed in the Samán community center. They worked together with members of the ODHS in order to construct a basketball court on a plot of land donated to the organization by the government.

March 2010 – The third annual Dartmouth group came and funded and oversaw the construction of the internet center with an apartment for intern and volunteer rent above the center. Community members worked hard mostly voluntarily to complete this project.

Leadership

General Direction

Coordinator: Yliomon Joce Francisco (Peralta)

Vice-Coordinator: Ramon Remy Rosa

Secretary: Wilfred Pierre (Tipa)

Vice-Secretary: Eldin Prevalus

Treasurer: Rosimene Demostene

Delegate: Simon Bauvrin

Delegate: Freddy Jean-Piet (Fefe)

First Counselor: Paste Feliciano Martinez

Second Counselor: Tito Confident

Discipline Member: Thomas Fritzner



Organization E-mail: odhs2009@yahoo.es

****Until now, all leadership positions have been voluntary. Perhaps certain positions will become paid positions when funding is generated.****

Committees

1. Base Committee – serves as a mediator between the general direction and the population of the community.
2. Health Committee – responsible for the cleanliness of the neighborhood and also to work together with doctors that come to do consultations. The Health Committee would like to have someone always present to provide First Aid. Health Horizons International (www.healthhorizonsinternational.org) is currently training two representatives from Samán to serve as community health workers.

Programs

Meetings: The general direction meets every Wednesday in the community center. There is also a meeting for the general population of Samán along with the general direction every 15 days.

Counseling for Delinquents: When there are people fighting, men abusing their wives, or any sort of interfamilial problem, the general direction of ODHS counsels people involved in such problems. They meet with delinquents, give them advice as to how they should live, and serve as an authority and counselor. The formation that ODHS gives avoids or significantly lowers the need for police intervention in Samán.

Soccer Team: When the soccer team has the necessary equipment such as soccer balls and cleats, they practice three times a week and compete weekly as the opportunity for games is available.



Samán School: The school began in Pastor Feliciano's church in September 2008. There are now four teachers and 45 students. Teachers made sacrifices in order to begin the school without any pay! School runs Monday through Friday, 8:00 am until noon.

Samán Children's Home: ODHS plans to open a children's home for children living without family in Samán. They will open with six children from five to eight years old. The kids will go to the school in Samán in the mornings, they will have someone present in the home at all times, they will eat three times a day, and will grow up in a Christian household where they put the lessons they learn in the Bible into practice in their own lives.

Internet Center: An Internet Center will serve as a supporting business for the ODHS and will simultaneously give the Samán community the opportunity to use the Internet close to home. ODHS has built a small building on the same land as the headquarters and is waiting to receive donated computers in order to begin the Internet Center.



Possible profit

Customers per day (1 hr. each)	Daily Gross Profit (20 pesos/hr.)	Monthly Gross Profit	Monthly Gross Profit (USD)
15	15x20= 300	300x30= 9,000	\$257.14
20	20x20= 400	400x30= 12,000	\$342.86
25	25x20= 500	500x30= 15,000	\$428.57



Housing aid: ODHS notices members of the Samán community that have problems paying their monthly rent, that rent small rooms to house their entire families, as well as families in need of house repairs without the means to repair them. ODHS plans to begin a housing aid program to provide aid to families in such situations.

Flood control: Samán is bordered by a river that floods frequently in times of heavy rainfall, destroying property in the homes in the community. Virginia Tech engineers are in the process of researching and implementing a solution to this problem.

Program to send students to the university: Batey Libertad in Esperanza, Dominican Republic has a program in which United States residents are paired with Batey Libertad students in order to send them to the university. Many students graduate high school but

don't have the ability to continue on to the university level. If these students can advance to the university, they will prepare for a profession and will aid more in the development of their community, as well as other communities where they arrive. ODHS would like to run a similar program in Samán to allow Samán students to advance to the university. Below is a budget for a student studying at a university in Santiago. If a pairing program is not set up, perhaps a few scholarship funds could be started where students are invited to apply each year.

Here you see an example of a budget for a 21-year-old girl from Samán that has completed one year in the university of UTESA in Santiago studying medicine. She needs financial aid in order to be able to finish the rest of her three years.

Expense	RD	USD
Monthly Tuition	2,500	\$71.50
Monthly Apartment Rent	2,000	\$57.00
Electricity	500	\$14.25
Monthly Total	5,000	\$142.75
Annual Total (9 months)	45,000	\$1,284.75

Donate

If you would like to make a donation to ODHS, you can send a check made out to Project Esperanza. Be sure to put "ODHS" in the memo.

Project Esperanza
1291 Valley Mill Rd.
Winchester, VA 22602

www.EsperanzaMeansHope.org

Questions can be sent to CaitlinMcHale@EsperanzaMeansHope.org. This document was last updated April 23, 2010.