



## Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Winter 2017

### “Operation Hummingbird” to Regenerate Land and Reinvent Community Food Systems



According to legend, when the forest became engulfed by flames all the animals fled to the river in fear. But the hummingbird kept filling its tiny beak with water and returned over and over to put drops on the fire. “*What are you doing?*”, mocked the other animals. “*I am doing my part*” replied the determined bird!

With similar determination and support from Rich in Mercy and a generous US benefactor, **Lamothe Lormier** has begun **Operasyon Kolibri** (Operation Hummingbird), to inspire a “hummingbird revolution” – a popular movement – in which each one is “*doing my part*” to

enhance food sovereignty by reinventing community food systems while restoring the social and natural ecology of rural Haiti.

The Operation Hummingbird Center will showcase bio-intensive gardening, composting – including worm-composting – agro-forestry, regenerative farming, and waste recycling (including plastics). Currently under construction is an eco-friendly guest house to accommodate visitors, volunteers, students, and researchers. The guest house is scheduled to be completed in January 2018 and will generate income to help support the outreach work of the center.



### Tree Planting Advances Hurricane Recovery by Increasing Food Access in Ducis Village



In October 2016 hurricane Matthew ravaged the southern interior of Haiti. Rich in Mercy (RiM) targeted recovery assistance in the village of Ducis where more than a dozen houses of single mothers, widows, and other vulnerable persons were identified for repair or reconstruction based on the extent of damage and degree of need. This first phase of recovery assistance was completed last summer.

With the generous support of an anonymous donation received via the **IHM Sisters** (Monroe, MI), Rich in Mercy (RiM) has launched a second phase of recovery assistance aimed at restoring food producing trees. More than 500 coconut palms, which provide food for local consumption and generate income through the sale of coconuts to other parts of the region and country, were distributed in early November. A newly constructed tree nursery will provide more than 2000 citrus and cherry seedlings for distribution in

January and at least another 2000 food-bearing tree seedlings for distribution on May 1, 2018 – a traditional school holiday in Haiti celebrated by children and adults planting trees at the beginning of the (rainy) growing season.

### Sisters of St. Antoine Launch Primary Care Medical Clinic to Serve Neighbors in Trouin

When the Sisters of St. Antoine of Fondwa established a formation house for novice sisters in the remote mountain village of Trouin, primary health care, gynecological services, and maternal child care services in the region were non-existent. Medical emergencies forced people to travel two hours or more by unreliable public transportation to Leogane or Port au Prince. To provide a range of primary care services, the Sisters sent their Sr. Dieula to study nursing and, with support from Rich in Mercy and the **Humility of Mary Sisters** (Villa Maria, PA), they launched the **Marie Carmel Voltaire Health Center** which was inaugurated at the beginning of November. Generous support from **Mother of Sorrows Outreach** (Murrysville, PA) made possible the purchase of supplies for the new clinic.



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## **Solar Electric Installations Provide Dependable, Affordable, and Renewable Energy**

The electricity sector in Haiti is among the most challenged in the region. Only about one quarter of the population has access to electricity. Diesel generators provide an expensive and costly-to-operate, alternative source of electricity. Stand-alone, solar electric systems can provide reliable and affordable electric energy.



Rich in Mercy (RIM) infrastructure grants have financed small, solar electric systems at the (Spiritan) parish of **St. Anne, Bokozel** (shown left) and **Our Lady of Perpetual Help** parish in St. Marc. A similar RIM grant to the **Foundation Enfant Jesus** (FEJ) provided the “match” FEJ needed to secure a larger grant from the



German embassy for the installation of a stand-alone solar electric system (shown right) that provides electricity to the vocational school at the FEJ campus in Lamardelle.

## **University Scholarships Provide Opportunities to Young Adults for Higher Education**



Education is the necessary foundation for positive change in Haiti. Rich in Mercy (RIM) provides support for pre-school education through its “Skip a Lunch, Save a Child” fund and offers more than 100 elementary and secondary school scholarships, based on merit and need, through its “Education for Change” fund. Currently several young adults are pursuing university degrees with RIM scholarship support. **Lordson Angervil** (shown left) is in his third term as an education major at **Quisqueya University** in Port au Prince.

Two additional university scholarships at the **University of Fondwa** were made possible through the gift of an anonymous donor. **Bossejour Bouloune** (26), from the rural community of Trouin, is studying agronomy and hopes to become a community leader in sustainable agriculture. **Jeff Josephs** (27) is a business management student who aspires to creating jobs in his rural community through commerce and entrepreneurship.

## **Infrastructure and Education Projects Extend Solidarity to Togo and Tanzania in AFRICA!**

Haitians have deep roots in Africa and new opportunities to promote “global solidarity” have given rise to RIM collaborations in Togo (West Africa) and Tanzania (East Africa). At the initiative of RIM supporter **Prof. Kimberly Baker** (St. Meinrad Seminary) and the coordination of **Fr. Odilon Kofi** (Society of African Missionaries), the village of Datcha in Togo has a new well that provides an abundance of clean water and has reduced the distance women and children must walk to access water from more than a mile to less than a kilometer! **Fr. Odilon** blessed the new well during a joyful inauguration in October 2017. Women and men expressed their joy and gratitude through singing and dancing in a ceremony that lasted more than 3 hours!



RIM general support for the **Olkokola Vocational Training Center** (OVTC) in northern Tanzania, helps foster its mission to provide those with physical disabilities the livelihood skills they need to grow from dependency to interdependency in all aspects of life. Students receive hands-on training in useful trades (including agro-vet, masonry, carpentry, and tailoring) that can be practiced in their own villages to earn incomes and lead a more meaningful life.

At the school students live in community sharing responsibilities for daily living. They receive medical, orthopedic and mobility evaluations, treatment and surgery (if needed), and necessary orthopedic equipment. Upon completion of the 18 month vocational training they are gifted with the tools needed to practice their trades! RIM Africa projects coordinator, **Dr. Anne Marie Hansen**, visits Olkokola periodically to participate in occupational therapy training for staff and to provide annual reports to the RIM board of directors.