

High Mountain



Newsletter of Haiti Mission Connection, Inc.

Fall 2012

2012 Missions Report

Martha Willi

This year Haiti Mission Connection sponsored two missions to Bodarie. In January we sent a team consisting of an ophthalmologist, a family practice doctor and two nurses. In July a team mainly from Cedar Rapids, Iowa went to Bodarie under the direction of Nick Nedza, an experienced volunteer.

The two doctors and three nurses spent 10 days in Bodarie holding clinic, evaluating the performance of our full-time nurse, and teaching her new skills. Other members of the team visited with our four water technicians and assessed the new bio-sand water filtration systems. The parish has a new pastor, Father Charles Jean Pierre. Nick and his crew were able to establish a relationship with him and explain the purpose and goals of Haiti Mission Connection. From their work with the pastor we look forward to a productive relationship.

We have a great deal to be grateful for. Nick led a group through the Haitian travel experience, established the summer clinic for 600 plus patients, and represented us well in the parish. Thank you to Nick and Alex Nedza, Tom Striegel MD, David Bell MD, Abigail Chapman RN, Ashley Stewart RN, Lorick Anderson, and Amy McTeague. We thank everyone who, through their generosity, was instrumental in supplying this team.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HAITIAN CRAFTS, COFFEE, VANILLA

PLACE: 904 EAST LAKE AVE, PEORIA HEIGHTS, IL

DATE/TIME: NOVEMBER 17TH AFTER 5:00 MASS

NOVEMBER 18TH AFTER 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 MASSES

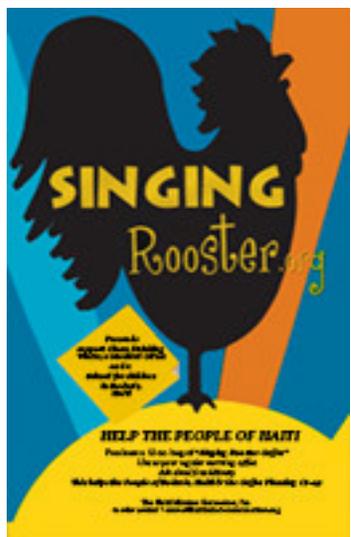
HAITI MISSION CONNECTION WILL BE SELLING ITEMS FROM OUR HAITI STORE, SINGING ROOSTER HAITIAN COFFEE, AND VANILLA.

HMCI Selling Singing Rooster Coffee

Emily Kerwin

HMCI is selling Haitian Mountain Bleu coffee purchased from Singing Rooster, a 501 (c) 3 organization based out of Wisconsin. The organization helps Haitian farmers cultivate and process high quality coffee. They buy the beans green at a fair price, air roast them in the US, and create new markets for the coffee (i.e. fundraising tool for groups like HMCI). Haitian farmers are given a stable outlet to sell their coffee without the use of expensive middlemen. Singing Rooster also provides pre-harvest financing and training in accounting skills. This helps the farmers build working capital so that they can re-invest and work towards self-sustainability. Best of all, 100% of the proceeds of coffee sales are returned to the farmers and their communities in the form of projects that support coffee production, land management, and small business development.

Over 400 million cups of coffee are consumed daily in the US, so why not fuel your morning habit with a cup of Haitian coffee purchased from HMCI? The cost is \$10 per 12 ounce bag. We think you'll love the taste of the medium dark Haitian Mountain Bleu coffee. Sheldon will deliver your ground or whole bean coffee purchase to your home, if you live in the Peoria area. Contact us at coffee@haitimissionconnection.org.



Biosand Water Filters – Providing Clean Water in Bodarie, Haiti

Emily Kerwin

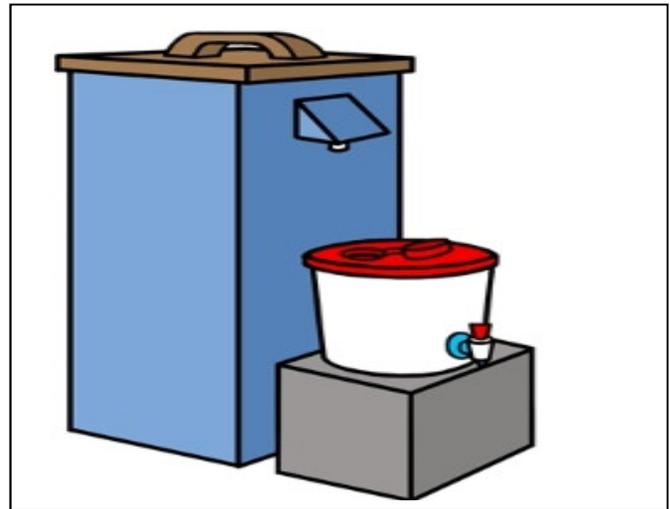
Partnership with Hands Helping Haiti Water Project
Haiti Mission Connection has partnered with Hands Helping Haiti Water Project, a local organization, in order to provide safe drinking water to the people of Bodarie, Haiti. Hands Helping Haiti Water Project is employing Haitians to produce and install concrete biosand water filters in an area where over 80% of the people suffer from water borne illnesses. The organization is also committed to teaching families proper water, sanitation, and hygiene practices. We are very excited about this partnership and already have 43 biosand filters in place in Bodarie.

How a Biosand Filter Works

Families simply pour dirty water into the top of the biosand filter. They place the lid back on the filter so that the risk of contamination is reduced. The top of the filter is called a reservoir and can hold about 3 gallons of water. The water slowly drips through the diffuser and through the sand. The top layer of the sand is called the biolayer, which consists of very small microbes that eat the pathogens in the water that cause illness. The biosand filter can remove almost all of the protozoa and worms, 98% of bacteria, and more than 70% of viruses. The bottom of the filter contains two types of gravel that prevent blockage in the outlet tube. Water that comes out of the outlet tube is now safe to drink!

What You Can Do to Help

Haiti Mission Connection is committed to sustaining the 1,800 plastic, one and two-bucket systems that the Bodarie community has been using since 2004. We can still purchase replacement parts to prolong the life of the bucket filtration systems. The spigot assemblies (\$1.50 each), lids (\$1.00 each), sediment filters (\$1.50 each), retaining filters (\$15.00 per 100), and couplers (\$0.50 each) are the parts that need to be replaced most often. Our long-term goal is to provide families with biosand filters because they have a longer life (20+ years), are sturdier, remove substantially more pathogens, and are made by Haitians using Haitian materials. Each biosand filter costs Haiti Mission Connection \$80.00; this also includes transportation. We ask each family receiving a biosand filter to contribute 50 Haitian dollars or around \$1.20. We are in need of donations to support our clean water efforts. Please include the word “water” on your donation so that we allocate the funds appropriately.



Penny Pinching – Supplying our Missions with Medicines

Martha Willi

When Haiti Mission Connection members travel to Bodarie, Haiti to hold a medical clinic, we are acutely aware that medicines are one of our major expenses. Generally we spend around \$2,000 on medicines for a 1 week clinic. Since all of our funds are provided by your generous donations, we try to make the best possible use of that money. We actively look for organizations that serve medical mission groups by providing free or discounted medicines. The process for applying for medicines and medical supplies begins 3-4 months ahead of the mission date. We carry these items with us to Haiti in our duffel bags, and therefore are limited by weight and the space available. We try to bring medicines sufficient for the use of our medical personnel and simple enough for our full-time Haitian nurse to use when we leave. Here are some of the ways Haiti Mission Connection gets medicines and other medical supplies.

Blessings International, a large drug clearing house which serves medical missionary groups, is a wonderful help. They have a wide variety of medicines in bulk packaging for a relatively low price. For instance, we are able to buy prenatal vitamins for \$0.02 each and children’s vitamins for a \$0.01 each when we buy them in mass quantities. Our mission of January 2012 paid \$1,600 for medicines which, according to Blessings International, had a \$42,083 wholesale value.

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The Hospital Sisters of Springfield run the Mission Outreach warehouse in Springfield, IL and provide medical equipment of all types, ranging from operating tables to sterile gauze bandages. We order in advance from a large list of items that are available--- sterile gloves, bandages, medical instruments, sutures, disinfectants. A volunteer picks up our order in Springfield on the appointed date, and for a \$50 handling fee, we have hundreds of dollars worth of supplies.

Since we have an ophthalmologist with us, we also provide eye care. Anyone who has spent \$15 for a bottle of artificial tears or \$120 for a bottle of glaucoma medicines knows that we cannot replenish our supplies on donations alone. Two large ophthalmic companies have supplied Haiti Mission Connection with medicines for years. We request the medicines, label them, and pack them according to their purpose. We also dispense reading glasses through the eye clinic. Unclaimed Freight Store has ordered reading glasses in bulk for us and has made other donations to our missions over the years. From the hundreds of pairs of glasses donated to us, volunteers clean and pack those we can use. Other volunteers have sewn hundreds of cases for these glasses.

Medicines which are not available through these channels have to be purchased here in Peoria at much higher prices. Bogard Drug Store has helped us with acquiring medicines and simple medical equipment that we cannot get any other way.

Haiti Mission Connection is grateful to all those who contribute to our medical mission and strive to make the best use of those funds. Any suggestions you can make in this matter will be gratefully received. We can always use volunteers as well. Call Martha at 674-4500 if you can help with these tasks.



Hurricane Sandy

We all have seen pictures and heard stories about the destruction that "Hurricane Sandy" has caused on America's east coast. Father Simon, the head of Caritas in Haiti reports widespread damage. Over four days, the southeast of Haiti was soaked with 20 inches of rain. Because of many years of deforestation, there have been mudslides down the mountainsides. In Bodaire most crops were washed away. Our friends in Bodarie are subsistence farmers who derive some income from their farms and depend on their gardens for their food. There is fear of rising food prices and widespread hunger this year.

There is also concern about a new upsurge in the cholera epidemic that is spread by dirty water. The heavy rains have caused the pit toilets to overflow carry the cholera germs into the streams and rivers from which the drinking water is taken. It becomes extremely important for them to have water purification.

Please keep Haiti in you thoughts and prayers as they work through this difficult time. Consider helping us in our effort to supply water purifiers to every household in our parish. If you wish to make a donation specifically to help replant crops after the hurricane we will forward the money to our parish.

Travel to Haiti?

Haiti Mission Connection travels to Bodarie, Haiti each January.

If you are thinking of a journey to Haiti, consider coming with us. There is an opportunity for daily Mass in the parish church. There is plenty of time for meditation in the evenings and for stargazing at night. Walks through the village will introduce you to a much different and simpler way of life. You will help us in our work in the village---no expertise required. But tell us if you have some specific skill.

All volunteers raise their own money for airfare and travel expenses---approximately \$1,200. HMC will take care of all the arrangements for you. Please call Martha at 674-4500 for more information.

Please go to our website www.haitimissionconnection.org to find out more information about the work HMC is doing in Bodarie, Haiti.

To join the e-newsletter, email hmcnewsletter@gmail.com and put subscribe in the subject line.