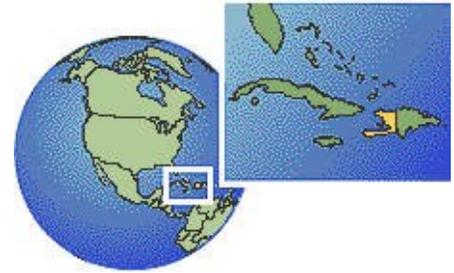


Newsletter

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
Haiti Outreach Ministry

October 2018



Health Update

A medical team of doctors and nurses from SMM and OLPH (including Pere Deone's sister) just completed a Mobil Medical Mission seeing over 400 seniors in our Seniors food program. Every person we saw received a pair of sunglasses and most also received a pair of reading glasses after a vision screening.

This fall we will also be starting a hygiene education program at OLPH. Ecuinio Alfonse has developed a program incorporating basic hand washing, food preparation, and water storage among other Haiti specific hygiene issues.



When our SMM team first visited Our Lady of Perpetual Help, they found an old church which had been badly damaged by the earthquake of 2010. The church had been declared dangerous and unfit for habitation. But the priest and parishioners were still using it because they had no way to replace it. When SMM pastor Richard Walsh saw its condition, he determined to find a way to rebuild the church. And when Fr. Walsh decides to find a way, a way is found! Here is a picture of the new church, dedicated in 2018, a joy to the people of Haiti.

Marriage at Our Lady of Perpetual Help

A great wedding is a major celebration. There should be lots of friends, music., food and dancing along with a meaningful wedding ceremony. Many of our friends in Haiti do not marry because they do not have the money for the license, rings and reception. The pastor of OLPH asked SMM to assist him in providing a marriage program for his parishioners. This marriage program includes weekly marriage preparation for three months, followed by a group wedding and celebration. Each couple speaks their vows separately. Other parishioners prepare the reception for the couples and their guests. There is food — beans, rice and goat or chicken, and a big wedding cake. Music and dancing cap off the celebration.

Each of the last 3 years saw more than 20 couples who were married in this ceremony. Afterwards, we heard many stories from the participants. One woman shared that she attended Mass every Sunday, but the pain of not receiving the

Eucharist because she was living with her man was so deep, she would walk out of church during Communion time and return when Communion was over. After receiving the Sacrament of Marriage she spoke of the joy of walking up to the altar and receiving Eucharist, taking her "rightful place" in the church. A man told us that he realized he was not respecting his woman by just living with her, and how happy he was about them being united in marriage. The couples also rejoiced in the fact that they were now able to share their faith more fully with their children. Even the children have benefited from the more loving environment and the examples of respect the couples have for each other. They are happy because "Mom and Dad are married". This experience is so meaningful the couples begged us to continue the program so that they "could encourage their friends and family members to participate in it and marry in the church.



Our Lady of Perpetual Help 2018

St. Margaret Mary
Catholic Church

526 Park Avenue North
Winter Park, FL 32789
407 647-3392
www.stmargaretmary.org

The people of OLPH earn their living by farming. Unfortunately, they earn barely enough to subsist. SMM has sponsored 3 major programs to improve the local economy, the Livestock Program., the Agriculture Program and the Women's Bank. All 3 are making a difference in the lives of the community. And all 3 are sustainable. When SMM moves on to a new parish, these programs will continue to exist. In the past 4 years, SMM has sponsored more than 750 animals and those animals have given back more than 550 babies which have been given to other families.

Our Agriculture Program has taught new and better ways of farming and soil conservation. New nurseries and seeds have given the farmers new products to feed their families and sell at the market. The seed banks will help all farmers in good and bad times. The building of rock dams on the mountains is holding onto soil that was previously washed away by storm water thus creating new areas for growing.



Our 5 Women's Banks support women in their traditional role of buying and selling for their families. First they learn basic business practices, then they are give a small loan to start or expand the business. Thus far all loans are being paid back and women are realizing some profit.

“Where We Are, We Are Forgotten” But Not by St. Margaret Mary

This year SMM funded a professional development training week for teachers and administrators. After the training, a school director stated “I want to thank all the people of St Margaret Mary for providing us that training. As you can notice, our teachers are getting better. It should be the responsibility of the government, but where we are,... we are forgotten. [What] St Margaret Mary is doing [is] helping our community. I don't have enough words to thank them.” A teacher added that “For me the training is very important. It makes me become a better teacher. .

The training addressed areas such as classroom management, developing learning objectives, and the creative use of local materials as concrete manipulatives to enrich learning, The teachers reported that the training, which included daily assignments preparing and presenting practice lessons based on the content, will help them to do a better job reaching their students.

Through the generosity of SMM parishioners, we were able to provide new textbooks in all subject areas for the four parish schools in August 2018. Typically in Haiti, students are expected to purchase the books they need for school, which is a major barrier to school enrollment and performance. In this program, books will be rented to students for a modest fee

The Marriage Program has been so successful that participants have urged us to continue it for others. But there was no way to make the program sustainable. However where there's a will, there is frequently a way. SMM has begun a new Commercial Loan Program which lends out small sums of money to

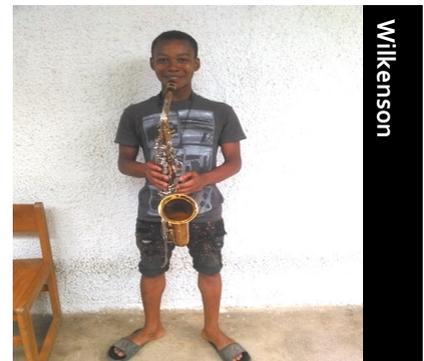


and the fees from book rentals will accumulate to allow for eventual repair and replacement of books.



Rebecca

We began a project this fall to sponsor instruction on a musical instrument for motivated young people Our first three students include a 16-year old girl (grade 10) and 2 17-year old boys (both in 9th grade), all of whom have been members of our Peace Program. Developing a skill such as playing an instrument helps Haitian youngsters to imagine a broader range of possibilities for their futures while developing confidence and a marketable skill.



Wilkenson

parishioners. Borrowers pay interest on the loan as well as paying back the principal. The interest will be saved to support the Marriage Program. Repaid principal will be accumulated to continue offering new loans. So far all loans being repaid on time. Please pray for the success of this new Commercial Loan Program.