



# Haitian Project News

The Louverture Cleary Schools Network, Transforming Haiti through Education

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## Careful Planning, Continued Success

### LCS Preparing for the Start of the 2020-2021 School Year

by Amanda Haluga (THP Director of  
Charism and Missionary Program)

September is usually the month when the doors of Louverture Cleary School (LCS) open for a new academic year, but 2020 continues to bring about a departure from the usual. While many schools in Haiti are making up classes now to complete the last school year, LCS is preparing to move forward despite a year of challenges, having already satisfied the 2019-2020 school year requirements and distributed diplomas to LCS's 25<sup>th</sup> graduating class.

In the fall of 2019, the school weathered *peyi lòk* (country lockdown), when civil unrest hindered business and education and prevented many schools from operating. During that time, LCS

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## Beginning of a New Era

### LCS's Newly-finished Radia Laboratory of Science and Technology Complete

by Jimi Grondin (THP Director of New  
School Construction)

Louverture Cleary School's newly-finished Radia Laboratory of Science and Technology is complete and stands ready for the students' return as soon as LCS is able to re-open for the new school year.

Construction of the newest building on the LCS Santo 5 campus has seen many challenges, including *peyi lòk* (country lockdown), restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the formidable foundation of the old science lab.

The former lab was solidly built with the help of the US military in 1999, but as the student population grew, so did the need for more classrooms and an improved space for the science and IT curricula. The concept for the new building was drawn by architect Scott Hill, a longtime THP



Facilities Manager Odson François in the computer lab of the Radia Laboratory of Science and Technology.

community member in Rockford, IL. The final plans were produced by Architecture + Plus with input from the structural engineers at Sogetra, both firms based in Port

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## THP Highlights

**Winning Match:** For the first time in almost two decades, The Madeleine Parish Garage Sale in Portland, OR was canceled this summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, the sale has raised over \$20,000 annually to support THP. In response to the cancellation, a group of Madeleine parishioners led by Steve Holmes and Dave Albertine organized a matching gift challenge that doubled the first \$2,500 of donations made to The Haitian Project. The parish itself generously gave \$1,000 towards the effort. Together, they raised nearly \$8,000! Thank you, Madeleine Parish community!

**Celebrating an Outstanding Achievement:** Like graduating seniors all over the world this year, the LCS Class of 2020 celebrated graduation a little differently. Although the school was not able to have a formal ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic, graduates received their diplomas in a smaller, socially-distanced ceremony in July that marked both the end of their Louverture Cleary education and a challenging school year. Time and time again, LCS alumni have proven that education is the surest path toward a brighter future; we look forward to seeing the accomplishments of this graduating class!

**Above and Beyond Kindness:** THP received a heart-warming donation in August from children attending Bible camp at St. Augustine's in Providence, RI. After discussing how there are children in the world who don't have access to education and other basic necessities, many of the camp attendees (aged 3 to 10 years) went home and sold lemonade that day to raise funds to donate with their own money to support THP. Then St. Augustine Ass't Pastor Rev. Jean Brice was amazed at their "above and beyond" kindness, asking that we pray for these generous children as we keep our own LCS students in our prayers.

## Celebrating Another LCS National Laureate!

Continuing its tradition of excellence, Louverture Cleary School recently learned that rising LCS *Sekond* (US 11<sup>th</sup> grade) student Marquez Michel placed first in the whole nation on the 2019 *Katryem* (US 9<sup>th</sup> grade) state exam! This exam is required to pass from the fundamental to the secondary level of the Haitian school curriculum.

Because of the disruption to education in Haiti from civil unrest last fall which was then followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, these exam results were not officially announced through the usual public ceremony. Nevertheless, we take this opportunity to celebrate our student's achievement and LCS's place among the top schools in Haiti!



Rising LCS *Sekond* student (US 11<sup>th</sup> grade) Marquez Michel placed first in Haiti on the 2019 *Katryem* (US 9<sup>th</sup> grade) exam.

## Careful Planning

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was able to stay in session thanks to prudent leadership and the benefit of being a boarding school. Then, schools across the country were shuttered by order of the government when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Haiti in March 2020—this time including LCS.

Although school is not in session, The Haitian Project and LCS remain committed to its community and to being there for students when LCS can safely re-open. While social distancing is especially difficult in Haiti, the dedicated and mission-minded leadership have been working to support both the LCS community and our community partners in some very needed ways:

- LCS's academic leadership have maintained communication with families and students, providing what little remote education was possible, and lately supporting the students' preparation for their upcoming state exams required for *Katryèm* (US 9<sup>th</sup> grade) to advance to the secondary level, and for *Philo* (US 12<sup>th</sup> grade +1) to go on to university.
- LCS continues to pay its employees despite the shutdown in order to

ensure they are able to support themselves and their families.

- LCS's outreach leadership remains attuned to the school's neighborhood in Santo 5, including the families of children in the *Koukouy Sen Kle* (Fireflies of St. Clare) Early Childhood Development Program, by providing clean water and food along with distributing 2,400 reusable masks, with guidance on social distancing and hygienic practices.
- In light of reduced school operation, THP has been able to reallocate unused food budget funds to provide direct support to Famille Kizito Religious Community run by Sister Paësie, a longtime friend of LCS, and Le Bon Samaritain de Varreux Primary School, both in the extremely vulnerable Cité Soleil section of Port-au-Prince, in their continued efforts to provide food, medical care, and more for the



LCS Head of School Ernst Viel (left) presents a diploma to 2020 LCS Graduate Markencia Bragel'Homme.

children and families they serve. Now, as other schools in Haiti make up classes to finish last year, LCS is focused on evaluating how to safely reopen as one of the few boarding schools in Haiti. As planning for the start to the 2020-2021 school year continues, LCS is looking forward to welcoming Louverturians back to school when the appropriate time comes.

In the meantime, THP has been using this time of reduced activity on campus to make capital improvements and, most importantly, to push ahead with preparations for breaking ground on a second Louverture Cleary School.

## A Love of Medicine, a Life of Service

*Alumni Spotlight: Jhonny Fequiere, M.D. (LCS '00)*

*By THP Staff*

In good company with almost 25 percent of his fellow Louverture Cleary School graduates, alum Jhonny Fequiere, M.D. chose a career in medicine to pursue a life of service.

After graduating from LCS in June 2000, Dr. Fequiere earned a highly coveted spot at the School of Medicine at the State University of Haiti. "It was not easy," Dr. Fequiere recalls. "Medical school [in Haiti], like everywhere in the world, is tough. To succeed, you have to study day and night, and be smart, dedicated, and diligent."

After six years of study, his mandatory year of social service brought him to the Artibonite, a department in North-Central Haiti. He remained for several years, stepping forward as a leading medical professional during the 2010 cholera epidemic. In 2013, Dr. Fequiere expanded his studies in obstetrics and gynecology, eventually returning to Port-au-Prince in 2019 to open a private OB/GYN clinic while beginning a master's degree in public health.

Dr. Fequiere's desire to pursue a career in medicine began at LCS when

he and other students would translate for visiting medical teams as part of LCS's community service programs. (Louverturians are fluent in four languages—Kreyòl, French, English and Spanish.) "I was involved in all activities with those teams... This is where I started falling in love with medicine... This taught me that being a doctor would be a good choice for me to continue helping those in need."

Dr. Fequiere, like his fellow doctors in Haiti, has had a difficult time since the COVID-19 pandemic reached the country. "It is very difficult to continue taking care of people in different private and public healthcare facilities. The medical staff does not have adequate equipment to protect themselves from getting COVID-19. The Haitian government and medical staff are trying to do their best to contain this pandemic, but it's still difficult. The Haitian healthcare system has many problems and was not prepared for such a situation."

Haiti's healthcare system significantly lacks the capacity of other countries in the western hemisphere. Whereas the United States has 25 doctors per 10,000 people, Haiti only has 2.5.

"Haiti is one of the poorest countries



*Jhonny Fequiere, M.D. (LCS '00) chose a career in medicine to pursue a life of service.*

in the world, and the healthcare system receives just a fraction of the national budget," said Dr. Fequiere. "Hospitals are under-equipped. Hospital staffs are not well paid. People are not covered by insurance. According to those problems, this healthcare system needs to be changed. To have this result, the Haitian politicians need to sit together in order to have common objectives to get the country out of this situation."

Healthcare improvements will ultimately be supported by a stronger economy and stronger institutions. THP is proud of its graduates working towards both.

## Calling Workers to the Harvest... The LCS Missionary Program

**Ever felt called to missionary service? Know someone who would be a good fit for our community in Haiti? It may seem like an unusual time to consider a call to service in Haiti... or, it may be the perfect time!**

Missionaries of all ages have brought stability in chaotic times, determination in challenging tasks, and joy in everyday living while embracing and leading the greater Louverture Cleary School community.

Email [program@haitianproject.org](mailto:program@haitianproject.org) to contact The Haitian Project for more information regarding the Missionary program. You can also find out more about being a Missionary at Louverture Cleary School and how to apply for the program at [www.haitianproject.org](http://www.haitianproject.org).

# Supporting Louverturians into the Future

## Donor Spotlight with Joseph and Lois Yoches

by Amanda Haluga (THP Director of Charism and Missionary Program)

When Peter Yoches chose to serve as a Volunteer teacher at Louverture Cleary School in 2004 after graduating from the University of Notre Dame, The Haitian Project gained more than a Volunteer. It gained an entire family.

Like Peter, his parents Joe and Lois Yoches believed in the transformative power of education. When they visited LCS at the end of their son's second Volunteer year, they could see that education, and LCS in particular, was the clear answer to the challenges facing Haiti.

"We were there for a week leading up to graduation," Lois recalls. "We were so impressed with the students we saw and with the school itself serving the needs of these gifted kids who would otherwise not get to go to school, and that they stay in Haiti."

During their trip, the couple participated in LCS's environmental stewardship program, turning compost and cleaning the campus alongside students and staff members. Joe also accompanied THP staff to local sites and businesses,

meeting with private sector leader and head of THP's partner foundations in Haiti Patrick Brun at his Batimat hardware store. Meanwhile, Lois remained at the school to help then Director of Community Outreach and missionary Christina Moynihan distribute clothes and other necessities to the families in the Santo 5 neighborhood surrounding the school.

"It was a really good experience to go and see what they were doing then," Joe recounts, "and it's exciting now that THP is building more schools in Haiti [as part of the ten-school LCS Network]."

Joe and Lois have been dedicated supporters since 2004 and make THP's mission a priority in their philanthropic giving. In addition to their personal giving, Joe, who is now retired, regularly requests a matching gift from his former employer, effectively doubling their giving each year. Thanks to Joe and Lois' dedication to keeping THP in front of their colleagues and

community, this year the company doubled their matching gift to THP as part of their response to COVID-19.

In order to ensure that their legacy of support lives on through The LCS Network and the success of its students and graduates, Joe and Lois also chose to include THP in their



Avid travelers Joe and Lois Yoches at Giza in Cairo, Egypt.

planned giving through a bequest to the endowment for the Dulcich Center for Career Advancement, formerly known as the Office of External Affairs. This gift will provide for the perpetuation and expansion of LCS's university scholarship and job placement program as THP build more schools across Haiti.

"We felt that it was the right thing to do, knowing the schools were going to expand and grow," said Joe and Lois. "Education is what's going to help solve more and more problems."

"When the earthquake happened [in 2010], all these donations went to Haiti, but where did they go? In our travels to many different countries, we've learned that we're all the same, we're looking for the same things and have the same goals. LCS is a bright light in these issues in Haiti."

**Interested in learning more about how you can support The Haitian Project through matching gifts and planned giving?**

**Visit:** [www.haitianproject.org/donate](http://www.haitianproject.org/donate)

**Email:** [development@haitianproject.org](mailto:development@haitianproject.org)



Peter (THP '04-'06), Mary Kay (THP '05-'06), Micah and Clare Yoches at the Grand Canyon.

## Beginning of a New Era

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-au-Prince.

Demolition of the old lab began in July 2018. Once the crew began removing the old foundation, it became clear that its extraction would be impractical. The former lab had been built on top of a swimming pool that had been filled with cement to form a solid foundation—solid enough to survive the earthquake in 2010. Adjustments were made to the construction plans, and it was decided to leave the pool of cement in place; it now serves as the base for the courtyard in front of the Radia Lab.

Part of the vision for the Radia Lab was to reduce the amount of cement needed to make a strong structure. The lab is now the first building on campus to incorporate steel bar joists and decking for the second floor and the roof. The steel elements were supplied by the Haitian

company LCI and reduce the thickness of the concrete slabs needed to fabricate the floors and roof of the building.

Continuing THP's commitment to environmental stewardship, the Radia Lab is fully solar powered. The components to power the lab were put in by Energy Central, a Haitian solar installation company co-founded by LCS Alum Salomon Asmath (LCS '98). The system will provide sufficient electricity for the whole building, including two classrooms, the science lab, a teachers' lounge, and an air-conditioned computer lab with capacity for 30 students at a time.

The new building was made possible through the generous support of the Dell Family Charitable Fund along with other members of the US support community, and with the backing of THP's friends and partners in Haiti. Enthusiastically providing the lead gift for the building was the family of Maulik Radia, a strong supporter of science education at LCS and owner

and operator of the largest plastics infusion molding factory in the country. Several LCS graduates are pursuing their careers with Radia's firm.

The Radia Laboratory of Science and Technology exemplifies THP's commitment to subsidiarity, utilizing Haitian resources and expertise in order to support the local economy and community. According to Patrick Brun, head of THP's partner foundations in Haiti, the lab is a "maximum impact project." An undertaking such as this involves people and enterprise on all levels. Having overseen the Radia Lab from concept to completion, Patrick sees "the economic impact at every level; a whole spectrum of people—engineers, architects, workers in all the trades. Working together, they have created a substantial resource for the future."

## 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 at PO Box 6891, Providence, RI 02940

Visit [www.haitianproject.org/donate](http://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](mailto: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!

# The Road to Social Justice Must Also Run Through Haiti

by Colby Bowker, THP Vice President and Chief Communications Officer

The events of the spring and summer of 2020 have held up a mirror. At times, we saw the best of ourselves. But these events also made it crystal clear that for decades we have been failing in our responsibility to care for others at least as much as we care for ourselves. More succinctly, we have failed to see others as ourselves.

If there is a silver lining to the pain and suffering felt by so many this year, it may be a new lens that allows more people to apprehend the unconscionable injustices that burden so many. And, God willing, that we maintain the resolve to correct them.

As an institution operating in two countries, the first and second republics in this hemisphere, The Haitian Project experiences and understands the events of this year through two histories. While there is much work to be done here in the US, it is important to appreciate that this work extends beyond our shores, and to Haiti in particular.

Too often, it is overlooked that Haiti is the birthplace of our entire hemisphere. It is where everything we now know as “America,” for better and for worse, first began in 1492. It was also the first nation to throw off the shackles of slavery, doing so a full 60 years before the United States.

An auspicious beginning, however, does not guarantee a bright future. European powers as well as the newly-minted United States of America quickly took steps to marginalize Haiti.

A new nation freed and led by those formerly enslaved was a threat to the US, whose economic success relied heavily on the oppression and exploitation of Black people. In the years following Haiti’s independence, President Thomas Jefferson embargoed the country. The US would not go on to officially recognize Haiti until the matter was taken up by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862.

Similarly, France did not recognize the country until 1825, and only after Haiti agreed to pay 150 million francs, the equivalent of \$21 billion today. (Haiti’s current GDP is only \$8 billion.) French warships in Port-au-Prince harbor served as an uncomfortable reminder of Haiti’s new chains.

Two centuries later, the state of the

largest majority Black country in our hemisphere is disturbingly analogous to the state of Black lives in the US, where the net worth of a white family is nearly 10 times the net worth of a Black family. The average GDP per capita of countries in the Western Hemisphere is just over \$29,000. This dwarfs Haiti’s GDP by a factor of 34, where millions of families struggle to get by on less than \$850 a year.

To ensure that racial injustice is being addressed not just at home but beyond our shores, there are several things that US Americans and the international community can do for Haiti. For starters, recognition: give Haiti credit for what it has accomplished and the leadership it showed in being first to abolish slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Secondly, opportunity: the US Government (and France, too) should see it as a moral imperative to spend the effort and resources needed to help bring Haiti in from the margins. The legacy of slavery in Haiti must similarly weigh on our collective consciousness as does our own history of the institution.

Fortunately, the US has a capable and committed leader on the ground in current US Ambassador Michele Sison, and Haitians are eager to build a just and prosperous country for themselves and their children. The Ambassador should be given the resources and leeway necessary to fulfill her most ambitious plans to be of service to the Haitian Government, so that the Haitian Government can in turn be of service to its people.

Finally, for all foreign charitable organizations working in the country (and the donors who fund them), education must be *the* priority. Haiti needs upstream solutions, not saviorism.

It is illustrative to consider that enslaved people, not out of compassion or humanity but as valued assets, were given housing, as deplorable as it was, and access to food and in some cases even medical care, but not education.

There is no path to social justice that does not eventually travel through Haiti. And, God willing, we have the resolve to walk it.

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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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