

Micro-Loans and Micro-Business

Dave Stevenson Micheal, a resident of Fond Doux, 25 years old, was without money and without a job and also recently a new father. What was he going to do? He had no way to support his family. He was desperate and in need. He talked to his friend Schneider Saint Surin, the godfather of his son. They are very close friends and Dave sometimes helps Schneider in his video business.



Dave Micheal and Family

Dave did not complain, but Schneider saw how hard Dave was trying. To Schneider it was like a shout – can you not see how hard he is striving! Schneider was moved to the core. “Each time I look at the baby, I feel a pain like Jesus felt when they were nailing him on the cross”, he said. “I was terrified.” Then Schneider really looked at Dave -- physically. “The friend that I had was no longer the same; he was totally desperate” said Saint-Surin.

He continues, “One day I decided to call him and tell him, if he gets some money can he start a business?”

Dave happily replied, “Ooh yes, that would have been the greatest thing ever for me.” And Schneider replied, “Okay, I’m thinking on something for you; but I’m not going to tell you anything until I’m sure about the result.” He was thinking of the Fond Doux Foundation and his American friend Brent Engel.

He called and spoke to Brent and he agreed to help. Together they devised a plan for a micro-loan to start a micro-business. Dave would buy cleaning supplies for clothes and dishes (soap, detergent, bleach) and resell them. Brent insisted that Dave have a monetary plan, by which he saved a sufficient portion of his sales so that he could constantly secure new supplies. Brent loaned him \$100 US dollars. Dave and his girlfriend, the mother of his child, go to the open market at Violet, which is about a 45-minute walk from the Primitive Church of Fond Doux or a 10-minute ride by tap-tap. There they sell their wares, walking through the market shouting out what they have to sell.

After the micro loan, Schneider reminisced, “I said to him, ‘Brother how do you feel right now?’” And Dave replied, “Man, I feel free like a bird in the air now.” Saint-Surin continued, “Wow, I felt amazed!!!”

Everything was going well. “They were eating every day,” said Schneider about his friend and the new family. But demonstrations have caused a lock down on the economy – yes, with effects on Fond Doux! Now Dave cannot get his wares to market. This experiment in micro-business has not yet failed, but unless some changes in the political situation that has hit Haiti since September do not change soon, Dave and his family may well be back where they started. What a catastrophe that would be! We pray for change soon.

Dave has hope. If the political situation stabilizes, he expects to finish Secondary School this year. Because it costs to go to school, he is not the only person that drops out of school and comes back when he has some money. In fact, it is quite common. The Foundation believes that micro-businesses are part of the future. We would like to find some people with expertise to join us on some mission trips to teach micro-business. We pray that Dave and his family make it.

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Interview with Madam Cristela

Question: Madam Christela, you have been employed as a community health worker for about six years now in Fond Doux. One of your duties has been to provide first aid to people that have had small injuries. Can you tell us what you do?



Madam Christela – Community health Worker

Answer: When people get hurt or sick, they come to my house and I take care of them. I wash their wounds and I apply some disinfectant. Afterwards I help them climb down the hill. If they have to take tap-tap, I stay by their side till they take it. For those who come from so far that they won't be able to come three times a week, I give them some disinfectant and soap so that they can clean their injuries. After three days, I visit them to see what is their condition. They are overjoyed each time they see me! I'm happy for the work that I've been doing – especially, to see their improvements.

Question: How often do you get called upon in a month to provide first aid assistance?

Answer: So many times! Sometimes I'm called many times -- often in a month. Occasionally I am called for fever, headache and body ache. Sometimes when they

come for those cases, I get some water from the water pump; I bath them; and I lay them down. I also refer them to the general hospital, to diagnose them, to see what's really wrong with them.

Question: Can you tell us of any particularly memorable experiences?

Answer: What stays in my mind? I remember there was a sick little girl that lives at Pig Village; we brought her to the house while the missionaries (FDF) were there. We were taking care of her, and Ms. Linda would give her some milk. While we were doing that, the little girl was getting better. Then suddenly that little girl died. I felt terrible to hear that awful news, because I feel my efforts were lost! I was distraught.

I also met an old man. He had a sore on his right foot. I said, "Hey... what happened to your foot?" And he replied, "I got hit and after a while it was swollen and started to hurt".

I was at a public market to buy stuff for my family. I took his address. I went back home to get what was needed (disinfectant, soap, gauze, bandages) so that I could go to his house to take care of that sore. When I got to his house, I cleaned his sore and I also applied some disinfectant.

I had some money with me, so I also brought some pain tablets (Ibuprofen) for him. I asked him right after taking care of his foot, "How do you feel?" He replied, "Mme Toto, I feel good; I feel my foot is new." And I happily replied, "It's going to be healed pretty soon, because of the medicine I applied to it." He said, "Thanks a million."

I gave him a visit after three days. When I got to his house, he said, "Mme Toto, I sleep really well." And I said to him, "I am hired to do this kind of thing by a mission (FDF). When somebody gets burned, sore, whatever your problem -- if I'm able to help, I will. Or else I can refer you to a hospital."

The next time I visited him he welcomed me with a big hug. Then he showed me his foot. I was happy to see how much better his foot was.

Question: Another duty is to distribute and explain the use of hygiene kits (sanitary pads) that the mission

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teams bring for teen-age girls, to keep them in school. How do you know with which girls to talk?

Answer: When the missionaries come down, they leave some kits with me. When the girls have their menstruation at the school, they climb up here to my house and ask me for a kit. They say, "Mme. Toto, is there any kit available, because I am having my period?" And if I have one, I give it to them, but sometimes I don't have any. What is really bad is that they frequently don't have money to buy sanitary napkins themselves. They cannot solve the problem! Some of them go home, and they don't go back to school for the week.

Question: Do they have any other method to use instead of using a sanitary napkin?

Answer: They use a white piece of cloth. But some the girls are a little untidy. Their parents don't want them to use any kind of cloth. They fear infection.

Question: Do the people appreciate this program?

Answer: Oh yes, they do, especially when the girls are in class, and they have their period. Other students used to watch them. "Ugh!" What's good is that now they are able to find a place where they can find someone that can help -- through cleaning themselves and giving them sanitary napkins. And they feel comfortable through that.

Question: Do the girls stay at school, when they have their menstruation?

Answer: Not all of them. Those who have a kit, they stay at the school. But those who don't have a kit or other appropriate method, they stay at home until their menstruation is over. Some of our girls suffer an awful bellyache when they have their menstruation. This is something we would like to know more about.

Question: Do you know approximately how many kits that you have given out?

Answer: Well, I don't really remember, because I've given a lot of them. That's why I don't have a specific number, but now I'll write down every kit I'm going to give.

Question: Are you involved with other aspects of health care or health education? Explain.



Answer: Yes, I used to talk to them especially when they have pink eye -- how they have to deal with that in order for the others to not get infected, because that virus can go viral! And also, I talk to some of the women about natural birth control. Some of them ask "Do you have a tablet for that?" Mme. Toto smiles and replies, "Oh no, I don't have that."

Question: How did you become involved with Linda Mitchell and the mission teams from Epworth and the Fond Doux Foundation? Can you tell us any memorable events that occurred then or since?

Answer: When the American missionaries came down, I used to be one of the cook members. Then Ms. Linda approached me and asked, "Can I do crafts?" And I said to her, "Oh no, I don't." And she asked again, "What can you do then? Can you take care of a sick person?" And I said, "Yes I can." Linda replied, "Are you sure?" And then I said, "Oh yes!"

Also, when Linda would go down to the school, I used to be there to help her on the road, because the road is a little slippery. I'm so patient. I help her -- from the beginning to the very end! And she said, "Good, good!" She saw the patience in me. She decided to hire me. So that's how I got the position.

Question: Madam Christela, thank you for talking to us. Is there anything that you would like to say to the American Christians that have been employing you?

Answer: Well, first, I'd like to thank God for the blessings HE bestowed on them. I feel like I'm blessed as well.

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Second, thanks to the Americans for their remarkable initiative in helping the people of the village. And also, I'm so grateful to be useful for the village! I feel so proud! Whenever the villagers see me, they know that I'm one of the helpers. It's good to know that there's a place for the villagers to receive first aid -- before going to a general hospital. I pray for this initiative to grow day by day -- to reach more needy people! May God keep providing for our supporters to keep doing this magical work!

Finally, I would like all of the supporters to know that I love what I'm doing! THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!



Building Benches for Platon School

Threats Close Simple English School

Despite the difficulties caused by the demonstrations outlined last month in THE FLYER, for some time our English language scholarship students studying in Miragoâne had been able to continue school, albeit on a reduced schedule. The Simple English School in Miragoâne had switched their classes to the weekends when the demonstrators were not out. Hurrah for

some creative thinking! But then, some people tried to burn the place down. The Simple English School then like other schools closed down also. What a travesty!

Late Breaking News

1. The government of Haiti has issued a new schedule for schools and school examination schedules. It is expected that most schools will reopen on December 1, 2019. If this comes to pass this will be exceedingly good news indeed!

2. On November 25, 2019 a young lad with two abdominal hernias under went life changing surgery at Harris Clinic Hospital in Petit Goâve. This surgery was made possible by generous contributions to the Fond Doux Foundation and its medical fund. A more complete story should be coming in the next issue of the Fond Doux Flyer.

3. As part of the FDF's effort to understand and coordinate with larger missions, Bill Nealey, Jr. of Mission to Haiti spent November 23 with the board of the FDF exploring mutual interests.

Platon School News

A special issue of the Flyer was published exclusively on the background, the challenge and our response for the Platon School. In addition to the two teachers announced in October, the Foundation is now paying for a third teacher made possible because of commitments from members of Swansboro UMC. The Foundation also was able to provide for some benches (including desks) for the school. They were built in Petit-Goâve and transported by boat to Platon. Our support was contingent upon total financial transparency and educational accountability. Thanks to all who are making this possible! If you would like a copy of this earlier information on the school or other information, contact us through our website:

www.fonddouxfoundation.org

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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, USA, whose Christian community outreach began in 2011

