



## Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Summer 2018

### Trainings Focus on Food Security Through Bio-Intensive Gardening Strategies



**Lamothe Lormier**, director of the “**Operation Hummingbird**” center, is committed to protecting the environment and increasing food security in Haiti by re-inventing rural community food systems through “bio-intensive gardening” strategies. **Rich in Mercy** is subsidizing a series of bio-intensive trainings in various locations across Haiti beginning with more than 25 participants in Pignon, located in the northern part of Haiti’s Central Plateau.

“Bio-intensive” describes a variety of methods for growing a lot of food in a small space reducing the amount of resources and hands-on labor required. It centers around nutrient-rich soil that can support growing crops closer together while reducing labor and the need for external inputs. The methods serve to heighten food security

especially for farmers working the small plots of land that are typical in Haiti.



Trainings include “hands on” learning through the construction of raised garden beds for plant cultivation, “worm bins”, where worms transform organic “waste material” into nutrient rich compost, and the use of “bio-char”, a form of charcoal that is especially useful as a soil amendment for tropical soils that can also be produced locally from organic “waste material”.

### Community Tree Planting Aims to Advance Hurricane Recovery and Avert Future Hunger



Residents of Ducis, both young and old, came together recently under the leadership of Ducis native **Fr. Patrick Eugene, C.S.Sp.** to plant more than 2000 food-bearing trees including varieties of citrus, cherry, mango, and coconut. This effort represents a second phase of recovery after hurricane Matthew destroyed houses and broke or uprooted hundreds of trees. In the first phase of recovery **Rich in Mercy** financed the rebuilding of houses for single mothers, widows, and other vulnerable persons after prioritizing reconstruction and repairs based on the extent of damage and degree of need. The second phase of recovery aims at

restoring an important sector of the local economy and at averting future hunger by replacing important local food sources.

It began with construction of a locally managed tree nursery and includes periodic distribution of various food producing trees. A second tree nursery is under construction in order to increase seedling production and expand the range of distribution while involving more community members. Local school children, some of whom receive educational scholarships through the **Rich in Mercy (RiM)** “Education for Change” fund, have learned about caring for seedlings and the value to the environment of planting trees. **RiM** provides financing for the tree-planting through an anonymous donation received via the community of the **Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) Sisters** in Monroe, MI.



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## *RIM Grant Supports Young Entrepreneur's Launch of Expanded "Milk Jam" Business*



**Estevenson Stephen**, an "odds defying" young Haitian, was among a handful of Haitian youth chosen to study in Paraguay at the Escuela Agricola San Francisco de Asis which provides practical education and "hands on" training in sustainable agriculture and developing small businesses centered on adding value to agricultural products. Upon his return to Haiti, Estevenson began hand-processing milk into a sweetened, carmelized spread called "Konfiti de let" ("milk jam" - also known in Spanish Latin America as "dulce de leche"). He found mentors for his business at the **Centre Action Volontaire Haiti** (CAVH) which promotes a social-solidarity economy and specializes in mentoring young Haitians computer literacy, environmental awareness, business skills, and entrepreneurship.

In order to reach established markets in Haiti – including local chain supermarkets like Giant and Compas – and to help other young people by creating jobs – Estevenson needed to expand his business. That required increasing both the efficiency and volume of his production.

**Rich in Mercy** and the Boston-based **Ansara Foundation** made matching grants to CAVH for the purchase of specialized equipment available in the neighboring Dominican Republic. Space for the expanded business is provided by the CAVH in Port au Prince and a strategy for further business expansion includes a plan to market

"milk jam" through the hundreds of "street food" vendors in Port au Prince and other population centers.



## *Beautifully Hand-Made Dresses Promote Dignity While Bringing JOY to Girls in Haiti*



The belief that "every girl in the world deserves at least one new dress" as a sign of worth, dignity, respect, and love motivates the "**Dress a Girl Around the World**" campaign of "**Hope 4 Women International**" and its affiliates. Rich in Mercy arranged to distribute dozens of beautifully hand-made dresses to girls at the **Fondation Enfant Jesus** (FEJ) orphanage in Kenscoff and at the **St. Louis de Montfort parish** in the Delmas section of Port au Prince, Haiti.

The gift of dresses, sewn by women in the Cincinnati, OH area, was arranged by **Nancy Kenny** of Lebanon, OH who is a co-worker with **Presentation Ministries**, a lay-association in the Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati, OH. The dresses were transported by students from **St. Vincent College** (Latrobe, PA) who traveled to Haiti during their spring break with **Rich in Mercy** executive director, Dr. Rich Gosser.

## *"Skip a Lunch, Save a Child" Fund Reduces Malnutrition Risk Among Pre-Schoolers*

Malnutrition rates in Haiti are among the highest in the Caribbean and children under the age of five are particularly at risk for diminished physical and intellectual development. A third of all pre-schoolers in Haiti suffer from stunted growth and three-fourths of all children under two years of age are anemic.

The RIM "**Skip a Lunch, Save a Child**" fund provides financial support for a "head start" program that focuses on primary nutrition and early education for pre-schoolers in the **St. Louis de Montfort parish** in the Delmas section of Port au Prince who are at high-risk for chronic malnutrition.

Created by **Marlene Shaw** of Republic, PA, following a Rich in Mercy "reverse mission pilgrimage" to Haiti, the RIM "**Skip a Lunch, Save a Child**" fund enables supporters to contribute a minimum of \$5 a month so that the parish can provide a daily, nutritious meal, structured play, and various formative educational activities to nearly 100 preschoolers!

