

**The Haitian Project, Inc.
Community Update: 100 Longest Yards**



In support of our brother school, Saint-Louis de Gonzague, and the Brothers of Christian Instruction's intent to re-open as soon as possible for not only the school's 1,200 secondary students, but another 3,500 students from the Port au Prince area (including students of the public secondary school in Gonzague's neighborhood) we took on the job of replacing 100 yards of the school's perimeter wall which fell in the quake.

The rubble removal required loading 7 to 8 tons of broken cinder block and concrete into large sand trucks by hand, one shovelful at a time. Don't be fooled by picture number two. That piece of equipment arrived late in the day (without Patrick Brun's pushing, we would not have had it all) and mostly removed the remaining 30 feet of teetering wall.

We started with a team of about fifteen. Lucky, Christina helped us to recruit a second team of 8 men from the neighborhood. I learned on this job that I am a lot older than I was in 1996 when I began heavy construction. The work of facilitating the Brothers' connection with the 82nd Airborne and Lt. General Keene was a bit easier and more suited to my age.

Again, this work not only moves Haiti forward in the recovery, education being a priority -- it provides jobs!

Patrick Faustin (LCS Head of Maintenance) and his maintenance team, along with Volunteers Peter Ulrickson, Jonathan Kennedy, and John DiTillo, did a great job leading the effort.

Patrick Brun, THP Board Chair and graduate of St. Louis Gonzague, articulated the excitement found in this relationship forming between LCS and SLG, "St. Louis Gonzague brings 150 years of history, challenge and education to Haiti. There are a lot of Brothers from SLG that have given their lives to Haiti and are buried here now. The match with Louverture Cleary School now is perfect. There is a lot now that SLG can learn from LCS's charism of work. Yesterday I was speaking with Brother Sarell, who has been a leader in getting the school reopened, about LCS's charism of work. When we finished talking, he looked at me with a smile and picked up a shovel."

"It's extraordinary that Louverture Cleary could help St. Louis Gonzague to reopen and the students of these two schools can work together," Patrick Brun went on to say. "It announces a better future for Haiti."

This past week, we also had the visit of Kurt Davis court, Brian Jones and Mike Smith from Seattle, WA. They are experts in building rehab, particularly buildings damaged in seismic events. Their findings fell in line with those of the past experts. They spent three days examining the buildings and designing repairs. We now have a set of detailed plans for renovations. We will be reporting the details of their findings in terms of scope and cost of repairs after the Facility Committee and the sub-committee of engineering experts review their work.

The best part of the team's visit was making "house calls" to the homes of staff and community members. The result: 4 families back in their houses--and simple repair ideas for two more. This is what Haiti needs most--small groups of experts to provide house inspections and repair recommendations. Our experience suggests that a large percent of the housing still standing could be occupied as is or with minor [in terms of cost] repairs.

Hopefully, we can get the international community to focus more on this aspect of Haiti's needs soon.

Peace, Patrick

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