

# High Mountain



Newsletter of Haiti Mission Connection, Inc.

May 2010

## Back from Haiti...

*April 11-17 Trip - a Time of Teaching and Learning*

### **Martha Willi and Liz Rickert**

Our long delayed trip to Haiti began April 10th with our flight to Miami where we stayed the night; hotel rooms are nonexistent in Port au Prince. The next day we were on the 6 am flight to Haiti with plans to rent a SUV at the airport and travel to Bodarie that same day. We were joined by Bernie Filzen, who with his wife Patty founded Haiti Mission Connection years ago, and 3 people from his parish in Arizona where he is a Deacon. Our group was completed by Walter Rogal, who was part of the initial mission to Bodarie in 1999. We arrived about dark, surprising Father Laguerre. Through an apparent communication glitch he had not expected us – limited water, no food, and unmade beds. He called in people to help, and after a dinner of Mamba (Peanut butter) and bread we had purchased on the way up, we slept that night on beds with sheets and pillowcases. The following (Monday) morning, we carried our supplies to the clinic and set up for patients, while he arranged for our stay.

Bernie and crew were instrumental in helping us set up our clinic and spent hours packaging medicines for dispensing in the clinic. On Tuesday they visited Mapou and inspected the water systems and the school. On Wednesday we waved them goodbye as they left on their mission of seeking out a parish with which to establish a twinning relationship. Our trip introduced us to the rainy season in the mountains.

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Medical clinic in Bodarie

## **CHECK OUT OUR REVAMPED WEBSITE!**

**WWW.HAITIMISSIONCONNECTION.ORG**

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### **WINE TASTING TO BENEFIT THE PEOPLE OF BODARIE**

PLACE: WINE COUNTRY/ FRENCH TOAST  
4600 N. PROSPECT RD.

PEORIA HEIGHTS, IL. 61616

TIME: FRIDAY JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2010 5:30PM TO 7:30 PM

CONTACT: SHELDON SCHAFER 309-682-1876

\$45/PERSON INCLUDES: WINE TASTING, HORS D'OEUVRES,  
DONATION

DINNER AVAILABLE AT FRENCH TOAST IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING  
THE TASTING; 10% OF ALL WINE SALES AND DINNER BILL WILL ALSO  
BE DONATED TO HMCI

#### **UPLANDS PLANT SALE**

PLACE: 1216 NORTH MAPLEWOOD AVENUE, PEORIA, IL  
TIME: SATURDAY JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2010 8:00AM TO 3:00PM

HAITI MISSION CONNECTION WILL HOLD A PLANT SALE TO BENEFIT  
OUR MISSION. IT WILL BE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UPLANDS  
NEIGHBORHOOD SALE. WE WILL FEATURE LOW MAINTENANCE  
PLANTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, BOTH SHADE AND SUNLOVING.

IF YOU HAVE PLANTS TO CONTRIBUTE, IF YOU CAN HELP WITH SET UP  
ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup>, OR WITH THE SALE ON THE 5<sup>TH</sup>, PLEASE CALL MARTHA  
WILLI AT 309-674-4500 TO HELP OUT!

#### **MOSS AVENUE SALE**

PLACE: CORNER OF MOSS AND COOPER AVENUES, PEORIA, IL  
TIME: SATURDAY JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2010 9:00AM TO 4:00PM

STOP BY TO PURCHASE HAITIAN COFFEE, FOLK ART, VANILLA , AND  
OTHER HAITIAN GOODS.

WE ARE ALSO ACCEPTING DONATIONS OF ANTIQUES. IF YOU HAVE  
ANYTHING TO DONATE OR IF YOU CAN HELP FOR AN HOUR OR TWO,  
PLEASE CONTACT MARTHA WILLI AT 309-674-4500.

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The clouds would roll in about 11 or 12 every day and about 1 or 2 pm water would pour from the sky for an hour or 2. Some days this sequence would repeat itself! Think your worst Midwestern cloudburst lasting for a couple of hours. During this time all outdoor activity comes to a halt and everyone gathers under whatever shelter is available and waits for the deluge to stop. Fortunately we did not experience the torrential rain on our journey up and down the mountain roads. Because of all the rain, the land was at its greenest and the scenery was spectacular. The vegetation and insect life were at their most abundant. We were sung to sleep every evening by a chorus of frogs, including those in the shower room.

#### **Report on the medical mission.**

One of the main goals of our mission this year was to evaluate and educate the nurse, Marie Ange Remarque. Dr. Jumuna Patel Nathan worked with her intensively for the 5 days we held clinic, seeing patients selected because of the severity of their problems. She believes that our new nurse will do well in Bodarie. Nurse Marie Ange and Dr. Jumuna saw 30 to 35 patients per day and performed several minor surgeries on grateful patients. One particularly sick woman had given birth to premature twins, one of whom had survived but looked to weigh barely 3 lbs at a month old. Dr. Patel determined that this young mother was in heart failure. Walter drove her and her family to Thiotte, since it was clear she, and probably her baby, would die without more sophisticated treatment than we could offer.

The clinic is now in a building completely renovated since our last visit. It is still primitive but the nurse has set up a functioning clinic there. We provided the nurse with several books in Kreyole on medical care and with some new equipment for her use in the clinic. With the aid of our interpreters, we unpacked and organized large quantities of supplies on shelves that were built as we worked. They labeled the shelves and we were able to bring some order out of the chaos that occurs where there is nowhere to store things.

The eye clinic was held in the church building as in past years. We dispensed 150 pairs of glasses and examined people with a large variety of eye problems. At the end of our time there, Father asked if our health agents could continue to give glasses after we were gone. We left the remaining glasses and cases and instructions on a shelf in the clinic and hope that their training will enable them to dispense reading glasses to those who need them.

#### **Report on the electrical system.**

I am pleased to report that the upgraded solar electric system that HMC installed last year was able to gather light from the 2-3 hours of sunlight we had during the morning and provide us with several hours of electric light after sunset. The parish will now take over maintenance of this system, which we hope will provide for the electrical needs of the parish compound for years to come.

#### **Report on the water systems.**

Our technicians continue to visit the homes and care for the water buckets. They are frustrated by the lack of supplies—due in part to the earthquake. We plan to expand the

number of purifiers in the village and will be actively pursuing getting them for Bodarie. We gave the technicians backpacks for carrying their equipment and safety glasses for their protection while handling the chlorine containing chemicals.

#### **We had several conversations with Father about the needs of the parish and his hopes for the future.**

Last year HMC celebrated 10 years of work in the parish of St. Benedict. We are collaborating with our third pastor. Our mission in the parish was established through conversations eleven years ago with the pastor and parishioners of St. Benedict, and leaders from the community of Bodarie, and this year we reviewed our mission with Fr. La Guerre. We discussed our medical focus and support of related projects such as the water programs, and the financial commitment we have made to those projects. Father noted that the clinic building is unfinished and requested our help in installing a new floor, plastering the ceiling, and purchasing some additional items for the clinic such as a refrigerator and solar panel. He also asked for more money for medications and to give the nurse a raise. During our discussion we acknowledged Father's commitment to the school and the catechetical needs of the parish. He asked for a substantial amount of money on an annual basis to replace worn and lost books. We let him know that the donation of the books last year was a onetime donation, and that we are saddened that our organization is unable to provide significant support to the school program as well as to the clinic.

When there is so much need it is hard for us to say no, and it is hard for Father to hear us say no. We echoed each other's words when we said that we would continue doing our best. At the end of our talk we renewed our commitment to the clinic, and Father invited us back for next year. We also told him we would see if we could find a group to work as hard with him to meet the educational needs of the children as we do to meet the health needs of the people of Bodarie.



Water systems at the school