

The Haitian Project, Inc.

Update # 26: Calm in the Storm--A Month Later



THP Volunteer Kristen Zeiler paints the grave markers for the deceased Archbishop Most Reverend Serge Joseph Miot and his Vicar General, Reverend Charles Benoit. "Today was a day to mourn the dead and celebrate the living," says Kristen

Today, the nation held a day of prayer, fasting and mourning. The most obvious impact of this observance of the one month anniversary is the lack of chaotic traffic. Indeed, certain calm has enveloped the city, allowing for much needed rest and reflection. Services were held all over town. Bishop Dumas celebrated the Eucharist at the mass burial site of the earthquake victims. This particular place's history began with bodies being left there from the time of Duvalier and before. So, it is a complex symbol of multi-generational importance. This most recent great sorrow may provide a way to finally recognize the years of suffering by allowing for a memorial to be constructed at this location. The latest victims having united everyone in sorrow, we may now be more ready to move ahead as a nation united.

This moment of calm also allowed for Kristen Zeiler to finish the grave markers for the deceased Archbishop of Port au Prince, Most Reverend Serge Joseph Miot, and his Vicar General, Reverend Charles Benoit. These are odd times and we are called to do things beyond our expectations. I continue to be impressed with the response of our staff, volunteers and students to these diverse calls to service. I am also impressed by the response of the vast community that supports **our mission together in Haiti.**

In her own words Kristen shares:

Driving outside it looked like a Sunday. Women and men dressed up in white led their children to the local churches and outdoor worship areas. Never before had I noticed how many churches there are on the busy National Road 3 outside our school. The painting itself did not take long to finish, and for the first time I saw graves of the men whose names I had become so familiar with. The site was respectfully set up. One large

white cross stood behind the two small crosses and graves. Thank you for sharing your gift of life; rest in peace. Today was a day to mourn the dead and celebrate the living.

We will finish today with a communion service. I am confident that we will find new energy tomorrow--a fruit of today's solemn work.

We are contacting the Red Cross for tents to replace the housing and classroom space that we lost by taking two of our campus buildings out of use. This is in preparation for more students coming back after next week. We plan to re-open on Feb. 21, having observed the government's one month hiatus from formal schooling.

Update on the status of our Louverture Cleary Students ...

A month after the earthquake, we have been able to interview the 219 students (out of a total of 358 students) who have returned to participate at LCS at some point in the past weeks. Two of these students lost a parent during the earthquake. Regarding housing, 29 students' residences collapsed during the earthquake and the houses of 126 students sustained some damage, leaving 71% of those who have returned to school with a housing problem. Students whose homes collapsed or are severely damaged continue to stay at LCS on the weekends. All of our 23 teachers have been contacted; one was injured during the earthquake and is recovering in the hospital.

Update on Relief Activities ...

Through its Earthquake Relief fund, LCS/THP has been able to significantly help its staff and the surrounding community following the earthquake. 12 of our staff now have stable housing after their homes were destroyed. In addition, we were able to help pay for the funeral of the husband of one of our cooks who passed away. We have been supporting the Hospital Saint Francois de Salles in Port-au-Prince by building a new gate for their dispensary as well as funding three of our medical students to provide medical care at the hospital. To assist the Memphis Medical Mission relief team, we have hired six graduates, one as a driver and five as translators. Finally, we have hired seven men from our neighborhood to clean up rubble around the area as well as to rescue important documents from the Cathedral and the Archbishop's residency. To date we have spent a total of \$9,215 US in our relief efforts.

Your Support ...

We have had a spectacular response from donors who continue to propel us forward in our unshaken mission to rebuild. Since January 12 we have received contributions from 915 donors, 240 of those being loyal current donors who have remained with us during this pressing time. We are also grateful for the encouraging number of the new 589 donors who have also joined us in our work.

We would like to give special thanks to the corporations and foundations who have generously contributed including Merrill Lynch, Bank of America, McGuireWoods LLP,

Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge, LLP, Goodwill Industries, Shapiro Capital Management, LLC, Zeta Associates and McCauley & L'Europa LLC.

THP has received and continues to receive from an amazing web of parishes, schools and other organizations throughout the United States who have given generously through organizing fundraisers or by digging deep into their pockets. We will have more coming later on these invaluable activities that have been occurring to support Louverture Cleary School and the mission to rebuild.

Peace, Patrick

Please continue to keep in your prayers those closest to our LCS community:

In loving Memory:

Marin Forde – LCS Class of 1998, LCS Librarian 2004-2009

Gabriel Marie Pierre – LCS Class of 2002

Ruth Alcenat – LCS Class of 2006

Berkely Pierre – LCS Class of 2006

Sabrina Louis Jeune – LCS Class of 2008

Ismaël Geslus – LCS Class of 2008

Gesline Laguerre – LCS Class of 2009

To make a donation or to read our archived updates since the time of the earthquake go to www.haitianproject.org