



Haitian Project News

The Louverture Cleary Schools Network, Transforming Haiti through Education

Volume 32 · April 2020 · Issue 3

Joyous Easter to The Haitian Project Community! "He is not here; he has risen..." Luke 24:6

Wè Jodi-a, Men Sonje Denmen (See Today, but Think About Tomorrow)

by Colby Bowker (THP Vice President)

Like so many during this challenging time, The Haitian Project (THP) has been busy adapting to the new and evolving realities imposed by COVID-19.

THP's US staff has been working remotely since March 16th. Meanwhile in Haiti, Louverture Cleary School (LCS) had been following the guidelines provided by the Haitian Ministry of Health for schools and taking steps to promote the safety of students and the LCS community.

Then, on March 20th, Haiti's government abruptly ordered all schools in the country to shut down as part of a state of emergency declaration in response to the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Haiti. THP takes pride in working with and through local institutions rather than around them, but the order

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Formed by Faith and Commitment to Others

by Tommy Cody
(THP Volunteer '13-'14)

For religious orders and organizations, the word "charism" can be defined as the spiritual identity of a community that delineates not *what* they do, but *why* and *how* they do it (Sr. Annie Klapheke, SC). The Haitian Project's charism revolves around the idea that work done first and foremost for the benefit of others is both internally and externally transformative.

Being Volunteer alumnae, THP's in-country missionaries Rachel Thelen and Amanda Haluga know and live this charism every day. In addition to teaching classes at LCS Santo 5, they work daily to strengthen the charism and culture at the school for students, fellow staff, and the



Amanda Haluga (second from left) and Rachel Thelen (third from right) sit with students from the 2020 LCS Philo (US 12th grade + 1) class.

entire community.

For Amanda, THP's director of Charism and Missionary Program, it is a blessing to serve as campus minister at LCS. Her role is to participate fully in the community, facilitate spiritual and liturgical aspects of life at LCS, and ensure that students and staff understand and

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THP Highlights

Strengthening a 20-Year Bond: LCS Santo 5's "sister school," Bishop Ireton High School in Arlington, Virginia, has been supporting The Haitian Project since 2001. Their most significant (and fun!) fundraiser for THP is their annual Winter Ball, where students donate what they would have spent on dresses and flowers and opt for a more casual dance instead. THP President Reese Grondin and Vice President Colby Bowker recently visited Bishop Ireton High School to thank them for nearly 20 years of support, update them on happenings at THP and LCS, and learn about their plans to become even more involved with THP going forward.

GOAL! LCS continued its commitment to women's empowerment this year by organizing its first female soccer tournament. Four teams of students participated in the tournament, coached by their fellow classmates. The girls spent months training for the event and now their hard work has paid off! The school cheered as the "Legacy Ladies" captured the winning title with a 3-0 victory over the "Dream Team." This event allowed the players to gain experience playing real matches before taking on outside teams. The players are already looking forward to more competitions, as well as another tournament next year.

Celebrating a Quarter Century of Service: This past December, THP and LCS community members were honored to attend a Mass marking the 25th anniversary of the Scalabrini Seminary in Haiti. The Scalabrini Missionaries, who have worked closely with LCS for decades, have received several LCS graduates as seminarians. During the ceremony, seminarian Waly Romain (LCS '17) presented a photo of the Scalabrinian order's founder to celebrant Archbishop Silvano Tomasi. Also in attendance was LCS alumnus Fr. Carl Jean (LCS '02). The following day, LCS hosted Archbishop Tomasi and other visiting Scalabrinians for a tour of the campus.

The LCS Network

A Seat at the Table

by Jimi Grondin, THP Director of New School Construction

Over the past 30 years, Louverture Cleary School has held 24 graduation ceremonies—that is 712 graduates who all have a seat at the table of Haiti's future. Judging by the success of LCS grads, it is clear that Haiti needs even more of them to move the country forward and ensure that Haiti's brighter future is built by and for Haitians themselves.

This is the impetus behind building The Louverture Cleary Schools Network: a national system of 10 schools, each with 360 seats for students to fill every year. That will mean 600 graduates annually who will go on to become leaders in the work that lies ahead for Haiti.

In order to execute The LCS Network, the Site Evaluation and Advisory Team (SEAT) was created under the direction of Fondation Haitian Project (THP's partner foundation in Haiti) to begin the process of planning and building nine more schools in Haiti.

A few SEAT members are long-time THP community members. THP President Emeritus Deacon Patrick Moynihan is the original visionary and the one who has gathered us together. Patrick Brun, who serves on THP's board and is the chair of Fondation Haitian Project, is a private sector leader in Haiti with decades of experience in the construction industry. Scott Hill is an architect who designed many of the extant buildings on

the LCS Santo 5 campus and has recently designed the Model Campus for the Network. Mickey Ingles is a solar energy and water system specialist who designed the solar power systems at LCS Santo 5.

Others on the team are relative newcomers, all experts in their fields. Dr. Michael Moynihan, former vice president of research and development at 22nd

Century Group, has decades of experience with biotechnology, agriculture and agroforestry. Matt Hantzmon is a 20-year veteran of the renewable energy industry who has founded or co-founded seven technology companies. Finally, THP board member Collin Davis court is a project manager at BELFOR, one of the largest property restoration companies in the world.

My own time with THP began in 2001 as a Volunteer at LCS Santo 5. As of January 2020, I have taken on the role of director of New School Construction. I'm excited to bring my experience both in Haiti and in construction and facilities management to work full-time for THP. And, I'm honored to coordinate such a talented and motivated group of individuals as we undertake



From left: Fr. Jean Marcel shows Jimi Grondin and Patrick Brun a potential school site in Les Cayes.

the Network plan.

To date, SEAT members have visited potential school sites in Anse-à-Veau, Cap-Haïtien, Hinche, Les Cayes, and the Artibonite Plateau to evaluate factors like local infrastructure, agriculture, topography, and economic opportunities. Our goal is to have a school in each of the ten dioceses of Haiti. To that end, we continue to make connections with the Bishops and other local stakeholders so that we may be welcomed into their communities.

As one might imagine, building the Network is a big undertaking and requires support in Haiti and the US. It will take a community to make this vision a reality, so come take a seat at our table and join in the work to build The LCS Network!

Wè Jodi-a

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to close schools was nevertheless tough to receive. The stability, community and promise for a better future that LCS represents to its students was evident in the school's *Philo* class (US 12th grade + 1), most of whom had tears in their eyes as they left campus.

As THP President Emeritus Deacon Patrick Moynihan recently said, "The concept of social distancing in Haiti is practically impossible given the housing density and need to go to the market daily for food. Most people barely get by on daily provisions. Social distancing is not only completely impractical, it is a sad reminder of how Haiti has been 'distanced'—

marginalized—throughout so much of its history."

In the face of these new challenges for Haiti, LCS is continuing to provide water to the neighborhood and is evaluating other ways to be of direct assistance under these conditions.

Most importantly, THP is committed to making sure that paychecks to Louverture Cleary School's teachers and staff will continue. In Haiti and in the US, The Haitian Project's team members have served through very thick and very thin—economic downturns, earthquakes, government failures, cholera outbreaks, and political unrest. THP's top priority is making sure they have the financial resources available to manage this situation and to support their

families and their communities as much as possible.

Whenever schools re-open in Haiti, it is THP's mission to make sure that LCS will be there for its students and to continue to develop the human capital that Haiti needs to better manage natural and manmade disasters in the future.

As ever, it is THP's community of supporters, like its team, that has been there for the Project's mission—through very thick, and very thin. "Everyone at The Haitian Project is sensitive to the disruptions and hardships ripping through our communities and our world right now," says THP President Reese Grondin. "We are hoping and praying that those who can still give at this time, will. We will put it to excellent use."

LCS Student View

Beethovens St. Louis, Katryem Student (US 9th Grade)

My name is Beethovens St. Louis and I am in *Katryem* (US 9th grade) at Louverture Cleary School. I live with my mom, my uncle, and my grandmother. I used to live in the city, and now I live near the school.

When I heard for the first time about a school whose name was LCS, I was not about to go because I was nervous about staying the whole week away from my family. But, in the end, I agreed to go and week after week it became easier to stay. Now, I love the school. I see that it was a good decision because LCS is not like other schools. I am not lying, for it is the best in Haiti.

My favorite thing is the level of education at LCS. I love the way it helps

me to learn. I like the English and Spanish languages, because when I leave the school, they will help me in my life. I also like to be able to talk with people from other countries and practicing languages allows me to do that.

At LCS we have all the things we need; our community becomes our family. I like living together with all of my friends at LCS.

I don't have a special thing that I am involved in at school except the sports we play. I like how the girls play at a higher level now because it proves that the girls are equal to the boys. My favorite class is French because it is easy for me.

I hope one day to see Haiti be like the US, and I hope there will be a change in



LCS Katryem (US 9th grade) student Beethovens St. Louis.

Haiti. I hope it's the Louverturians that become the leaders in Haiti. I am inspired by the expression "don't stop until you are proud," because I see a lot of people give up, but it is important to continue trying until you succeed.

LCS Alum View

Clovesky Pierre (LCS '17)

by Djim Guerrier (LCS '14, Head of the Dulcich Center for Career Advancement)

Louverture Cleary School's philosophy "What we receive for free, we must give for free" (Matthew 10:8) is lived out every day by LCS students and alumni. Clovesky Pierre (LCS '17) is no exception.

Looking back on his time at LCS, Clovesky most fondly remembers the services students provided to the community. Besides LCS's ordinary activities, he was involved in the school's debate club. Today, Clovesky keeps returning to LCS with the spirit of sharing what he has received, despite his busy schedule in university, to communicate his experience with the new students.

After graduation, Clovesky struggled to find his path. First, he went to law school, but did not pursue that direction because he believed deeply that he could make more of an impact if he followed his heart to the political sphere. "I thought of the best way for me to serve,

"Human dignity is the reason I work. I want Haiti to be a place where everyone can live without being troubled by if they are going to have food for dinner or when their children will go to school."

—Clovesky Pierre (LCS '17)

and found it is by getting into politics where decisions for the people are made," he shared.

Clovesky transferred to a political science and international relations program at Université Quisqueya, where he studies today on a scholarship from The Haitian Project. Meanwhile, he has hosted several debates in his community on matters concerning society and human rights.

Clovesky's goal for Haiti is to unite every citizen to work together toward improving all aspects of the country. To do so, he plans to learn and acquire more skills in order to transform himself into "being a great leader." He summarizes the difference he hopes to make in this way: "Human dignity is the reason I work. I want Haiti to be a place where



Clovesky Pierre (LCS '17)

everyone can live without being troubled by if they are going to have food for dinner or when their children will go to school."

Clovesky recognizes that LCS represents the place that made him who he is today, a man with a vision, which he draws from one of the school's murals: "We are ready to rebuild Haiti, and you?"

Decades of Dedication

by Angela Mascena (THP Director of Institutional Advancement)

Long-time readers of *Haitian Project News* will likely recognize the name “J. Richard Ratcliffe” from being printed for nearly twelve years straight, between 1991 and 2003. A board member and stalwart advocate, Richard was instrumental in helping to stabilize and strengthen the Project during its early years.

Richard grew up in Cumberland, Rhode Island, and lives there with his family today. He attended Providence College as an undergraduate and then studied law at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Since then, he has been practicing as a criminal defense lawyer and in general business litigation.

Richard learned about The Haitian Project as a parishioner at THP’s founding parish in Providence, Rhode Island. What compelled him to get involved years ago is largely what keeps him supporting the mission today. “I believe in the philosophy. Education is the key to a better life. Not only does it give you the ability to earn a living, but you will have a better understanding of the world around you and be a better citizen.”

THP’s mission of education resonated particularly with Richard because of his

own family history. “My father just drove down to Providence College one day and signed up, then went on to dental school,” he said. “Education was the way to the middle class.”

At Richard’s first opportunity to visit LCS, he brought along his father. With the help of the local military, they set up a free dental clinic for the day. Richard recalls that even without social media, word spread and there was a long line of people waiting to be seen.

Reflecting on his experience at LCS, Richard said, “I was shown around campus by a US Volunteer and was impressed by his Kreyòl. I remember that the children were very energetic and wanted to learn.” He continued, “The school was smaller then, but it was clean and there was always enough food.”

Richard also recalls the rather intense nature of being a board member in THP’s first decade. “There was not a lot of financial security back then,” he said. “It was very hand-to-mouth.” There was always an undeniable urgency to the mission, and the importance of instilling “strong family, faith, and education” prevailed.

After serving tirelessly for nearly



Margaret and Richard Ratcliffe (center) with their sons.

twelve years, Richard retired from the board in 2003. THP promptly named him an Honorary Trustee in recognition of his commitment, hard work and advocacy.

Since then, Richard has remained involved with the Project in various ways. In addition to his regular financial support, he helps THP file its Annual Report with the state of Rhode Island each year. THP President Reese Grondin affirmed, “We are fortunate and grateful for Richard’s involvement and his historical knowledge of the Project. His staunch support of THP’s mission continues to be reflected in his immediate and enthusiastic response to our requests for his help and expertise.”

Richard was also a lead giver to THP’s endowed university scholarship for LCS alumni studying law in Haiti. “Having people trained in law who can fight for the rights of citizens is a good way to cause social change,” he explained. “It’s also important to have lawyers who are not just from the bourgeoisie. You have to have lawyers who can empathize with the poor.”

Nowadays, Richard looks back fondly on his decades with THP. “Being involved with The Haitian Project has made my life fuller in a lot of ways,” he reflected. “I think it’s good to branch out and get a better understanding of the world and how other people live. It’s given me a broader perspective.”

Did you know there are many ways to support The Haitian Project?

- **Donate online** at HaitianProject.org where it is easy (and very helpful) to set up a recurring donation
- Give the **Gift of Education** in honor or in memory of a loved one
- Make a legacy contribution through **Planned Giving**
- Participate in your employer’s **Corporate Matching Gifts Program** (THP can help you check if your company has a Matching Gifts Program)
- Give the gift of **Stock or Mutual Funds**
- Shop and give through **AmazonSmile**
- **Donations can also be mailed** to The Haitian Project

Visit www.haitianproject.org/donate for more information on these various options, or contact us at 401-351-3624 or by email at development@haitianproject.org to learn how your tax-deductible donation can provide talented young men and women at Louverture Cleary School with a top notch, tuition-free, secondary education steeped in service and civic-mindedness!

Putting Faith in Action

by Abigail Knapp (THP Volunteer '18-'19)

After living as missionary teachers at LCS, Volunteers pursue careers and vocations in a variety of fields. After leaving LCS, Elizabeth (Guertin) Mason (THP Volunteer '03-'05) chose a path which eventually led her to being a wife and mother of five children while working as an outpatient mental health therapist.

As a Volunteer, Elizabeth taught religion to *Senkyem*, *Katryem*, and *Twasyem* (US 8th, 9th, and 10th grades) and was involved with the school's extracurricular activities such as art club, rosary group, and the Celebrate Women program. In particular, she remembers the enthusiasm and joy the students brought to their work and activities. One of Elizabeth's favorite memories happened while reviewing classroom material with her religion class. To make the review more exciting, she created a game with dice...and the students loved it! The classroom was filled with joyful shouting and laughter as they reviewed for their test, and the students begged to play it during future review classes.

Elizabeth decided to return to teach for

a second year. She recalls, "I had never been a part of something like this before where you could so deeply live the gospel in an authentic way. I felt committed to the school because it was an incredible place of faith in action, and I wanted to see the growth in my students for another year."

Working in Haiti deepened Elizabeth's desire to help others. She moved to New York to pursue a graduate degree in social work at NYU and was able to use her Kreyòl to help students and parents from Haiti. She also continued to serve THP as a board member, helping with Volunteer interviews and development. Her husband, Greg, volunteered in Haiti with the Missionaries of Charity and shares a love for missionary work and Haiti.

Elizabeth notes, "If you are ready to



Greg and Elizabeth Mason (THP Volunteer '03-'05) with their children.

give of yourself and deepen your faith, your connection with God, and with others, then volunteering in Haiti is just an unbelievable experience of putting faith into action."

Formed by Faith

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embrace the charism.

Amanda leads morning prayer in the LCS Chapel and organizes Masses at LCS. Additionally, she facilitates the religious formation of students through catechesis, retreats, and preparation for the sacraments. She recently led a retreat for the *Rhêto* and *Philo* (US 12th grade and 12th grade + 1) classes. "I found it moving to dive into the charism statement with these students—who have been steeped in LCS culture for almost six and seven years, respectively—and see them recognize and feel validated in who we are as a community, and who they are becoming and preparing to be when they leave LCS,"

she reflected.

Rachel, who serves as the dean of students at LCS, strives to live the LCS mission in all aspects of daily life and to see the fruit of the charism in action every day. "I see it in simple ways like how the students organize themselves each morning for the daily Gospel reading and flag-raising without any promptings from a staff member. I see it in the students' involvement in our outreach programs like the *Koukouy* Early Childhood Development Center and *Ekol Ankourajman* tutoring program," she said. "Personally, I try to foster LCS culture through all my interactions with students, helping them to grow in their development and understanding of how to be a Louverturian," she continued.

For both Rachel and Amanda, the

LCS culture and charism not only provide the strength to live their daily lives for others, but provide hope for the future of Haiti. As they point out, it is more important now than ever that members of the LCS community hold these values because they will impact more than LCS Santo 5—they will permeate The Louverture Cleary Schools Network throughout Haiti.

"The culture, values, and traditions we foster now will be the foundation for the spiritual identity of the next nine Louverture Cleary Schools in Haiti. It is not only the education that LCS alumni have but the culture in which they are formed that will lead to the transformation of Haiti," Amanda concluded.

On a Mission

by Julie Arza and Linda Crowley

Julie Arza and Linda Crowley, parishioners of St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Crystal Lake, Illinois, a long-time supporting parish of The Haitian Project, reflect on their mission trip to Louverture Cleary School in November 2019.

Julie Arza

I used to work for an international adoption agency, and I was extremely blessed to be able to help children find their forever families. I left my position when I became a mother of twins, but I have often wondered what I could do to help more children. I began attending events to help THP and started talking to my friends at church who had gone to Haiti.

Fast forward to November 18—a week before Thanksgiving. Linda and I were off to Haiti! We were a bit nervous about just the two of us going and all the unrest that Haiti was experiencing, but we put our fears in God's hands.

The first thing I noticed when I arrived in Haiti was the beauty of the mountains. Upon entering LCS, I was amazed at how clean it was, how happy the students looked, and how hard everyone was working.

I very much enjoyed attending several classes. I was surprised when Mr. Djim Guerrier asked me to explain the New York Stock Exchange to his Economics class. One of my biggest joys was helping students practice their English. The kids answered any questions we asked, and they asked us many interesting questions in return.

One young man, Claudius, asked me if I would return to Haiti. He said, "I hope when you return that you will bring your husband and children with you." I told Claudius that I look forward to returning to Haiti, and I would love to bring my family with me!

Linda Crowley

At the very first meeting for this mis-



Front: Daelle Edmond; Back, from left: Marly Morland, Amanda Haluga, Julie Arza, Linda Crowley, and Rachel Thelen.

sion, I knew Julie and I were called to go.

When we first stepped off our plane in Haiti, it was quiet and calm. On the ride from the airport to the school, I was in awe at the number of locals who had shops.

We stayed in the community house across the road from campus. Our day started at 5:30 am with breakfast followed by prayer, then classes at 7:00 am. The classes ranged from religion to math, computers and economics with Mr. Djim Guerrier, which I enjoyed the most.

We visited the *Koukouy* Early Childhood Development Program. I am a retired preschool teacher, so of course this was my favorite! As we watched, the children sang "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" in Kreyòl. Marly Morland, their teacher, wrote the Kreyòl words for me in my journal.

All the children ate in the cafeteria. They have a water system in the center of campus, and to my surprise, each child washed their own dishes. After classes we would help in the office and with dinner, relax, and then turn in.

I think I was impressed most by the students' work ethic, discipline, and their desire to learn. The older children could speak four languages and the younger ones practiced their English enthusiastically.

What I will never forget is the positivity, the ability to coexist with each other, and the determination of each and every person involved in The Haitian Project. Such a work of love!

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Mission Statement

The Haitian Project through its support of Louverture Cleary Schools, a national network of tuition-free, Catholic, co-educational secondary boarding schools in Haiti, provides for the education of academically-talented and motivated students from Haitian families who cannot afford the cost of their children's education in order to maximize their potential and enable them to work toward building a Haiti where justice and peace thrive.

To donate, visit

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HPN printed by Minuteman Press



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