



## Solidarity News Notes...

News from the Rich in Mercy Institute – Winter 2018

### Environmentalist's Passion is to Inspire a "Hummingbird Revolution" in Rural Haiti



Inspired by the legend of the hummingbird who repeatedly filled her tiny beak with water, dropping it on the fire which engulfed the forest, and challenging the other animals saying "I'm doing MY part", 55 year old **Lamothe Lormier** is working to inspire a "hummingbird revolution" – a popular movement – in which everyone is "doing my part" to transform the social and natural ecology of rural Haiti by restoring soil health and increasing biodiversity.

The **Operation Hummingbird Center**, located outside of Cap Haitian on Haiti's north coast, showcases bio-intensive gardening, worm-composting, waste recycling, and other agro-ecological and regenerative farming strategies.

Multiple varieties of fast-growing bamboo will capture carbon dioxide from the air and provide natural building materials. "Zai holes" – small pits that concentrate compost and allow rainwater to collect – help offset compacted soil and the growing aridity resulting from Haiti's severe deforestation. Nutrient rich worm compost made from organic "waste" combined with nitrogen-fixing "cover crops" of legumes enhances soil health and fertility. Demonstrations of "companion planting", "intercropping", and "layering" of food-producing plants spotlight strategies for maximizing yields on the kind of small plots that are typical in rural Haiti.

A Rich in Mercy grant, made possible through the efforts of **Steven Krist, DDS of Tampa, FL** financed the installation of a water system that provides clean water from a deep well. A drip-irrigation system will help make the center productive during droughts and extended dry spells. A diesel generator currently powers the water pump and provides electricity for the center. As funding becomes available the generator will be replaced by a photo-voltaic solar electric system and a solar-powered water pump.



### Sewing Machines and Skills Equip Women Entrepreneurs to Take Control of their Future



In 2015 the **Sisters of St. Antoine** established a vocational school in the village of Fondwa so girls and young women could acquire skills in sewing, culinary arts, and basic skills in managing a small business. Women use their newly acquired sewing skill to alter second-hand clothes or to make uniforms their children need for school. For some sewing is a means to financial independence and having some control over their future.

**Fanese Elise** (shown left) is from Tom Gato, a market town near Fondwa. She is 29 and had to drop out of school in 10<sup>th</sup> grade for financial reasons. Her husband, like many Haitian men, recently immigrated to Chile to seek employment and Fanese has struggled to support her two children. A Rich in Mercy "women's fund" scholarship allowed her to attend vocational school and become a seamstress. Thanks to a generous RIM donor who

financed the purchase of a sewing machine for her, Fanese will have the opportunity to earn a living and meet the financial needs of her family by sewing.

**Jacqueline Chery** (shown right) was born in Fondwa and is 24 years old. She is the 7<sup>th</sup> of nine children and completed school in 2016 after which she learned sewing on a RIM "women's fund" scholarship at the Sisters' vocational school in Fondwa. Thanks to another generous RIM donor who financed the purchase of a sewing machine, Jacqueline will be able to help support her family and serve her community by operating a small business as a seamstress!



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## Parish House and Formation Center Nearing Completion in St. Anne Parish, Bokozelle



The parish of **St. Anne** in Bokozelle includes two parish centers (Bokozelle and Poirier) and three chapels to serve a very poor parish population of more than 15,000. Established in 2013 by the **Congregation of the Holy Spirit** (Spiritans), the parish was formerly a chapel of nearby Sacred Heart parish. The only house on the property was in a state of extreme decay that made renovation impractical and imprudent. The parish identified as an urgent need the construction of a new house that will also serve as a formation center. “Seed money” from the Spiritan province in Haiti enabled work to begin on the foundation last spring.

A Rich in Mercy grant, made possible with assistance from the **Spiritan Office for Mission Advancement** (SOMA) and the generous support of the **Bozzone Family Foundation** (Lower Burrell, PA) and the **Farrell Family Foundation** (Kentfield, CA), provides financing for a simple and functional building adapted to the needs of the parish mission and housing a small religious community of two permanent members with space for another temporary member or other guest. Addition of a second floor will accommodate 3 or 4 novices in formation. Completion of the main living space is expected in December.



## University Scholarships Provide Youth Rare Opportunity for Higher Education in Haiti



Education is a necessary foundation for positive change, but in Haiti access to education is severely restricted by lack of opportunity and lack of financial resources. Fewer than 25% of children of high-school age attend secondary school. Less than 1% of young people receive university education in Haiti.

Rich in Mercy supports education in Haiti from pre-school through university and currently 10 students are enrolled in post-secondary curricula.



At the **University of Fondwa**, which Rich in Mercy helped establish in 2004, RIM scholarships support 4 students (left to right): **Jeff Josephs** (2<sup>nd</sup> business), **Jeff Fenelik** (2<sup>nd</sup> agronomy), **Bossejour Bouloune** (4<sup>th</sup> agronomy), and **Robert St. Pierre** (2<sup>nd</sup> agronomy). At **University Hautes d’Etudes** RIM scholarships support 2 students (shown right): **Chelda Dumervil** (1<sup>st</sup> economics) and **Clare RONALDA ELAN** (1<sup>st</sup> business). Diunica Moneus is in first year medical school at the **University of Notre Dame (UNDH)** and **Peterson Alcuis**, a RIM secondary school alumnus, is in third year medical school in Santiago, Cuba on a full scholarship provided by the Cuban government. Two additional RIM scholarships for university studies in diplomacy and in nursing will be awarded in January.

## C.A.V.H. Youth Formation Emphasizes Scholarship, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship



The **Centre Action Volontaire d’Haiti** (CAVH) believes that “Investing in young people is investing in a better future for Haiti”. It provides family and professional support for youth, selected from Haitian schools with high academic standards, who exhibit qualities of leadership and entrepreneurship. The **Volunteer Action Center** encourages local production and consumption of goods with a focus on sustainability and environmental protection.

Rich in Mercy provides general support for the center through the generosity of the **Karen Ansara Family** via the **Boston Foundation**. Rich in Mercy and the **Ansara**

**Family** made matching grants to finance the purchase of a machine to manufacture “milk jam” – a spread of sweet, caramelized milk – developed by **Estevenson Stephen** (shown right with center director **Andreneuse Juste**) whose small business has successfully placed its product in the large markets of Port au Prince’s upscale suburbs!

