



## Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Summer 2019

### Continued Tree-planting Restores Food and Income, Off-Sets Environmental Breakdown



Hurricane Matthew devastated Haiti's southern peninsula in 2016, destroying hundreds of food-producing and income-generating trees and resulting in economic collapse, famine-like hunger, and heightened vulnerability to environmental breakdown. **Rich in Mercy** (RiM) targeted Ducis village for recovery, rebuilding houses for single mothers and widows and launching a tree-planting initiative with tree nurseries producing mango, citrus, coconut and other varieties of seedlings in two locations. Replanting thousands of trees will increase food security and reduce environmental vulnerability while restoring local food production and re-localizing the economy.

Periodic distributions of 4000-6000 trees at a time have become "whole-village" events bringing school students and their parents together at the local parish of **St. Pius** under the leadership of its pastor, **Fr. Dinnel**, and Ducis native **Fr. Patrick Eugene, C.S.Sp.** These semi-annual events serve as opportunities to deepen awareness of the importance of trees in the local ecology and the local economy. Ducis agronomists teach both youth and adults to nurture and protect the seedlings so that a majority of them will become mature trees, a form of "village capital" that both generates income and protects the environment.



**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.

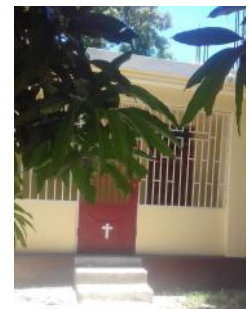
### Completed Outreach Centers Multiply Positive Impact in Kafelompri and Bokozelle



The **Sisters of St. Antoine** in Fondwa lost their motherhouse in the earthquake of 2010 and have lived in temporary housing for nearly a decade. Believing that "God wants us to help our neighbors first.", they have overseen construction of two new preschools and a clinic, managing an elementary and secondary school, launching a farming initiative, and expanding their vocational school primarily for young women. Thanks to numerous benefactors, including **Rich in Mercy**, they have finally completed construction of a new motherhouse (left) and center for ministry outreach

on their property in Kafelompri where they manage a preschool, clinic, emergency food depot to provide essential services to an isolated population that lacks any other form of social services.

Spiritans priests at the parish of St. Anne, Bokozelle – a former chapel lacking a priest residence – lived several years in a dilapidated, leaky, rat-infested structure that lacked electricity and running water. **Rich in Mercy** provided immediate financing for a solar electric system and a construction grant to match funding from the **Spiritans province in Haiti** and the **Farrell Family Foundation** in California – for a new residence and ministry outreach center (right). In spite of months of civil unrest in Haiti, accelerating inflation, and other serious challenges, **Fr. Raynold, C.S.Sp.** and **Fr. Migenson, C.S.Sp.** brought the project to completion in early summer and were able to take up residence in the new rectory that will also serve as a ministry center, hospice for occasional guests, and – eventually – a formation center for aspiring Spiritans!



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## **Poultry Business Contributes to Economic Recovery and Food Security in Ducis**



Faced with chronic food shortages and protein deficiencies Haitians import more than 70,000 tons of poultry annually. **Evenson Eugene** is an “odds-defying” young leader in his rural community of Ducis, a village devastated by hurricane Matthew in 2016. After completing secondary school he studied agronomy at the Catholic university (UNDH) in Les Cayes and began providing agricultural “extension services” to local farmers, encouraging increased production for local markets and reduced dependence on importing foods – a practice that drains financial resources from local communities.



Chicken is the most common animal protein source in much of Haiti, but local production must compete with large-scale production of imported poultry. With a capital loan from **Rich in Mercy**, Evenson launched a model, small-scale poultry enterprise in his home village to provide high-quality, locally-grown chickens to his neighbors and for the larger restaurant market in the town of Les Cayes located about 12 miles away. If successful, this venture will make a substantial contribution to the economic recovery of Ducis and enhance the food security of the region.

## **Nutriton and Early Education Program Gives High-Risk Pre-schoolers a “Head Start”**



More than half the population of Haiti suffers from chronic hunger and malnutrition rates are among the highest in the Caribbean. Children under the age of five are especially at risk for diminished intellectual and physical development. One in three pre-school children in Haiti suffer from stunted growth and virtually ALL children under the age of two are anemic.

Through its “**Skip a Lunch, Save a Child**” fund, founded by Marlene Shaw (Republic , PA) following a **Rich in Mercy** “reverse mission” trip, RIM supports primary nutrition and early education for pre-school students at high risk for malnutrition in the **St. Louis de Montfort** parish in the Delmas section of Port au Prince. Donations of \$5 per month help make possible a daily, nutritious meal, structured play, and various formative educational activities to nearly 100 preschoolers!

## **Composting Latrines Protect Students, Enhance Public Health, and Benefit Environment**

In 2017, **Rich in Mercy (RIM)** extended its mission of promoting global solidarity to **Togo, West Africa**, by providing fiscal sponsorship for the construction of a water well in the village of Datcha. Fundraising was undertaken and overseen by long-time **RIM** supporter Kimberly Baker, Ph.D. (St. Meinrad Seminary).



Building on the success of his collaboration, Society of African Missionary priest and village leader, **Fr. Odilon Kofi**, voiced the positive feedback and appreciation of the local population as well as their expression of other primary needs of the community, particularly the need for environmentally friendly sanitation at the local elementary school and in the community at large.



With **Dr. Baker** raising funds and **Rich in Mercy** providing fiscal sponsorship, the latrine project was launched. The first phase – bringing composting latrines to the school – was completed early this year. Fr. Odilon blessed the completed project in March. A second phase, soon to be launched, will provide sanitation to the wider Datcha community.

Each latrine is a waterless, composting toilet connected to two septic tanks. The two tanks allow for successive collection and composting of waste material over a minimum, two-year cycle, producing a manure usable in agricultural production. At the community ceremony blessing the latrines, students at the school expressed their deep appreciation and promised “*to maintain the latrines so that they remain useful long into the future!*”