

# ERITAJ CHRONICLE

A newsletter for the friends and supporters of Haiti

January/February 2005

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Our work is made possible by the generous tax deductible contributions of organizations and individuals like you. This year we are giving a complimentary book, or a DVD, or CD when you join Eritaj as a Gold Member for 2005.

The free gifts include:

- Circles of Change: a Quiet Revolution in Haiti (20-minute DVD see back page)
- Giffrants, Twoubadou Sek CD
- Echoing, Willie Sordillo CD
- And Don't Call Me a Racist A treasury of quotes of the past, present and future of the color line in America, selected and arranged by Ella Mazel

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In photo: Mirlande Butler, center, with founders of Rose Mirna Diez orphanage.

Ask "What's My Job?" and Do it Now!

## Beginning of the Year Resolution to Help Shape a Better Legacy for Haiti

As we are going through serious reflection as to directions or strategic plans for the next four years on how to help Haiti through grassroots organizations, we invite Haitians of all walks of life to undertake a little exercise with us. We understand that many are veterans in analyzing, proposing solutions and processing toward positive change. We are seeking to involve more individuals to act. This particular essay aims to benefit the country as a whole and not just our own relatives.

First, make a mental note of what you can do. What is it that you are really good at that could benefit a community in Haiti. Second, write down that one thing you can do, or share it with someone. Third, define the steps you are going to take to do it. Fourth, do it!

We welcome stories of what is being done. If you would like your action to be used as a model for other people to follow, write or email us. Here are a few suggestions of what can be done. Please send us your ideas so we can add to this list:

- Start a discussion group with friends/ church members or join one
- Plan activities in your neighborhood (read to a child, clean up a street, visit a hospital)
- Volunteer at a hospital, school or other community projects
- Pray for change and to be an element of change
- Support a less fortunate person positively
- Take the time to thank someone for an act of kindness
- Organize focus groups with the larger community to determine what is needed
- Teach an adult you know how to read
- Give money to your school or project of your choice
- Write your experience to share them with others
- Clear up some room in your own space to reflect and meditate on change
- Remember the goodness in someone you dislike and show that you care
- Teach a skill to a younger person and ask to pass it on to another

Every bit counts! If this is so, we will each accomplish a little bit. The key word here is 'act positively.' The goal is to get things done. These things will make a slight improvement in the current condition towards a bigger improvement to accomplish a complete change. The "do" part seems to have been the greater problem. Many are assessing and evaluating and making recommendations - these steps are needed, but more people must **act**. So what's your homework?



## Gonaïves Floods, Asian Tsunami, Different Response!

Although I realize the magnitude of the disaster which took place in Asia, I can't help but feel slightly bitter that the outpouring of help which the world is giving the affected countries, was never evident after the flooding of Gonaïves, Haiti in September '04, after Tropical Storm Jeanne passed through. Granted, the places, number of people affected, and circumstances were different, the outcomes were the same: thousands of people were killed by nature's wrath. The latest estimates of the death toll in Asia have surpassed 150,000, while approximately 3000 were killed in Haiti.

In recent news, the U.S. government came under fire for responding

to the tsunami disaster too slowly. Well, if I remember correctly, most of the world didn't even know about the tragedy in Gonaïves for about a week after it happened. When the magnitude of what happened in Haiti was finally assessed, many organizations held fund raisers to help the victims. They were slow to respond, and resulted in efforts which were, for the most part, uncoordinated. They also paled in comparison to the outpouring of help for the tsunami victims where banners were placed almost over night on every major website, to help raise funds. How easily Gonaïves could have gotten back on it's feet if it received just a fraction of this help!

Maybe I'm completely wrong in thinking this way. Maybe it's wrong to pit one tragedy against another. Maybe I'm just jealous that Asia is getting all of this attention, while my poor country is, as usual, all but forgotten. Whatever the case may be, a life is a life, and no one can say that one life lost deserves more or less attention than another. For others out there who think like me, let's stop hating, and learn from what we are reading and seeing. Surely, the Gonaïves floods are not the last disaster to happen in our beloved Haiti.

*HaitiXchange, Peyi Nou Pap Tonbe  
Pascal Antoine, President  
<http://www.haitixchange.com>*

## Rezolisyon

*Pou kòmansman ane a pou ede tabliyon pi bon eritaj pou Ayiti Mande «Ki travay mwen?» epi Fè l Kounyeya!*

Panse a sa ou ka fè. Kisa ou reyèlman ka fè ki kapab benefisye yon kominote an(n) Ayiti. Dezyèmman, ekri sa ou ka fè a, oubyen pataje l ak yon moun. Twazyèmman, defini machasuiv ou pral pran pou fè sa. Katriyèmman, fè l!

Nou pa gen pwoblèm asepte istwa sou sa w fè deja. Si ou ta renmen travay ou a itilize kòm modèl pou lòt moun suiv, ekri oubyen imel nou.



Children from Centre D'Accueil enjoy a meal.

Men kèk sijesyon bagay ou ka fè. Souple, voye ide w ban nou pou n ka ajoute l nan lis la:

- Kòmanse yon diskisyon an gwoup ak zanmi/ manm legliz oubyen vin fè pati youn
- Plan aktivite nan vwazinaj ou (li pou yon timoun, netwaye yon ri, vizite yon lopital)
- Travay kòm volontè nan yon lopital, lekòl oubyen nan lòt pwojè kominotè
- Priye pou chanjman e pou vin yon eleman chanjman
- Sipòte pozitivman yon moun ki pa gen anpil sikse
- Pran yon ti tan pou remèsye yon moun ki montre yon jantiyès
- Òganize gwoup ki montre dinamite nan gran kominote a pou detèmine sa k manke
- Montre yon gran moun li
- Bay lekòl ou a lajan oubyen yon pwojè o chwa ke w genyen
- Ekri esperyans ou pou pataje l ak lòt
- Netwaye plas nan pwòp espas pa w pou reflekte e pou medite sou chanjman
- Sonje bonte ki egziste nan yon moun ou deteste epi montre ke w sousye
- Anseye yon bagay ou konnen a

adolesan (jenn moun) epi mande ke l vin yon bagay respwòk (pase konesans lan bay lòt).

Chak ti moso konte! Si se vre, chak nan nou pral fè yon ti moso. Mo kle a se 'aji pozitivman'. Bi prensipal la se fè bagay yo fèt. Bagay sa yo pral pote yon ti amelyorasyon nan kondisyon aktyèl yo vizavi yon pi gwo amelyorasyon pou debouche a yon chanjman total. «Fè pa w» sanble se pi gwo pwoblèm. Anpil moun ap evalue ak rekòmande – machasuiv yo nesesè tout bon, men plis moun dwe aji an konsekans. Donk, ki devwa pa ou?

*Text traduction by E.W.Vedrine,  
writer & researcher Visit his site at  
[www.palli.ch/~kapeskreyol/  
bibliographie/vedrine.html](http://www.palli.ch/~kapeskreyol/bibliographie/vedrine.html) for a  
plethora of teaching materials in  
Haitian Creole*

### Haitian Cultural Heritage Month March 2005!

Commemorate the historic links between Haiti and the United States from the American Revolution to the present. Find out through activities and web links why the month of May is special for Haitians around the world. [www.glencoe.com/sec/  
socialstudies/btt/](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/socialstudies/btt/)

## News From Haiti Brought to you by AlterPresse

❖ **Le Programme Alimentaire Mondial (PAM)** a lancé le 14 décembre un clip de la star haitiano-américaine Wyclef Jean, dédié à Gonaïves, ville du Nord d'Haïti durement touchée par la tempête tropicale Jeanne les 18 et 19 septembre 2004. Le clip qui montre le célèbre chanteur en train de causer avec des Sinistrés, aider les manutentionnaires du PAM à décharger de lourds sacs, vise à sensibiliser la communauté internationale sur la situation de ces populations, et susciter des gestes de solidarité et de générosité à leur égard.

❖ **La Société d'Animation et de Communication Sociale (SAKS)** a mis en circulation son « agenda populaire », ayant cette année pour thème de fond « Un pays à construire ». L'agenda de la SAKS renferme non seulement des espaces pour noter des rendez-vous, mais aussi des thèmes de réflexions sur des problématiques sociales, politiques, économiques et culturelles.

❖ Le gouvernement a alerté la **Brasserie Nationale d'Haïti (BRANA S.A)** sur les effets pervers d'une affiche de cette compagnie, jugée sexiste par les secteurs féministes, a révélé la Ministre à la

Condition Féminine, Adeline Chancy. Les féministes haïtiennes n'ont pas cessé de demander le retrait de l'affiche incriminée montrant une femme aux fesses nues sur une plage, tenant une bouteille de bière. Le Président de BRANA, Michael Madsen, a refusé d'enlever l'affiche critiquée et a affirmé qu'il continuera à faire de la « publicité hardie ».

❖ **Le Ministre des Haïtiens Vivant à l'étranger**, Alix Baptiste, a effectué une visite officielle en République Dominicaine du 9 au 11 janvier 2005. Il s'est entretenu avec des représentants de divers secteurs de la communauté haïtienne, dont les étudiants. Ces derniers ont, entre autres, exprimé au ministre leurs préoccupations par rapport à divers abus subis et à l'augmentation des frais d'inscriptions à l'université, passant de US \$600 à 900 par semestre.

Pour supporter AlterPresse, faites un don par chèque, émis à l'ordre de Groupe Médialternatif et expédié à l'adresse suivante : Groupe Médialternatif Delmas 38 #8 PauP, Haïti Ou bien faites un transfert bancaire : Nom du compte: Groupe Médialternatif / solidarité Numéro du compte: 130-2016-4429-640 Banque: UNIBANK

### Relief Update

**Participants to the Gonaïves Disaster Relief include ministers, students, educators and community people. The groups are geared to assist international organizations, churches and others who are reaching to the people of Gonaïves with in kind and monetary contributions. They have so far organized support groups and focus groups to decide how to help the people most affected by Hurricane Jeanne. They have also served meals to the community on a weekly basis. The group received \$12,000 from Eritaj for these activities. Unfortunately, the three 40-foot containers from Massachusetts, Texas Christian Alliance and the New Jersey groups have not made it yet to Gonaïves. People made do with a 20-foot container that went with the CHAPO group.**

## St. Louis Community Extends A Helping Hand

**I**n a humanitarian effort to help the hurricane victims of Ivan and Jeanne in Haiti, a number of community based organizations and faith based initiatives came together to form the St. Louis Project for Haiti. With their unity and commitment, this newly formed group was able to generate over 450 boxes of clothing, medical supplies, bottled water and food that was shipped in a 40' foot container to the people of Haiti for distribution to those in need. These items were to be

received by the Haitian based organization, Project 2000 International along with the Gonaïves Disaster Relief group, a partner of Eritaj.

Organizations and faith based initiatives involved in this humanitarian project included Greater St. Mark Church, Concerned Haitians and Friends, African Hebrew Israelite Community, National Black United Front, and the Universal African Peoples Organization. Zaki Baruti served as chief organizer along with great assistance

from Harold Compere, Bill Monroe, Anthony Lewis, Safiyah Chauvin, Rev. Tommie Pierson and Akbar Muhammad. Also, a number of business people and churches made financial contributions to offset costs relating to shipping the container.

This effort started in late October 2004, with the container being shipped in January. Zaki Baruti of the Universal African Peoples Organization stated, "It is our duty as a people to help one another no matter where on earth we reside."

# Musicozîles

## Friends from Switzerland organize 2nd concert to benefit Eritaj

We presented our second fundraising event in Switzerland for Eritaj, an open air evening festival with local artists. Many volunteers helped with the planning phase, as well as during the day of the festival. The organizers had to try to gather the whole material at the lowest price (stage, electrical and musical installation, bars, drinks). They also had to develop a sort of advertising campaign, to be sure to attract the most young people from the area. Finally, during the night of the festival, the volunteers, as well as the organizers, had to work as barmen or barmaid, sell the entry

tickets and make sure that everything was going on well. And on the following day, they helped with the cleaning of the site.

The first edition was organized on September 13th, 2003, on a place called "Les Iles" in Switzerland (from which the name of the festival was derived) and met the expectations of all the organizers and the visitors! The entry ticket was priced quite low and it attracted lots of young people. As it allowed us to save a certain amount of money for Eritaj, we decided to organize it again this year. We sat it up on the same place, and it attracted even more people than in 2003, although the

entry price had been increased.

For this year edition, we raised approx. \$1,500 euros and must thank the four music groups who play for the good cause: The Prisms, Jane's Brain, The Bohemians and the Coordinatrix. We would like to thank as well all the people and institutions that allowed us to save money, as for example those who lent us the stage or offered us a security guard. The success of this year's edition makes us hope for a great future for this event. For Musicozîles, Celine Dubas December 2004

Bétrisey Jennifer, Dubas Céline, Pfammatter Vincent, Rentmeister Michaël, Roduit Axel, Claivaz

[vincentpfammatter@yahoo.fr](mailto:vincentpfammatter@yahoo.fr)

## Circles of Change: A Quiet Revolution in Haiti (20-minute DVD)

"Circles of Change is a top rate piece of work." Philippe Armand, President, Haitian-American Chamber of Commerce & CEO, Groupe Dynamic Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This DVD tells the story of a grassroots movement that is transforming notions and practices in education and leadership in Haiti and beyond. Through Open Space, an innovative approach to community organizing and Reflection Circles, a discussion-based approach to classroom education called Touchstones in the U.S., the seeds of change are being planted

among a new generation of Haitian leaders.

Thousands of Haitians are discovering hope for the future. In pockets throughout Haiti, new leaders are cultivating peace and self-determination through innovative practices in education and community organizing. In Circles of Change, you'll see how grassroots techniques such as Reflection Circles and Open Space are transforming notions of education and leadership and nurturing a culture of democracy throughout Haiti.

"If change begins with dialogue, this program offers a great deal of hope

for change. The discussions and commitment of those involved are extraordinary and inspiring. A better, truly unified Haiti will finally be possible when everybody joins the circle." Edwidge Danticat, author

Produced by Wozo Productions in collaboration with The Experiment in Alternative Leadership (in Haitian Creole with English subtitles). Order/learn more by going to [www.circlesofchange.com](http://www.circlesofchange.com) or call toll-free at 1.866.424.8401. Better yet, receive a complimentary DVD of Circles of Change with a 2005 Eritaj membership. See insert on front page.

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