

The Fond Doux Flyer October 2020

House for Madam Antoinette Innocent Family



Day One Construction



Day Six Construction



Day Three Construction



Day Nineteen Stucco Construction

The home for Madam Antoinette has progressed very rapidly. In the first phase the work crew consisted of 10 men including her two oldest sons. It was decided to pay them as well, as the family needs the income. Smaller crews are finishing the house. We are extremely grateful for all our donors that have made this house possible.

Madam Antoinette was asked what this house means to her. With a smile she answered, "This House is a sign that shows nothing is impossible, I had always dreamed of having a better house than that in which I lived, but I didn't dream of having a nice one like this.

Now, my kids and I won't have to wake up when it is raining at night, as our roof and walls are strong enough to protect us when it is raining. I have a garden, so I Love when it is raining. But when it rains at night, we all have to stand up until the rain stops as the roof we had was leaking. I have always heard people talking about manna from heaven. For me this house is from heaven... If in a certain time I thought God forgot me, as the condition in which I am living is very bad, now I trust. The eyes of God are on me because of that House! This house is for me a blessing...." Tears



Day Twenty-six Roof Construction

Exchange Rate Crisis

Just as we were celebrating our successful fund raising and in the process of erecting the new home for the Innocent family, the unexpected happened! Suddenly, the US dollar experienced a sharp decline versus the Haitian Gourde. The official exchange rate was apparently not significantly altered, but no one exchanging dollars would use the official rate. Some banks would not exchange money at all. Those that did changed their rates daily. Many limited the amount that could be exchanged. The cost of the house for Madam Antoinette was based on an expected exchange rate of 100 Gourdes per US dollar. In October last year we were exchanging money at 90 Gourdes per dollar. But since Spring, we have been exchanging at 100 Gourdes per dollar. That was the rate assumed for pricing the home.

Because we could not exchange money at that 100 Gourde rate as expected, we anticipated a shortfall in our funding for the home. About half of our funds were exchanged at 90 Gourdes. This was unexpected, but seemed reasonable based on past experience. But as we were in the process of construction, just as we were purchasing some materials for the home, the bank wanted to give only 70 Gourdes, a 30% reduction. Our Haitian friends found another source exchanging 75 Gourdes for the dollar. From that we paid for the materials ordered and on hand. More recently the findable rate has bounced around 80 to 84 Gourdes per dollar but is still unstable. Because the house is actually being built under budget (in Haitian dollars), it appears that we will get it erected for almost the expected American dollar cost. We thought it was paid for! Then we thought it was not paid for. Then we found it was

actually almost covered. But as they say, "In Haiti, you never know what is going to happen."

While this was a totally unanticipated problem [because the dollar has been constantly rising and there is no known economic reason for a drop to occur], we and our Haitian partners are adapting.

We inquired, what was going on with the exchange rate? A similar problem of erratic exchange rates apparently occurred about 15 years ago. One source told us they thought the Haitian government was manipulating the exchange for unknown reasons. Another source told us that the government was responding to demonstrations over the high cost of living caused by the strengthening dollar. The value of the dollar has doubled over the last eight years. Since most imports in Haiti are from the US, this means that Haitians have seen a very sharp rise in their cost of imported goods.

Whatever the reason, the Foundation is seeking the best exchange rate possible, and, where possible, is delaying exchange until the exchange rate stabilizes. We do not know when or at what level that will be, but the Foundation is addressing how to manage this and future currency turbulence.

Supplies Delivered to Fond Doux



Dieuseul, Schneider & Emile

On September 23rd Brent Engel traveled to Port-au-Prince, Haiti where he was met by Dieuseul Istache, Schneider Saint Surin and Emile Maceus. He delivered 8 computers, 16 hygiene kits, 36 birthing kits, 100 books, eight backpacks for the computers, shoes, clothing, lighting equipment, two I-phones and student medical equipment and supplies. These were then taken to Fond Doux by the Haitians. He returned September 24th.

Our Scholarship Student Faédra



Faédra Olivier is 20 years old and is completing the Spring term of her freshman year at Ecole Emile Durkheim in Petit-Goâve, a school to prepare teachers. She was selected by the Haitian Fond Doux Foundation committee to receive the scholarship last Fall. She was the laureate of her high school class, the equivalent of valedictorian. The Spring term of school was suspended in March because of the Coronavirus, but resumed August 10th. When the suspended Spring term is completed, the school will begin the Fall term late, around the beginning of November. She wishes to become a kindergarten teacher.

In addition to paying for her tuition, the scholarship also covers a monthly stipend to cover transportation to and from school, internet and one meal each school day.

She is an adoptive mother, having adopted a 4-year-old cousin, Japhe Zidor Mikerton. He is the natural son of one of her mother's sisters. Her father is deceased. She lives with her mother (Kerline Olivier), three older siblings and another of her mother's sisters -- Majorie Theodore Edouarsin, 30 years old; Fabiola Theodore Edouarsin, 27 years old; Jean Ronaldo Theodore Edouarsin, 21 years old; and Allienne Olivier, age 31.

All the adults are unemployed. Unless one of them finds employment, she will become the family's "breadwinner". Meanwhile they are surviving through the help of their extended family and the Mormon Church, her mother's church. Her opportunity to obtain an education is a godsend for the family. It is impossible for us to really comprehend how significant this scholarship program is. A Haitian university education costs approximately \$2500 US per year.



The Olivier Home

Other Scholarship Students

Meanwhile, Frantz Delma, our nursing student, has resumed in-person classes to complete the Spring semester and will begin the Fall semester after the suspended Spring classes are completed. Dieuseul Istache, our medical student, resumed in person classes in September. Emile Maceus, our senior student in education, took online classes in September and resumes in person classes this month.

Because a new donor stepped forward this past Spring, Schneider Saint Surin, our newest scholarship student, begins his studies this month. We are hoping that by this coming Spring still another donor or donors will choose to fund another scholarship so that we might award a new scholarship in 2021.

We believe educated leaders will transform the future -- and that these students are the future. All scholarship recipients are expected to give back to the Fond Doux community as a condition of the scholarship.

Swansboro Members Donate Books



Lynn Rouse of Swansboro

Lynn Rouse of Swansboro, NC and board member Linda Mitchell recently announced that two members of Swansboro United Methodist Church have written a dual language 28-page children's book in Creole and English. The author and artists are Cheryl Epperson and her sister, Nadine Eby. Yvon Pierre (now deceased) translated it into Creole. Brent Engel took 100 of these to Haiti on Sept. 23rd to be divided among the Fond Doux and Platon, Haiti schools and the Ryan Epps Home. The book is entitled "*I Can Count: Numbers in My Village*". They will also sell copies (\$10 per copy) for funds for these schools and/or for Swansboro UMW's future reprints, if needed.

Library on Hold

The establishment of a library is one of the more immediate not yet implemented goals of the Foundation, which will require a major benefactor, a capital funds drive, or both. Before the pandemic hit us, the Foundation had been contemplating the establishment of a library as a possible 10th Anniversary project. As of the present, it is on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but not forgotten. One site for the project has been explored, but will probably not be accepted. A couple of other sites have been suggested. The cost of available land has been higher than expected. It is planned to put the Library in the hands of a Haitian Board of Directors and a paid librarian. The librarian has been provisionally selected.

Pierre -- Temporary Platon Teacher

The school in Platon lost a teacher in April when Guifaude Meunier, the only teacher that did not live in the area, resigned. He cited his wife's dislike of his regular week-long absences from home. Because the main transportation to the village is difficult and by boat, it is nearly impossible for a teacher to commute daily to the school, if they do not reside locally. He was thus absent from home 5 days a week.

The community operates a Christian elementary school (K-6) under the direction of Pastor Jonas Pierre. The school closed in April because of COVID-19, but reopened August 10th to complete the Spring semester. The Fall semester is about to begin. Pastor Jonas Pierre, school administrator, has been teaching the 3rd and 4th grade class since classes resumed on August 10th and will continue to do so until a new teacher is obtained.

The school opened in 2013, but struggled financially with inability to pay their teachers. Speaking of the Foundation's assistance, Pastor Jonas said, "In the past, the teachers were not used to being paid on time. That affected the smooth functioning of the school, but right now we pay them on time. And now, we see that there is more motivation. They are motivated to improve their teaching, to have educational reform. The teachers do their best to learn more about teaching, participate in training. We see that they are motivated to give their best to better the school."

The Foundation became the principal support of the Good Samaritan School of Platon in October 2019 upon the urging of the Christians in the neighboring village of Fond Doux.

For information on this or any project, you may contact us in the following ways:

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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.