

**State of Anxiety, Insecurity**

The continuing political instability of the country, the demonstrations, the road blockades, the threat of gang violence, the closing of the borders and the recent release of prisoners have created a constant state of anxiety among many people in Fond Doux. Our assistant Director Eluard Louis expressed it this way:

“In short, we are afraid for our lives. We, without knowing it, establish curfews. We can't stay out late because of the insecurity. The escape from the national prison touches us. More than four thousand fugitives escaped from the national prison. Insecurity is more bitter. We live looking over our shoulders.” We are thinking: “Criminals are everywhere. No crime has yet been committed in our locality but that could change.” Your prayers for our Haitian partners and the people of Haiti are requested.

**Revisiting Construction Costs**

In February the secretary of the Foundation sent out a fundraising letter to Foundation contributors based on a preliminary guesstimate of the construction cost for a proposed community center/school. The estimates were based on our past experiences with construction in Fond Doux. Unfortunately, they did not sufficiently take into consideration the changing exchange rate, the recent skyrocketing inflation -- around 49% in the last year alone, nor perhaps the need for superior quality building. The result was a wildly optimistic cost projection for our first building.

To build as we have been planning will be far more expensive than we had guesstimated. Our new detailed estimate by a reliable builder came in at \$98,420 for the building alone. This suggests our other estimates are also low. Unless our fund raising is far more fruitful than our previous minimum goal, we will need to scale back or delay our plans. For the moment, we have a minimum goal of \$100,000 and an advance goal of \$135,000.

The net result of all this is that we will probably need to take a longer view for achieving what we deemed as phase one and break it into smaller bits. This is a bit disheartening but unfortunately is often what happens in Haiti. Many times, we are struck by unforeseen negative events. Yet our partners are resilient. They bounce back from numerous disappointments with a vibrant faith that the Lord will provide. SO SHALL WE!

**Progress of Fund Drives**

School/Center	-new goal \$100,000 --	\$42,906
Clinic Latrine	- new goal \$ 11,000 --	\$ 7,875
House Fund	- goal \$ 5,500 --	\$ 4,025
Solar Power Fund	- goal \$ 8,000 --	\$ 8,000

**Thank you, donors. We are making progress.**  
Directions for giving are at the end of this issue.

**School Children Nutrition**



**Vita Mamba at Platon School.**

The Vita Mamba program of the Foundation began in the Platon School (sponsored by the Foundation) when the school administrator Jonas Pierre told the board about children coming to school with a “tummy ache” cured by eating some crackers. The Foundation conducted an eating survey in the school which indicated nearly half the children were coming to school without breakfast. Further, many ate only one meal a day and some of them not even that.



The board first gave supplemental money to the administrator to buy crackers, but immediately searched for better ways to alleviate the hunger among the students at the school. The result was providing Vita Mamba, a peanut butter based snack/nutritional supplement to all the students. The

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ingredients are grown in Haiti and the product also manufactured in Haiti by an organization known as "Food and Meds for Kids." It is an NGO based in Northern Haiti around Cap-Haitien. This snack provides all the necessary nutritional ingredients usually missing in the Haitian diet.

The result of providing Vita Mamba was an immediate increase in the number of children attending school and an improvement in the grades of the students. Administrator Jonas Pierre reported that the students also seemed to be livelier.

With this report, the board then decided late in 2023 to increase the program to the Methodist School kindergarten. Studies have shown that improving nutrition in the first 5 years of life makes a lifetime difference in physical and mental abilities.



### Vita Mamba at Ravine Parc Club

The board also extended the program to the Ravine Parc English Club to replace other snacks that were part of that program.

It costs about \$50 per year for each child to receive the supplement every school day. We have about 100 children enrolled fulltime in the program at Methodist School kindergarten and the Platon School and 60 part time in the Ravine Parc English Club. It is supported by a number of people that give \$40 a month to undergird the program. To sustain our present program requires 11 additional sponsors – about \$5300 additional dollars. We believe there are 11 more people willing and able to give \$40 a month. We have not yet found them, although some new pledges may have reduced this number. Unless we find these additional sponsors, we may need to curtail the program, although we actually would like to expand it to the entire Methodist School, the Ravine Parc School and the new Fond Doux English Club. If

you would be willing to become a monthly sponsor, ways to donate are found at the end of this issue. Where else can you profoundly change the life of 10 children for so little? We appreciate your support. It is life changing. Thank you, donors, especially those of you that recently responded.

### Clinic News



**Dr. Dieuseul Istache**

The board of the Found Doux Foundation has authorized a trial position for Dr. Dieuseul Istache to become a resident physician at the Fond Doux Clinic. It would be for a period of 4 months as we discover whether there are sufficient patients to warrant the clinic being open for three or four days per week with a physician on staff. As of the date of publication, he has not yet signed the contract, but is expected to accept the position.

Dr Istache grew up in Fond Doux and received his university and medical training on a Fond Doux Foundation scholarship. Since graduating from Royal Université d'Haiti in 2023, he has been waiting for assignment from the Department of Health for his required assignment for social work, the last step in becoming a certified MD in Haiti. However, the government of Haiti has not been fully functional and he is in an extended waiting period. He is able to take on a temporary position.

The Fond Doux Foundation has an emergency surgical account funded by special donations for lifesaving and lifechanging emergency care and surgeries. The Foundation had two children with birth deformities waiting for surgeries. We have raised the money and

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authorized one of these – for Virgil Merlens. Virgil is five years old with a congenital leg deformity. The cost of his surgery is about \$1600. We also paid for a minor surgery for a 16 month old boy.

impossible with the gang violence. We have referred her now to a surgeon in Petit-Goave and awaiting word, hoping that he is able to perform her surgery. She is now nine months. Contributions for her surgery should be designated “surgery fund!”



**Virgil Merlens**



**Sheelove Spen Mauril and her Mother**



**Virgil in Cast**

The other major surgery is for Sheelove Mauril, also with a congenital leg deformity. The cost of her surgery is not yet known but probably similar to Virgil's. The Foundation only pays for these types of things when this fund has sufficient money to pay for them. We need additional funds for Sheelove.

When Sheelove Spen Mauril was 6 months old, she was referred to a hospital in Carrefour, Port-au-Prince for corrective leg surgery that should be done before she is a year old. However, travel there has been



**Vita Mamba Treats Malnutrition**

Malnutrition is as you may know a major problem among the children of Fond Doux, the result of inadequate diets caused by the lack of parental employment or low wages. Because of the arrival of our recent shipment of Vita Mamba, the clinic is able to use it as a treatment tool. Recently a young lad who was treated successfully for malnutrition has now been provided with Vita Mamba as a food supplement to maintain his regained health. However, the mother has taken him to another place where some relatives can help, so she can better feed her son. The father continues to work in Fond Doux – still with low wages. We are glad we could help.

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**Students at the Clinic**

Part of the work of the clinic is to provide free check-ups for school children to catch small problems before they become big ones. It is surprising how many problems the clinic finds. Thank you, donors!

### **Finally Paid For**



**Soccer Field Enlargement**

Over three years ago (November 2020), the Foundation enlarged the soccer field in Fond Doux to make it regulation size. This enabled the Fond Doux community soccer team to compete in the regional tournaments on its home field and local children to play on a regulation field. However, funding for the enlargement lagged. Not very many people were interested in donating to enlarge a soccer field when there were life and death issues to attend to. However, two recent gifts enabled the Foundation to pay off this longstanding deficit. Despite reluctance of American donors to donate towards Haitian soccer, it was of high importance to the local Haitian advisory committee.

### **Dave Stevenson Moves In**



**Not Quite Complete**

Although the house is not actually complete, our night watchman at the Fond Doux Clinic, Dave Stevenson Michael, moved into his new house. Dave built the house with the help of some of his friends with materials supplied by the Foundation. Dave will supply free labor for some future Foundation construction projects to partially pay for the materials. The house was built quickly because the rented home in which he and his family were living was being sold and they needed to move out.

### **“SO LITTLE CAN DO SO MUCH”**

To learn about our projects, to donate, or to contact us you can reach the Foundation in a number of ways:

Website: [www.fonddouxfoundation.org](http://www.fonddouxfoundation.org)

Email: [John@fonddouxfoundation.org](mailto:John@fonddouxfoundation.org)

By US mail at:

Fond Doux Foundation

PO Box 51443

Durham, NC 27717

Donations also thru PayPal: Fond Doux Foundation

Venmo: @FondDouxFoundation

Or through Epworth UMC Church, Durham, NC

Website manager: Brent Engel

Newsletter editor: John Clausung

The Fond Doux Foundation engages friend-to-friend with people in and around the village of Fond Doux, Haiti, helping to provide better access to medical care and health education, improved nutrition through agriculture and animal husbandry, educational scholarships, and intercultural faith-based activities. FDF is a 501(c)3 organization based in Durham, North Carolina.