



## Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Spring 2018

### Hurricane Recovery in Ducis Advances With Push to Plant Thousands of Fruit Trees



Hurricane Matthew ravaged Haiti's southern peninsula in October 2016 and many communities are still struggling to recover from the damage to houses, crops and trees caused by sustained 145 mph winds and heavy rains. **Rich in Mercy** rebuilt and repaired more than a dozen houses of widows and single mothers in Ducis, working in collaboration with **Rev. Patrick Eugene, CSSp** and the local church.

A second phase of recovery, intended to restore long-term food security, began last fall with the construction of a "pepinye" or tree nursery. More than 500 coconut palms, which were distributed in November, are thriving throughout the area. These will begin producing high-value fruit in 3-5 years, contributing both to food security and economic recovery.



Currently under production are several thousand mango, citron (citrus), and cerise (cherry) seedlings. These are set for distribution at the end of April, in time for the start of Haiti's "rainy season" and for the traditional "tree planting" school holiday on May 1. Construction of at least two additional tree nurseries is planned for 2018 to increased production of seedlings and broaden the distribution area.

### RIM Scholarship Enables Young Woman to Realize Life-long Dream to Study Medicine

With the support of a generous friend of **Rich in Mercy** and long-time supporter of education in Haiti, the **Rich in Mercy Institute** has established a woman's, merit-based scholarship at the faculty of medicine at the **Université Notre Dame d'Haïti (UNDH)**, a Catholic university established by the Haitian bishops' conference in 1995.



A year-long search for a suitable candidate resulted in awarding the scholarship to 20 year old **Dieunica Moneus**. The oldest of two brothers and one sister, Dieunica is the first member of her extended family to attend university. As a child she developed a strong hunger for education, a desire to "help people" and to contribute positively to her mountain community of Kenscoff. She dreamed of becoming a doctor and hopes eventually to become a cardiologist.

Her father, **Matelot Moneus**, is employed at UNDH as a groundskeeper. But, even with her father's employment, the family struggled and sacrificed to cover even her secondary school expenses. Additional sacrifices made it possible for her to complete one semester of medical school, but she faced the grim prospect of having to drop out because of the financial burden of university tuition. The Rich in Mercy scholarship covers full tuition for her at the Port au Prince UNDH campus and removes a major obstacle to realizing her life-long dream!

**Rich in Mercy** is currently providing university scholarships to three additional Haitian youth. **Lordson Angervil**, 23, is studying education at Quisqueya University in Port au Prince. **Bouloune Bossejour**, 26, and **Jeff Josephs**, 27, are studying agronomy and business management respectively at the University of Fondwa located in a rural section of Leogane.

RICH IN MERCY is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit corporation with tax ID #.47-1591567

All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

The official registration and financial information of Partners in Progress may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## *St. Vincent College Students on Spring Break Open a “Window on Our Worlds” in Haiti*



Five students from **St. Vincent College** (Latrobe, PA), accompanied by service learning coordinator **Jessica Parsons** and RIM executive director Dr. Rich Gosser, spent their “spring break” on a service / immersion trip to Haiti that took them from Cap Haitian in the north to Jacmel in the south while opening a “window” through which they could catch a glimpse not only of Haiti, but of what life is like in many similar parts of the world.

The St. Vincent students are enrolled in “**Haiti: Window on Our Worlds**”, a “service learning” course offered by Gosser through the college’s history department. It combines academic learning and critical reflection with service in Haiti. Students identify critical global issues affecting Haiti and deepen their understanding of the connections between the US and countries like Haiti. The experience encourages students to grow in self-awareness and contribute to building a global “culture of solidarity” and engaged citizenship at **St. Vincent College**.



## *Expanded Vocational School Offers Women (and Men) New Opportunities in Plumbing*



Girls in rural Haiti often have only limited access to formal education. For cultural, financial, and practical reasons parents often give priority to the education of sons over daughters. Also, girls have fewer opportunities for vocational education that can equip them with practical skills through which they could support themselves.

To address this critical need in their village of Fondwa, the **Sisters of St. Antoine**, with support from **Rich in Mercy** and other donors, launched a “professional school” offering practical education in culinary arts and sewing along with basic business management strategies that can equip students to launch their own small businesses. The first class of students completed their studies and graduated in 2017.

While targeting mostly women, the sisters also welcome young men who want to learn to cook or sew. They also recognized that some vocations – like plumbing and electricity – that traditionally attract men, could open new and valuable opportunities to women to become self-supporting. In January – with a grant from **Rich in Mercy** provided by generous donors from Pittsburgh, PA – the sisters launched a new, two-year course in plumbing open to men but aimed at attracting women in this “non-traditional” field! As funds become available, a similar course in electricity is planned.



## *St. François de Sales Faith Community “Raises the Roof” on New Church Building*



Following the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that devastated Haiti in January 2010, a small group of neighbors in the Delmas 33 section of Port au Prince began assembling weekly in residents’ homes for prayer and mutual support. Over time this nucleus of a faith community grew into an independent parish community under the patronage of **St. François de Sales** and pastoral leadership of **Msgr. Pierre Andre-Pierre**, the current rector of the Université Notre Dame d’Haïti (UNDH).

The parish community began collecting funds to purchase land and build a permanent worship space. Construction began in 2015 as a series of successive “modules” and reached a point where the congregation could begin meeting last year in the new building that doubles as a neighborhood social service center. A grant from **Rich in Mercy** was used to help “raise the roof” on the new building and complete a priority element of the continuing construction.