

ERITAJ CHRONICLE

A newsletter for the friends and supporters of Haiti

January/February 2006

Eritaj Foundation, Inc.
*Partnership for
a Better Haiti*

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**Eritaj Reforestation
Project with high school
students in Gonaives.
Several schools and
churches were involved,
using funds from the
Bridgeway Charitable
Foundation and from the
Switzerland Group.**

Residents of Portland, Maine Team up with Haitian Nationals to Resuscitate School in Port au Prince

In the Gwo Jan area of Port-au-Prince stand 8 school buildings that in the past served the education needs of more than six hundred students. Most of the buildings have been idle for several years, lacking the funds to continue. Thanks to the generosity of the owners, the buildings are available for use if they can be renovated and staffed to serve an equivalent number of students again.

The project is directed by Moravia Drice, Haitian born, now working as a stone mason and studying at USM, in Portland, Maine. "Tito" graduated from and taught at the largest of the schools, the former L'Ecole de Metivier. He has been developing plans to reopen the schools for more than three years. Bill Davis, a retired educator and advisory board member of the Justice Studies Association, serves as the project's administrative assistant. Advisory board members of the Gwo Jan project are James Masi, professor emeritus of Electrical Engineering and Bioengineer-

ing at Western New England College, research professor at the University of Southern Maine, and member of the board of trustees of Our Lady of the Elms College, Springfield, MA, Charitable Wanchee, Haitian born, working in Maine since 2002 as a CNA after studying in Massachusetts, Jean Ernest Marc, Haitian born, currently a public accountant at Harvard University in Cambridge, taught French adults in Port-au-Prince, and Coleman Gorham, U.S. Navy retired Lieutenant Commander, high school English teacher and psychologist, restaurant owner and builder and developer.

Plans to begin the project, costs of renovation and development of the school staffs and educational programs will all be accomplished at minimal costs through volunteer efforts and salaries much lower than in the U.S. The school program will be developed with the advice and assistance of knowledgeable educators from the USA and from Haiti. The school will seek to: Teach relevant subject matter to community students, including agriculture and forestry, aquaculture, government for the common good, child care, health care, mathematics, sciences (including social sciences), Kreyol, French, Spanish and English.

In addition, one nutritious meal will be provided each school day. Fund raising will be included under 501(C)3 and managed by independent professionals of the Eritaj Foundation of



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Thanks and Greetings

We would like to thank everyone who, in one way or another, has made a contribution to further justice and hope, reduce hunger, improve health and education in Haiti. We hope that the new year will bring wisdom, health and prosperity to all.

Carine Savain, Eritaj Foundation,

Count Our Blessings

At the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH) and the Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), we are grateful for everyone who pitched in to support justice in Haiti during 2005, with our Half Hour for Haiti alerts and with the many alerts issued by other human rights and solidarity organizations. There is much work undone- we will address that in our 2006 action alerts. But we should also recognize that together we have proven the Haitian creole proverb- men anpil, chay pa lou (many hands make the load light). Our collective efforts have induced powerful actors, especially the U.S. and the UN, to take human rights in Haiti more seriously. Grassroots groups on the ground in Haiti know we are there to support them. To receive Half-Hour for Haiti briefing, send an email to: Brian Concannon Jr., Director, Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti PO Box 745, Joseph, OR 97846; 541-432-0597; www.ijdh.org Brian@IJDH.ORG

Voeux de Compatriote

A l'occasion de la nouvelle annee, je veux adresser, a toute les Communautees Haitiennes d'Haiti et de l'exterieur, mes voeux de bonheur, de sante et de prosperite. A l'aube de cette annee, ma premiere pensee va a tous ceux qui ne pourront participer a la joie generale, frappe par le malheur, un deuil, la vieillesse, ou simplement, la pauvreté. Ne les oublions pas et

que chacun de nous fasse, s'il le peut, quelque chose pour les aider. A eux et a vous, je dis, avec tout mon coeur d'homme et de patriote, BONNE ANNEE. Que 2006 vous apporte ce que vous souhaitez, sante, bonheur familial, succes dans vos etudes ou dans votre travail, et pour notre pays, ce bien supreme, qu'est la paix. Que 2006 soit pour notre pays l'annee du renouveau, de l'union dans la diversite d'opinion, de tolerance, de consensus politique, de negociation de nos differences. Qu'apres les secousses subies, les perils une fois encore surmontes, nous poursuivions dans le calme, notre effort vers le progres, vers le bien-etre, vers la justice. Bonne Annee, Hebert Jules: hebertjules@hotmail.com

Hope for the Children

HFC's wishes are that in these days when it is easy to despair of progress in Haiti, we all would remember what Dale Carnegie said: "Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." Gerald Walle, Director, Hope for the Children of Haiti- www.hfc-haiti.com

From Benjamin Banneker CPS

Happy New Year from the Benjamin Banneker in Cambridge! Thank you to all of the parents, community members, staff and students for helping to create this wonderful learning community. We are making significant progress toward our goal of Charter Renewal and we would not have come this far without the support of BBCPS parents and community members like our friends from the Eritaj Foundation. Bón Ane! Chandra Banks Gooding, Ed.M., School Wellness Coordinator Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School (617) 497-7771 x226

MIT's Students/Staff seek to Develop Alternative Energy Project

The group have developed a process for making charcoal that does not rely on cutting down trees, but rather uses waste from sugarcane processing. Using a simple kiln, a binding material made from locally grown manioc and a hand-made briquette press, we can produce charcoal that burns longer, hotter and cleaner than wood charcoal. Having achieved this success, we are now ready to optimize the process and begin dissemination throughout Haiti.

We are seeking funding to conduct site visits to Haiti as part of a three stage approach including, individual level production of charcoal for single-family use, village level production, using a sugar mill waste product for the general market and a research site at the Petite-Anse sugar mill. This project has the potential to make a dramatic difference in Haiti, both environmentally and economically.

To support the Charcoal Project, contact Gerthy Lahens, D-LAB Community Representative glahens@mit.edu, or call 617-427-9308.

The life of Paul Dejean, A Celebration

Le Centre National de L'Aspotolat Haitien celebrates this January the life of Paul Dejean. With Father Carl Leveque and Mr. Joseph Augusti, Mr. Dejean co-founded the office of Haitian Christian Community of Montreal, (la Communauté Chretienne des Haitiens de Montreal). For his lifetime contribution to the cause of Haitian immigration to Canada, this community has lost one of its most beloved and admired figures. Rev. Eddy Julien, St. Boniface Church, Elmont, Long Island

Is Justice Jailed in Haiti?

Editor's note: Excerpted from Languishing and Sick in a Haitian Jail, published on Monday, January 2, 2006 in the Miami Herald- by Paul Farmer)

Born and raised in Haiti, Fr. Gerard Jean-Juste was the first Haitian ordained a priest in the United States. Inspired by liberation theology, Father Gerry has worked with the homeless, uprooted and poor. He directed Miami's Haitian Refugee Center from 1979 to 1989, which championed the rights of Haitian immigrants, most of them newly arrived "boat people" fleeing persecution and misery in Haiti.

But Father Gerry traded the comforts of Florida for the slums of his native country. Charismatic and warm, he turned his attention to feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and putting children in school.

In August, Amnesty International adopted Father Gerry as a prisoner of conscience.

Father Gerry has leukemia, possibly a rapidly progressive form. So he

is not only a prisoner of conscience, one of hundreds in Haiti, but a sick prisoner who needs more than prayers and letters of support. He needs proper medical care and, probably, chemotherapy. As we know from long experience in central Haiti, it's hard enough to deliver chemotherapy anywhere in the country. It's simply not possible to do so in a Haitian prison.

Time is running out for a fine man who has done much to assuage the suffering of the Haitian poor. Those who know Haiti believe that it's well within the power of the U.S. administration, the Haitian government's principal international patron, to have Father Gerry released immediately for the medical attention he needs.

"I'm sure I'll be out of prison soon," he told me on Christmas Eve. "But what about all the others? They need help too." What is needed is to have those calling the shots in Haiti -- many of them in the United States -- reverse the policies that have filled Haiti's prisons with expediently

chosen "suspects" against whom no charges have been presented. The way to start is to release Father Gerry for proper medical evaluation and care.

"It was six years ago this month that I went to Haiti for the first time and met Fr. Jean-Juste. He shared his vision of a food program for hungry children and this meeting inspired the birth of the What If? Foundation.

Now years later, 700 children and 150 adults receive their only meal of the day every Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at Fr. Jean-Juste's parish - St. Clare's. This is where this man of extraordinary faith and courage belongs, not in jail. I've never met anyone so committed to serving the poor and helping the oppressed." Margaret Trost, President, What If? Foundation, 1563 Solano Ave., #192 Berkeley, CA 94707 <http://www.whatiffoundation.org>

margarettrost@yahoo.com

Our Churches, Our Strength

Action Items for Our Living God: A prayer whispered at the dawn of 2006 for Haiti

- ❖ Give us a leader to lead Haiti out of poverty, misery, despair and humiliation. Give us the Holy Spirit to enlighten us as to how to do it.
- ❖ Inspire our people to acquire wisdom and join hands in changing the legacy we inherited from our forbearers. Inspire our faith ministers/pastors to take active steps for change.
- ❖ Touch our hearts so we stop curtailing and hurting each other. Touch our minds so we learn to live together.
- ❖ Show us how to feed our children and to educate our young. Show us how to manage or depleted resources, to produce crops, raise hens and cattle.

- ❖ Send your Holy Spirit to enlighten us. Send you guiding light to instruct us.
- ❖ Teach us to love each other in deeds, not in wishful thinking, nor in words.
- ❖ On our knees, we ask that political upheavals, social injustices, rampant crimes and killings by unfettered tugs to cease. We ask that Haitians willing to stay home (nearly all) as their heart desires, can do so.
- ❖ We pray that Haiti's true friends will back justice and rule of law and will support concrete, sustainable poverty reduction and development programs. We pray for blessings and wisdom for them in doing so.
- ❖ Help us to find the way. Help us see the glimmer of light at the end of this long tunnel.

Elections Update Submitted by the Haiti for Christ Office

The Presidential elections scheduled for Sunday January 8 have once again been postponed. No new date has been set. Haiti's interim government and the UN are blaming each other for the delay in setting up polling places and distributing voter registration cards.

The *Miami Herald* reported this morning that Gerard Latortue, the interim Prime Minister who has served since Aristide's ouster, told the Associated Press on Thursday that he plans to step down on February 7, 2006 even though it is impossible for the country to have a

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First National Center mini-convention

The conference, "Women, force of life for the church and for the society" will be held on January 14, 2006, at the Pastoral College, located at 454 East 29th Street, Brooklyn, New York. Rev. Donelson Thevenin of the Parish of the Holy Cross in Brooklyn will be the keynote speaker. The panelists for this historic event include Dr. Frances Schmidt, from the Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad (AMHE), Sister Mary Francis Amanfo, DDL, the coordinator of the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees in the Department of Migration and Refugee Services at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Mrs. Tamara Thompson, project coordinator of the National Coalition for Haitian Rights. For additional information, call the center at (718) 856-3323.

Port au Prince *Continued from page one*

Framingham, Mass., and through Fonkoze of Haiti. Mr. Drice and Mr. Davis traveled to Port-au-Prince in September to meet with potential school staff and school board members to determine how best to begin our effort to support and assist one of the schools which began to operate in the 2004-2005 school year. Until the Haitian government can take over, we will provide salary assistance as well as funds for needed repairs, renovations and expansion of L'ecole Mixte de Savoir Vivre de Gwo Jean. Contacts: Bill Davis, rjbill@hotmail.com, 207-799-7395
Tito Drice, moraviad@yahoo.com, 207-332-9695

Haiti for Christ *Continued from page one*

newly elected leader in place by this date. February 7 is Haiti's constitutionally mandated date for a newly elected administration to take control. Mr. Latortue was quoted as saying "My decision is final... I will resign on February 7 no matter what." Obviously, the vacating of the Prime Minister's office could create additional delays in the election process.

The UN Security Council called a special session for today, January 6, to discuss their next move.

For future weekly updates on the Haiti elections and other Haiti news please go to www.partnersworldwide.org/haiti and click on "news."

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Femmes en luttres

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Eritaj Chronicle

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Gift of Education

Alumni of Haitian schools are encouraged to form student associations to support education in Haiti and to develop a better future for their alma mater.

If you already have a group, send us your news for the *Eritaj Chronicle* at
eritajfoundation@msn.com or
call 508-620-1424.

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