

Partners in Caring

by Hal Cleveland - *Chairman, Board of Directors*

As the end of 2008 is fast approaching, I want to take this opportunity to thank God for all of the blessings he has bestowed upon us. Hope for the Children of Haiti has many reasons to be grateful. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Dr. Bernard and Claudette, the staff and teachers at the orphanage, and most of all, our children and students at the school, thanks so much to all of you who have provided spiritual, physical, and financial support over these past 12+ years. We simply could not do it without you.

It has been a very difficult year in Haiti, as the country has been ravaged by

numerous tropical storms and hurricanes. Tens of thousands in Haiti have lost their homes and struggle for survival on a daily basis. Although the orphanage was generally spared from the storm damage, the availability of food has become more difficult and prices have increased significantly. Our costs of operation have increased accordingly, and those costs will continue to rise as we transition our teenagers into adulthood.

The focus in the United States today is clearly on the financial crisis and how difficult things have become.

All of us who have visited Haiti understand the true meaning of difficult times. This downturn in our economy most likely will impact the normal increase in year-end giving for all charity organizations, including HFC. We will pray that it doesn't, place our trust firmly in the Lord, and continue to work diligently to support the children of Haiti. We wish you and your family a Blessed Christmas season!

Myriam's Story by Myriam Dol Laird

Myriam Dol, who grew up at HFC, was adopted by longtime supporters of HFC Laura and Mike Laird in November of 2007. As she celebrates her year-anniversary of coming to the US, Myriam shared some of her experiences for the HFC community

I am Myriam Dol. I am seventeen years old. I am from Haiti. My Haitian mom is named Kristimene and my dad's name was Wilner Dol. I have two brothers in Haiti, one is named Michelet and one Rodney. My mom just had a baby girl; my sister's name is Lovely. My father died when I was five years old. After my dad died I went to the orphanage with my grandma. I grew up in the orphanage. I think the orphanage was very good because I have many brothers and sisters and I made a lot of friends.

Now I am in the U.S.A because I was adopted by the Laird family. The Laird family wanted to adopt one baby I don't no what baby. The Laird family prayed and they felt that God said, "adopt Myriam." One day when Dr Bernard came to see me, he said to me, "you're going to be adopted." I asked him which family was going to adopt me. He said, "The Laird family, Mike and Laura." He wrote their names for me. I am very happy be-

cause I have known Laura and Mike since I was a little girl. Laura came to Haiti many times when she worked for HFC. I love Laura and she loves me too. Mike and Laura came to Haiti for my 16th birthday.

I came to the U.S.A on November 15th, 2007. And for the first time I flew in an airplane. It was also the first time I saw snow in my life. They have no snow in Haiti. I love



snow but it is very cold for me. In Haiti they have no jackets and no boots. It is very different here than in Haiti. I was very nervous about going to school because I didn't



know anybody. I didn't have a friend to walk in to school with. I walked in all by myself and people were looking at me. I am very self-conscious. Now I have friends in school. And I speak English pretty good with my family, my friends and in school too. Now my name is Myriam Dol Laird. My American family is Christian. My Dad is a pastor. I have two brothers and one sister in America. One brother is named Samuel the other is Benjamin and my sister's name is Phoebe Joy. I love my family so much.

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Prayer Requests

Thank you for your ongoing prayers for the children. As we prepare for the advent season, please pray...

- For the ongoing recovery of the country from the effects of the hurricanes.
- For the students as they continue in their studies.
- For a joyful Christ-centered Christmas.
- For the health and wellness of all of our children and staff.
- For safe travel for Pierre Daniel, who goes to Haiti on December 29th to assume the position of Assistant Director of the Orphanage.

Missions Corner by Kathy Francois



Free Christian Church (FCC) in Andover, MA is currently assembling a missions team to go to Haiti to work with the children during the week of Carnivale, as the children will be off from school for a couple of days. If anyone is interested in assisting the team or joining the trip, please feel free to contact Kathy Francois, HFC's Missions and Volunteers Coordinator who will also be part of this team.

Marianne Langston, team leader, and Kathy Francois, co-leader visited the Boston Haitian

Missionary Church in Boston, MA on November 6th to present to fellow Haitian Christians the work of HFC and the needs of the children at the orphanage as well as our vision to transition the older children as working, trained adults in society. We are hoping that our Haitian brothers and sisters will respond and join us to assist with the teaching and interpreting during the mission trip.

The team plans to stay at Dr. Bernard's Bethel House, arriving Friday, February 20th and departing Wednesday, February 25th. Nurses and medical personnel are urged to join us as we would like to vaccinate and give check ups to the children at the orphanage. The focus of the trip will be on mentoring. Besides the team mentoring the children by doing a Vacation Bible School and crafts and activities day, the team plans to have selected children visit another local orphanage to mentor children there, serving their needs and teaching them about Christ Jesus. The children will have Monday and Tuesday off from school because of the Carnivale holiday, so there will be time to teach, share activities, pray and participate in devotionals with the children as well as attend Sunday church and plan a trip to the beach.

Besides bringing the needed food, medicine and supplies, we will be addressing specific needs of the children as they are growing into adulthood. Also, we will gather new sheets for their beds as most have outgrown their teddy bear sheets by now! Assistance will be needed to sew hems and size the sheets.

Please contact Kathy Francois at kfrancois@hfchaiti.org, tel. 978-657-8843 or Marianne Langston at Langstonfamily@comcast.com, tel. 978-258-1531 if you would like to participate in any way.



HFC Community Gathers for Annual Walkathon



Thank you to everyone who participated in the fourth annual HFC Walkathon on Saturday, October 18th at Minuteman National Park in Concord, MA. Twenty-five walkers, including many old and

new friends, mature grandparents, and adventurous two-year-olds, came out to enjoy fellowship and to share their desire to support our kids. We are thankful that it was glorious fall day with bright sunshine and gorgeous fall foliage.

One of the highlights of the morning was walking with Adrienne Mack, the daughter of our founder, Marion Austin. We were blessed to hear stories from long-time supporters, ideas from those new to the HFC community, and even memories from HFC alumni as we shared a lunch of sandwiches and Haitian rice and beans. The walkers and their faithful supporters raised over \$6,000 to support the vision of helping children grow to be women and men of faith who can impact their

future and their country for God's glory.

If you were unable to attend this year we hope you consider joining us next fall. Thank you to everyone who made this possible and we look forward to next year!



What's New at HFC

This fall **Dan Dzikowicz**, a long time advocate and Board member, leaves the Boston area to pursue a pastor position in Illinois. Dan has been an incredible supporter of the vision of HFC, from his time working on HFC stateside staff to his years serving on the Board. Bringing knowledge of the history of HFC and a Christ-centered perspective to decision making, Dan has blessed the kids and whole HFC community. Dan also helped develop HFC's

relationship with Free Christian Church, a community that is planning a second missions trip to HFC this coming winter. We are so thankful for your support over the years and pray the best for you and your family in your new role Dan!

Anyone who has been to Haiti can attest – it is a life changing experience. This February you have an opportunity to have your life changed in that way. Those **interested in**

joining a short-term missions team to Haiti in February with HFC – whether it is your first time or fifteenth time – can contact **Kathy Francois** at kfrancois@hfchaiti.org for more information. If you have a team of people interested in going in summer 2009, Kathy can also give you more information about how to start preparing now. We hope you will consider and pray about taking a step toward a life altering experience of being in Port-au-Prince and meeting the kids in person.

With the success of last year's spring fundraiser, **Growing Grace**, we are excited to invite you to this year's event on **May 2, 2009**. Mark your calendars now and be ready to come join us to celebrate the growth of our children and the vision for their future both as children and as they grow into adulthood. Dinner and dessert will be provided - more details to come. If you are interested in helping organize this event, please email Shannon O'Brien at sobrien@hfchaiti.org.

One Such Child by Bryn Boorman



When the meeting broke, I tried to get through the crowd of kids to find the girl I was looking for. Dr. Bernard was calling my name and a chorus of voices was asking me for various things. I broke out of the crowd just as the girl reached the stairs. Turning

her to face me, I saw tears glistening in her eyes and my heart hurt for her.

As usual, Youdemie had stood up for her brothers and sisters. In the face of miscommunications and misunderstandings, Youdemie has fought back, determined to be heard as the adult she is becoming. On this day she was fighting for the boys, the only girl to stand up and argue their case for them. For her efforts, she was heckled by the girls who didn't want the boys to win their case. She ended

the meeting with her head buried in her arms.

After a couple of hours of girl time, her beautiful smile returned. She ended her day by working in the New Life Link nursery with the toddlers who adore her. At first glance, Youdemie doesn't look like a natural leader and she's not the extroverted dominant personality leader that most of us imagine. She isn't confident in front of a crowd, but if she sees something happening that isn't right, she'll intercede. I remember one night Wislandy decided that someone was committing a grave injustice to her and she went hauling off down the hall screaming Youdemie's name. A few minutes later, Youdemie appeared with fire in her eyes and gave the perpetrator an earful. If the kids are misbehaving, Youdemie calls them on it. The girls' head nanny depends on Youdemie for help more than any other girl, whether it is sorting through all of the clothes or making sure the girls are doing what they are supposed to be doing. The girls look up to her. They listen to her when she talks. They do what she asks them to do. Youdemie has a learning disability and is often embarrassed by it, but that

disability doesn't stop her from constantly trying to do her best and striving for perfection. Unlike a lot of the children, if your beliefs differ from hers, she wants to know why. Instead of stubbornly deciding that her way is the best way, she wants to talk about issues and know as much information as she can before she decides her stance. If you ask her what she wants to do with her life, she'll list off a string of professions: dentistry, dermatology, cosmetology. Every profession she dreams of is about helping someone look and feel their best.

Of course, if you were to tell her all of these amazing qualities that she possesses, she would be quick to disagree with you. Like most girls her age, she sees her faults ahead of her attributes. That is why it is so hard to get her to talk in front of a crowd or project herself into a leadership position. That's ok. The world has plenty of charismatic leaders. Quiet leaders are just as needed and, as long as she learns to believe in herself, Youdemie has the potential to be a powerful influence on those around her.

Intern Report by Bryn Boorman

Last night I started down the stairs around 8:30 to empty my garbage in the outside garbage barrel. The girls' head nanny, Soeur Pradel, saw me heading down the stairs and called for me to stop. I thought perhaps the gates were already locked and that is why she didn't want me to go downstairs, but she called two girls out of their room to go outside with me. "You can't go outside by yourself!"

This concern is typical of the extra-protective measures the staff want to

take around me. It's something a person must get used to when they live here. The staff is so used to taking care of the kids that they end up taking care of you too. Because their way of life is so different, most Americans have a learning curve when they arrive here.

After 11 months of tutelage, I finally learned the correct method for washing clothes. The laundry women cheered as we could ever so faintly hear the squishing sound that means

you are scrubbing the clothes correctly. The other day I took over in the kitchen so one of the girls could go study and the cooks talked amongst themselves about the fact that I can actually do some stuff in the kitchen.

Whether it is being chased down the hall by the head cook because she doesn't think I've eaten enough today or having Soeur Pradel come into my room with a mop and tell me my floor isn't clean enough for her liking, the staff daily shows their enormous

hearts. While it would be easy to interpret their overbearing actions as an insult to one's intelligence and self-sufficiency, you have to take it in the cultural context. It simply means they have absorbed you into the family.



In Memory of Paula Quinn

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Paula Quinn, one of the most ardent supporters of the cause of Hope for the Children of Haiti. Paula passed on September 29, 2008. She made numerous trips to Haiti to work at the orphanage and visit our children, and served as the Child Sponsorship Coordinator for the organization for many years. In addition to her work on behalf of HFC, Paula worked as an on call translator for Spanish and French speaking patients and their families at the National Institute of Health, was a volunteer in the children's playroom at the National Institute of Health, and served the homeless shelter So Others Might Eat in Washington DC. Paula was a remarkable individual who clearly put the needs of others before her own. Clearly Paula understood the words of the apostle Paul, who said in Acts 20:24, "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." Paula did indeed finish that race and we at HFC are so thankful for all of the hard work, dedication, and love demonstrated by Paula throughout her life and how much she truly loved our kids.

A special note of thanks to...

Marianne Langston, Armand Bergeron, and Emanuel for their efforts in making the HFC Christmas Card program a reality.

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for the children
of HAITI

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Caring for the needs of today,
Investing in the leaders of tomorrow,
Sharing hope in Christ for eternity.

Hope For the Children of Haiti (HFC), a Massachusetts based 501 (C) 3 non-profit organization, owns and operates a Christian school and orphanage located in Bolosse, an impoverished section of Port-Au-Prince, Haiti. The Marion G. Austin Christian School currently provides education for the 55 children living at the orphanage and for more than 200 children from the community.

HFC is called by God to give Haitian children, particularly orphans, the opportunity to experience the hope and the future God has planned for them.

GRACE CHAPEL'S GLOBAL AWARENESS WEEK

Hope for the Children of Haiti participated in **Grace Chapel's Global Awareness Week** during the first two weeks in November. **Dr. Jacob Bernard**, Managing Director in Haiti, **his wife Claudette**, and **Micaelle Benjamin**, Director of the Orphanage, all traveled to the Boston area to participate in this most important program. The theme of this year's conference was ONE ANOTHER: BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST. This vision allowed participants to focus on how to deepen and strengthen God's work in their lives by learning how to build each other up in love.

Dr. Bernard, Claudette, and Micaelle participated in workshops to discuss best ministry practices, spent time with leaders of other ministries to share their stories and experiences, and interfaced with the leaders of Grace Chapel to update them on our ministry in Haiti. This retreat allowed everyone involved to become spiritually enriched and refreshed.

We wish to **express our gratitude** to everyone at Grace Chapel, but especially to **Pastor Bryan Wilkerson, Pastor Jeanette Yep, and Justin Bennett** for the opportunity to participate in Global Awareness Week. Grace Chapel, as many of you know, is the church attended by our founder, **Marion Austin**. We are also so grateful for the continued financial support of Grace Chapel and what that has allowed us to do with our ministry and the significant difference it has made in the lives of our children.

