

Haiti Outreach Newsletter

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Success on La Gonave - We Hit Water!

Five boreholes were dug in the community of Deux Baleins Nord on the island of La Gonave, without reaching water. But on the sixth attempt water was struck!

A spontaneous, joyful celebration erupted in this community of approximately 100 homes and 500 people. Up until now the community has used rain water catchment or has traveled four hours one way to the nearest spring to obtain water. Even then, the salinity of the spring is close to that of sea water.

This new well will not only serve Deux Baleins Nord, but two other isolated communities where people travel even longer distances to obtain water.

The island of La Gonave is one of the driest parts of Haiti. The average person lives on less than two gallons of water per day for all of their needs; drinking, cooking, bathing and laundry. Haiti Outreach decided 18 months ago to initiate this water project. It included the organizing of communities following our model of community development where the community takes responsibility for maintaining the well after it is created. A preliminary geophysical study was also necessary to estimate the location that most likely would produce water.

While we are very excited to find water in this desolate location, we also found out that the cost for drilling a well on this island is going to be much higher than on the mainland – essentially double – around \$10,000 each.

There are two main reasons for the additional cost. First, the depth of the drilling was not the typical 180 feet, but about 270 feet. Second, the ground consists almost entirely of porous rock. Typically, water is used with the rotary well drilling rig to lubricate the drill bit and bring displaced materials to the surface. Yet in porous rock, this water just seeps away through the hard rock. Therefore the drill needed to be converted to an air hammer rig and expensive foam was needed with the water, to lubricate the drill. We are grateful for the efforts of Bob Thein



The community of Deux Baleins Nord watches as a well is drilled using foam with the converted rotary air hammer rig.



Families of Deux Baleins Nord spontaneously celebrated the successful well drilling with music and dance.

Paul Lendobeja who joined our Country Director Neil Van Dine in March to convert the rotary rig.

While the cost to drill on La Gonave is expensive compared to other wells dug on mainland Haiti, it is not nearly the cost of drilling a well through rock in the States. Haiti Outreach Executive Director Dale Snyder stated, “We will just have to raise more money per well in order to bring clean water to the people of La Gonave. The important thing is that we have now demonstrated that finding water will be possible in some areas.”

Haiti Outreach is looking into the possibility of doing more extensive geophysical studies to ensure a higher frequency in finding potable sub-surface water on the island. With the financial support of our donors, we hope that our success at Deux Baleins Nord is just the beginning of bringing clean and available water to tens of thousands of people on La Gonave.

Haiti Outreach - IIT Holds Major Event February 2

The student chapter of Haiti Outreach at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago held a celebration dinner February 2nd to share information about their role in development projects in Haiti. The theme for the evening was “Learn To Make A Difference In Haiti”. Over 250 people attended this event, including people connected with IIT, Engineers Without Borders, Rotary International, the American Society of Engineers, the Water Environment Federation, Haiti Outreach and the Haitian community of Chicago. It was held at IIT’s Hermann Union Building and included Haitian hors d’oeuvres and dinner, with a Haitian band performing after the program.

The event, planned entirely by the Engineers Without Borders and Haiti Outreach student chapters of IIT raised over \$14,000 to support Haiti Outreach/IIT’s projects.

IIT Event continued on back



IIT students who organized the Chicago event with others who spoke at the Haiti Outreach-IIT celebration.

IIT Event continued from front page

With IIT's Vice President of External Affairs David Baker as Master of Ceremonies, the program included speeches by Professor Krishna Pagilla, Haiti Outreach's Country Director Neil Van Dine and Executive Director Dale Snyder, the Haitian Consul for Chicago Lesly Condé, Rotary International's Director-Elect Tom Thorfinnson, and many IIT students who have been working on projects. Illinois State Senator Kwame Raoul, who is of Haitian ancestry, delivered the keynote address, and Haitian poet Marie Mica Dory shared some of her original poetry with the guests as well.

The highlight of the evening was when the IIT students spoke and showed pictures of the work they had been doing. Students showed their designs of the addition to the secondary school in Pignon, the water systems in the towns of Pignon and La Victoire, and an electrification project of the Pignon secondary school. This work will be incorporated into the potential Haiti Outreach projects, which IIT's student chapter is not only helping to design but for which they will also be raising funds.

Haiti Outreach is very excited about the progress of this partnership with IIT and looks forward to increasing our work together, along with the people of Haiti. A special thanks goes out to the many IIT students, faculty and administration who made this event a great success, including David Baker, Krishna Pagilla, Alex Miot, Chairman and Founder of the Haiti Outreach IIT Student Chapter and Mark Rokita, its current President.



Members of Rotary District #5960 presented a \$28,200 check to Haiti Outreach for well drilling and community development work. L. to R. current District Governor Clare Lillis, past District Governor Lee Finholm, Haiti Outreach Executive Director Dale Snyder, past District Governor Dianne Nesvig, Haiti Outreach Board Member John Getsch, and Rotary Club President and future District Governor Craig

Leiser. We are very grateful for their donation and partnership.

Mark You Calendar for Upcoming Haiti Outreach Events

**Tuesday, April 29th – Twin Cities Free Spring
Informational Luncheon and Fundraiser**

**Friday, May 2nd – Fundraiser at Ruttger's Resort,
Deerwood, MN**

**Saturday, September 27th – Twin Cities Annual
Fall Fundraiser**

My Experience in Haiti by Charlie Penn (Age 15)

I was able to go down to Haiti in December 2007 along with Haiti Outreach. First of all, I had a great time. We had a little trouble getting down there on schedule due to airlines who (it seemed) did not know what they were doing. Once we got there though, it was well worth the wait. One of my favorite parts was riding around in the back of the pickup trucks. There are usually animals walking down Highway 3, a gravel road that winds through many Haitian towns including Pignon. Every now and then we would see a stray donkey hauling its load to who-knows-where.

While we primarily went down to build a house, we experienced many other aspects of Pignon and the Haitian culture. Building the house was very fun. Even when we were working we got to know many of the Haitians, as they worked on the house just as much as we did, probably more. The lodging is very comfortable, so if you're contemplating whether or not to go because you're scared that you'll get a tarantula under your bed, just go...I think the worst thing we had was a gecko. Oh, and those killer mosquitoes, but you don't have to worry about them. There's plenty of good food at La Juene, so don't worry about that either.

I thought this trip was really fun. I am glad that we went down in the winter, so that we could escape from the Minnesota arctic chill. I would recommend going in the winter also, the weather was excellent. Temperatures reached the mid- to upper-80s in the middle of the day, and dropped to the upper 50s and low-60s during the night (great sleeping weather!). To go to this third-world country for a week really adjusts your mindset as to what people really need. It gives you a good idea of how things work in a completely different world – not so far away from ours.