

Haiti Outreach Newsletter

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Well Drilling on the Island of La Gonave

La Gonave is one of the driest parts of Haiti, yet there are about 100,000 people who live there. Water is so scarce that the average person lives on less than 2 gallons per day for **everything** – bathing, cooking, drinking, and laundry. People travel hours to gather water from a water hole or small stream that is typically contaminated. They will load up their donkey with as many plastic water jugs as they own and spend a day going to and from the water source often several times a week.

The country of Haiti is shaped like a claw and the large island of La Gonave sits in the center of this “claw”. While there are many organizations that have talked about drilling wells and helping provide clean water to residents of La Gonave, Haiti Outreach decided to take the initiative. A 3 phase project is planned with the goal to provide people of this island with clean, accessible water.

Phase One was to do a geophysical study of the island. Data indicated that it was likely that subterranean water could be found. This initial phase also included purchasing another well drilling rig. Then, one of our animators (community coordinators) would be sent to organize ten communities using our community development model, to take responsibility for the wells to be drilled. Phase One has now been completed.

Phase Two is a pilot project in which wells are drilled in the ten identified communities. The hope is that clean water will be found. Knowing that this is a fairly dry island, this will not be an easy task. Even with our geophysical study, no technology exists that is able to guarantee subterranean water, especially within reasonable proximity to where the people live.

If Phase Two is successful, then Phase Three will use this data and experience to proceed with drilling wells

Pignon Public School Addition Progresses

It won't be long before students are able to occupy classrooms in the new addition to Lycee Nationale, the public secondary school in Pignon. The school addition has been under construction since the ground-breaking in late March and will have 7 new rooms when completed, including a library and computer lab.

The decision was made to build the school addition in such a way that a second story could be added when additional classrooms would be needed. A stronger type of construction now would save both money and time in the future. However, because of the need to make it structurally sound for future expansion, it has taken more time than was originally estimated to complete. The cost has also been higher than projected due to the decision to add the library and computer lab. In the long term these decisions will all pay off, but in the short term it has lengthened the building process.

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Families on the island of La Gonave ride their donkeys, loaded with plastic water jugs, over rugged terrain for miles twice a week to get enough water to survive.

throughout the island. This could take a number of years to complete and hundreds of thousands of dollars. However, if successful, it would result in saving the lives of children who cannot fight off the diseases that result from drinking contaminated water. This would also free-up people to use the time and energy of obtaining water, for growing more crops, working on income producing projects, and allowing their children the time to attend school.

We are raising money now for Phase Two of this project. At a minimum, it takes \$5000 to cover the cost of drilling one well, and that doesn't guarantee water will be found, for often the holes turn out to be dry. Your generous contribution to help us provide clean water on the island of La Gonave could make a big difference in the lives of many people who live there. Please consider donating. Thank you!



School addition for the public secondary school in Pignon is nearing completion.

“We are learning a lot from this experience and will apply this knowledge when participating in future public building projects,” said Executive Director Dale Snyder. Neighboring towns have already contacted Haiti Outreach and are eager to have a public secondary school built in their communities for there are few in the Central Plateau area of Haiti.

Another possibility for an educational facility includes working jointly with the communities of Pignon, La Victoire, and Ranquitte to build a regional public post-secondary technical school. There, students would learn important trade skills such as carpentry, masonry, mechanics, plumbing, electricity, and welding. “With our experience in Pignon, we should be able to help communities more accurately estimate and efficiently build these other schools,” said Snyder.

10th Birthday Celebration a Big Success

With festive ribbons and colorful balloons, luscious birthday cake and a rousing “Happy Birthday”, over 150 people celebrated the 10th year that Haiti Outreach has sponsored community development in Haiti. The Fall Fundraiser, chaired by Judy Nelson, was held on Saturday evening, September 15th at the Marriott Minneapolis Southwest Hotel.

The evening began with a silent auction of Haitian crafts and a variety of appetizers served while Greg Lewis and his band played. Following dinner, long-time Haiti Outreach supporter Karen Larson spoke about what Haiti Outreach meant to her. Country Director Neil Van Dine and Haitian Deputy Hidson Nelson then spoke. Deputy Nelson is the congressman representing the district that includes the town of Pignon, where Haiti Outreach is based. Through Van Dine’s translation, he thanked Haiti Outreach for the work it has done in that community and throughout Haiti, bringing clean water to over 90,000 people and helping build two community public schools.

The program finished with a live auction. A new addition this year, the “Golden Ticket”, provided a lot of excitement and anticipation. Only 100 Golden Tickets were sold at \$50 a piece and the winner of this raffle could select any of the eleven live auction items. The lucky “Golden Ticket” winner was Geoff Dodd of Deephaven, MN. He selected the one week condo stay in Costa Rica, generously donated by Jessie Montfleury and Charlie Hanf. Other live auction items included a condo stay in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, a choice of resorts in North America and Hawaii and a week long cabin vacation on a lake in northern Minnesota.

The live auction ended with guests pledging donations for wells to be drilled on the island of La Gonave. Including donations from people who could not attend that night, we raised over \$74,000 for our community development work in Haiti.

We thank all our supporters who attended the event. Additionally we want to thank the group of volunteers and people who generously donated to various aspects of the event including the invitations, wine, decorations, cakes, and the auction items. All these pieces contributed to making this both a very fun and successful event. A special thanks goes also to Judy Nelson, who chaired this year’s fall fundraiser.

At right, Country Director Neil Van Dine and Haitian Deputy Hidson Nelson speak at Haiti Outreach’s annual fundraiser.



August travelers to Haiti, along with Country Director Neil Van Dine (at right), are shown in front of the 73 school desks they built during the week they were there.

Trips to Haiti Scheduled for Early 2008

Two trips to Haiti with Haiti Outreach have been planned in early 2008. The first is scheduled for February 14th – 22nd. The second trip will be on or around March 21st – 29th. Space is currently available for both of these trips. The all-inclusive cost is around \$1400, but can vary depending on the price of airline tickets.

Haiti Outreach trips include viewing our community development projects, visiting the town of Pignon to meet the people and experience the culture of Haiti, and working on a small project. The work projects for these trips may be working with community members to build a house for a needy family and/or painting the building and classrooms of the new public school addition in Pignon. If you are interested in joining us on one of these trips, or a future trip, email us at info@haitioutreach.org or call us at 612-929-1122. An application form and \$400 deposit is required to hold a place for a trip.

New Employee for Haiti Outreach USA

As Haiti Outreach has grown, the need to have more than just volunteer support for our Executive Director, Dale Snyder, has become necessary. We are very pleased to announce that Pam Murray has been hired as Executive Assistant to Dale. Pam will be responsible for a variety of tasks, including our bookkeeping, trip and volunteer coordination, ordering parts for our operation in Haiti, and special projects. Pam has been an account executive for MCI for 10 years and is the mom of a 14 year old daughter. Pam’s work will allow Dale to increase his fundraising efforts which will subsequently increase our ability to finance more community development work in Haiti. Welcome Pam!



