

April 2008 Newsletter

Overall the trip to Haiti in February went very smoothly. Both Ed Lockett and Pastor Abner had recently obtained fairly new 4-wheel drive vehicles with working AC, taking us through the mountains to Marchasse in relative comfort. Carole (second trip to Haiti) and Sam (first trip) did a tremendous job. The VBS crafts they did in the classrooms went well, and they truly enjoyed spending time with people and children building relationships and demonstrating the love of Jesus.

Food prices in Haiti

One of the goals for any trip to Haiti is to see that the money people are giving is being used as intended. That was particularly true for this trip, especially for the nutritional lunch programs at the schools. We had received an unsubstantiated report that these programs had been scaled back considerably. It was not totally unexpected from reading an Associated Press article that came out prior to our trip that described how dire the situation had become in regard to the sky-rocketing cost of food and gas. Haiti, like many countries in the Caribbean, depends on food imports. However, food prices around the world have spiked because of higher oil prices. The article went on to sadly describe how many of the poorest Haitians have resorted to eating "cookies" consisting of dried mud and spices to fill their empty bellies.

Marchasse

Indeed, it was sad to see in Marchasse, where we focused most of our time and attention, the 400+ children in the school no longer eating lunch three days per week as they were in previous school years. We determined that the current donation level of \$1200 per month is now adequate to pay the teacher salaries and feed the school with rice and beans only one day each week. Even that was not happening recently because the local leadership felt the need to use some of the funds to firm up the crumbling foundation of the school buildings. We stressed the need to make sure that children eat as much as possible, and although we recognize that the building repairs were necessary, there must be better communication when there is a change in how funds are used. Now the children are eating one day per week (~\$400 more each month would allow a second meal each week) and as Carole illustrates on the extra page, the need to do more is greater than ever.

Bananier and Petit Goave

The situation is mixed at the other two HFM supported schools. Children in Bananier still eat at least twice each week due to relatively consistent support, but in Petit Goave the food program has been suspended altogether due to a combination of a drop in support and higher prices. Ed Lockett, whose school in Lakul is in the same general area as Petit Goave, has also had to reduce the number of days his kids eat because of the rising cost of rice and beans and other foods. One bright note in Petit Goave is that the semi-finished second story of the school building that some of you helped with financially is now being used on a regular basis for a high school and for church services.

New Projects

A specific goal for this trip was to gather information on additional projects to consider helping with in Marchasse. Some of these include a high school and an adult literacy program, both of which have been attempted in the past but no longer exist due to lack of funding. However, this time we wanted to focus on Pastor Abner's vision for a building that would function as a church for the community and a chapel for the school. It will seat at least 500 people, but could fit up to 600 with how adept the Haitian people are at crowding together. The foundation has been started, and it is estimated at current prices that it would cost approximately \$16,000 to finish. A few people have already expressed interest in helping out.

Missionary Ventures International

It's exciting being part of an interdenominational organization that is dedicated to helping the world's lost and hurting, which among its many activities supports the development of churches, schools, feeding centers and clinics in over 50 countries. MVI (www.mvi.org) is also an organization committed to fiscal responsibility through certified audits and affiliations with the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (www.ecfa.org) and Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org). HFM has benefited from being under such an established organization in gaining helpful insight with mission work and financial oversight. MVI does take 20% of project specific donations to support administration and other mission projects worldwide. Actually only about 9% is used for administration, and it has the highest possible financial accountability ranking. The remaining project deduction (~11%) helps missionaries like Ed Lockett stay on the field and not be responsible for such gifts as "personal income". Since HFM became associated with MVI in 2000, donations to this ministry have been exempt from the 20% deduction. However, both we and the MVI leadership feel it's time to bring HFM more in conformance with MVI policy. Therefore we believe it is important to let you know that as of July 1, 2008, all donations to HFM will be subject to the MVI deduction. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this change.

Would you like to get more involved?

Let us know if you would like more information about ministry in Haiti or with MVI, a visit to your church or fellowship, or to get updates through email if you are not already on our list. Donations should be made out to Missionary Ventures, designated for "HFM" and sent to the address on the first page letterhead of this newsletter (or use the enclosed envelope). If you would like to donate on a regular basis or as a one-time gift to specifically help with any of the following, please designate as indicated below (designations of "HFM" only will be directed as needed, unless you have already been giving for a specific child or school):

- ❖ The new church building in Marchasse: "HFM – MA church"
- ❖ Lunch program for children at the Marchasse school: "HFM – MA food"
- ❖ Sponsor a Christian school (teacher salaries, lunch & other needs) [\$20/month suggested donation]
 - Marchasse school: "HFM – MA"
 - Petit Goave school: "HFM – PG"
 - Bananier school: "HFM – BA"

Needs...

The needs all over the world, in our communities and sometimes even in our homes can seem overwhelming. It's sometimes difficult to remember that Jesus said that Mary chose the better part in listening at His feet in response to Martha's complaint that Mary was not helping her serve. But we believe that one of the reasons Jesus said that is because He knew that putting our focus on Him and, as a result, renewing our spiritual energies will allow us to also be more effective in serving Him. We indicated several needs throughout this newsletter, along with some significant changes to this ministry. Let the Lord show you if and how to help out more. But thank you for already praying and helping.

For the least of these,
Joel & Carole