

Location of Platon

The village of Platon lies over a mountain from Fond Doux and on a beach on the north side of Southern Haiti between Petit-Goâve and Miragoâne about 60 miles west of the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince. It is a very poor community. You get there only by boat.



Map of Area



The Exterior of the School at Platon

An Emergency -- A Challenge

What would you do if one of your best friends or a family member asked you to help some neighbor (mutual friends) because they were in desperate need? I suspect you would try to find out if you could help. What would you do if you found out the help that was needed was quite modest, but you found that you yourself really could not do it alone? I think most of us would then see if they could find some other friends to also help. That is exactly what has happened to the Fond Doux Foundation.

The request. The Christians of Fond Doux asked the Fond Doux Foundation if we could pay for three or four teachers in the school at the neighboring village of Platon. They pointed out that the school would

need to eliminate grades or even close without them. The total cost would fall between \$3000-\$4000. However, the foundation does not presently have sufficient funds. Furthermore, it has never been active in supporting a school. Mission to Haiti does support schools in the region, but their resources are also very thin.

Our Response. The Fond Doux Foundation decided that more information was needed. We asked what was the greatest need? We set conditions: 1. Complete financial and institutional transparency. 2. Commitment to quality education. Upon receiving this information, we decided to make an emergency contribution to help them this year. This emergency contribution was made possible through a generous contribution by William and Mary Jo Devorick of Lititz, PA.

Next Steps. 1. We are working with the school to help them follow through on their commitments. Amidst a culture of informal arrangements, achieving this is more difficult than you might think. In order for us to find the funds that we do not yet have, from donors that we do not yet know, these commitments are vitally important. But the commitments are active. We believe that the money that we are seeking will be used wisely and produce a quality education. To assure the latter, student achievement will be measured to meet certain objective criteria and the teachers must receive adequate training. They agree.



An interior View of the School

When asked what was the greatest need in the village, the unanimous answer was help for paying teachers. The school building consists of four class rooms – extremely modest. Here they accommodate three levels of pre-school, two years that we would call Nursery School and one year that we call Kindergarten as well as grades one through six.

Background. Our first FDF mission teams went to the village of Platon for the purpose of recreation (swimming), not mission, but gradually became more involved with the community. The teams began with goat vaccinations and deworming and Bible School for the children. Thereafter classes in first aid, health, hygiene, childbirth and birth control as well as goat and chicken care were added.



Platon Children Bible School Game

Each year Dr. Libby Engel vaccinates and deworms the goats from the village and surrounding area. August, 2019 was a new record when 116 goats were vaccinated.



Dr. Libby Engel Examining a Goat



The Goat Class at Platon

Sunday mornings, the people get into their dugout canoes to travel to another village to attend services. The biggest project in the community is the school. The school was started by Pastor Brucey Delma of Fond Doux. However, the financial burden was too great for him and he turned over the school to Pastor Jonas of Platon. Pastor Jonas lives in Platon and ministers there, but there is no church building in the village.



Platon Mode of Travel –Dugout Canoe

Teachers are the first requirement for the school, but adequate supplies and facilities are also necessary. [Our dream is to eventually provide a better facility.] At the present time the government of Haiti does not provide resources for remote communities like Platon. Further, we are told government regulations forbid teachers from teaching more than one grade at a time in government assisted schools – total nonsense in a small community such as Platon.



Pastor Jonas Pierre

The school has approximately 44 students enrolled now including 10 that come from La Gonave (Island off the coast that can be seen from Platon). These Children come and live in Platon for the school year.



Island of Gonave as Seen from Platon

The Teachers

Kindergarten: All three levels of Kindergarten are taught by Sonique Destine, whose home is in Petit-Goâve, but dwells with a family in Platon during the week, traveling home for the week-end (by boat). Her secondary education was at College Pierre Baptiste in Petit-Goâve, which she attended 2000-2007. She received her teaching certificate through a class provided by "Save Our Children" (2011-2013). This is apparently at least partly an online course. She taught first grade in the Bon Berger de Croix-Hillaire School from 2007 to 2010 and taught the third year of

Kindergarten there from 2010-2016 before coming to Platon. She has relatives in Platon.

Grades One and Two: Eugene Belizaire is the oldest of the teachers and has the longest teaching experience. He attended secondary school at Lycée Faustin Soulouque in Petit-Goâve from 7th to 12th grade (1984-1989), not graduating but began teaching without further education, teaching for 5 years (1990- 1995) in the School of Cadet. From 1997 to 2003, he taught at School Wesleyenne near Fond Doux. Then from 2004 to 2006 he attended a program for training teachers that was organized by the Ministry of Education Sciences of Haiti. From 2006-2008 he taught at Centre Damour and from 2008-2014 he taught at Edzer Vilaire. He began teaching in Platon in 2015.



Eugene Belizaire with Class

Grades Three and Four: Ginald Geffrard is new this year to the Platon School. He attended secondary school at Philippe Geurrieur, Petit-Goâve (2007-2014). At the same time (2008-2012) he pursued and got his license as an accountant through the University of IFSA (Institute of Higher Education in Administrative Sciences). From 2014 to 2016 he taught high school algebra both at Baptist Primitive de Jacob and Union Chretienne de Jacob at Petit-Goâve arranging his class schedules in order to do both. He continued at Union Chretienne de Jacob 2016-2019.



Platon School Children

Grades Five and Six. Orlmy Dorce is a graduate of Lycée Faustin Soulouque in Petit-Goâve. He attended Morning Stars Professional School (2017-2018), where he received his certificate in French, English and basic computer science. He reads, writes, and speaks French fluently and is “pretty good” in English. His curriculum Vitae indicates that Orlmy is punctual and dynamic, has a sense of responsibility, a facility for adaptation, and promotes a spirit of team work. Last year he taught grades three-five and will teach grades five and six this year.

The needs. Even after our emergency contribution, the school has some unmet needs. The problem is very simple – the tuition that the villagers can pay actually collects only enough money to pay one of the four teachers. The pay for the other three teachers must be covered by outside donors. Some money has been collected. We have also pledged to pay two teachers this year (\$2000). That means that they must still seek donors to pay another of the teachers. There are no wealthy people in Platon. Pastor Jonas contacts friends that live in other communities to solicit money – so far insufficient.

Anticipated deficit =	\$ 670 US
Needed school repairs =	606 US
New benches =	<u>363</u> US
Grand Total =	\$1639 US

Additional resources therefor needed for the school this year to be found from either Haitian or US sources amount to \$1639. Past experience indicates that finding sufficient Haitian resources to cover this

is next to impossible. If possible, we would also like to arrange for occasional meals for the children. Most children eat one meal a day. To provide one meal for all children once a week probably costs about \$25 a week additional. Last year eight of the students were admitted to the school without paying tuition because the parents were unable to pay even the \$20 per year tuition. Your prayers and support are invited.

The Future of Platon

One Step for advancing the economic potential of the village is the building of an outhouse. It is hoped that by providing a modest rest room facility and place to change clothing, the beach at Platon might attract other visitors here for recreation as was the case with the Fond Doux Foundation. It has taken a long time, but the Haitians are now doing just that, although perhaps mostly to accommodate their Fond Doux Foundation friends. They were aware that the mission teams desired such a facility. They are very gracious hosts and are reciprocating our concern for them by doing something for us (and themselves).



Building the Platon Outhouse

Website: www.fonddouxfoundation.org

Address: Fond Doux Foundation
PO Box 51443
Durham, NC 27717

Newsletter Editor: John Clausing
Website Editor: Brent Engel

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.