

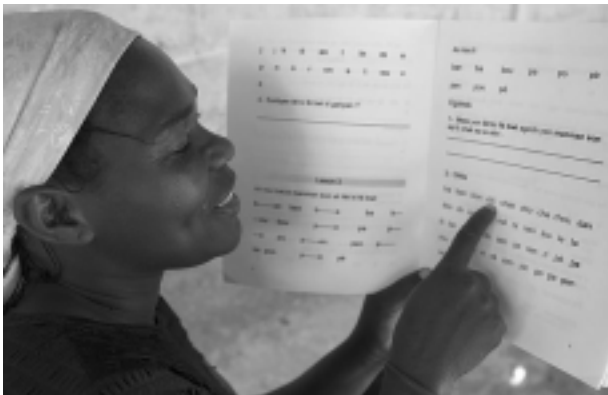
ERITAJ CHRONICLE

A newsletter for the friends and supporters of Haiti

March/April 2004

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In Fonkoze, access to literacy training is both a right and a responsibility!



Fonkoze Attacks Illiteracy in Rural Haiti

Fonkoze is “Haiti’s Alternative Bank for the Organized Poor.” It is the largest microfinance institution in Haiti with 19 branches covering every region. Microfinance is the provision of financial services, such as small loans, to the poor who normally do not have access to them.

Currently, Fonkoze serves 25,000 loan clients, over 95% of whom are women, who have \$2.6 million in loans in their hands. Initial loans are less than \$100 and require no formal collateral. Fonkoze also serves 50,000 savers and has mobilized close to \$4 million in savings. Fonkoze also operates a money transfer service that allows Haitian Americans to send funds to Haiti quickly, safely, and at a lower rate than banks and other transfer services – only \$10 for all transfers of less than \$1,000!

Fonkoze **accompanies** women out of poverty by providing other financial and educational services. **More than 60 percent of Fonkoze’s clients do not know how to read and write when they join the program.** Fonkoze is attacking illiteracy in Haiti through its pioneering educational program that combines basic literacy training with practical education in subjects such as building a business, improving health, and using financial services effectively. Fonkoze’s current literacy program offers three modules of group training: one in reading and writing, the

second in business skills and the third in health.

The first module is based on a game called *Jwèt Korelit La (The Game to Reinforce the Struggle)*, which incorporates the teachings of Paulo Freire.

In the second module, participants use the workbook *Gid Pou M Jere Biznis Mwen (A Guide for Managing My Business)*. They learn basic business concepts, analyze their own small business to see if they are making a profit, and discuss changes that would make it more profitable.

In the third module, participants receive training in health through a combination of pictures, stories, information and discussion to encourage a change in the way people are taking care of themselves and their families and discussing these issues with their families and communities.

During the year 2003, Fonkoze successfully trained over 4,400 of its borrowers, the majority of whom are rural women, in its literacy and business skills program. When asked what she has learned in the program, one of the participants responded: *“Before I entered into the literacy center, the first letter in my name I couldn’t even make out. I came to the center so I would never write an ‘x’ or have to dip my thumb in ink again. I have learned so many things.”*

During 2004, Fonkoze expects to attract 25,000 new clients for its financial services division. An estimated 60%, or 15,000, will need literacy services in 2004. Fonkoze hopes to meet the growing demand for its literacy services and thus reduce adult illiteracy in rural Haiti.

If you are interested in learning more about Fonkoze, please contact Sharmi Sobhan at fonkozeusa@fonkoze.org.

Metrowest and Beyond

The Future of Democracy in Haiti

The American Jewish Committee, an organization dedicated to advancing democracy, pluralism and mutual understanding and the Eritaj Foundation are co-sponsoring a luncheon on Thursday, March 11, 2004 at 126 High Street, Boston at 12:00PM. Friends of Haiti will come together to reflect on the current situation in Haiti.

Currently, distressed and overburdened with civil war and strife, Haiti's future is grim and uncertain. Haitian Americans in the Boston area and Jewish friends, supporters of justice and democracy will debunk prospects and possible solutions for peace and democracy in Haiti.

Dr. Nesly Metayer, a distinguished scholar in the Haitian community in Boston and former Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Community Relations Director will be our keynote speaker. Seats are limited. Call (617) 457-8700. Event is free to our guests. Reservations only at (617) 457-8700.

New Information for Batey Relief, Please Update your Mailing List:

United Nations' sponsored Online Volunteer Chad Williams creates a new interactive website for Batey Relief Alliance www.bateyrelief.org. It includes daily updates on BRA's critical field work and provides a forum for those from the Bateyes who desperately want their issues to be heard. Contact BRA at: bra@bateyrelief.org with comments and suggestions.

Celebrating Haitian-American Professionals in America:

PromoInter, The International Net Service of PromoBank Haiti, is pleased to announce a new online newsletter entitled *Celebrating Haitian-American Professionals in America*. The sixth Haitian-American professional featured in this series is: Hervé FRANCOIS. Visit PromoInter www.promointer.net

Celebration of Haitian Independence at Tufts University Please reserve the date

On March 6th, well-known authors from Haiti and guest speaker Michele Montas, wife of Jean Dominique, will be at the TUFTS University. The Interdisciplinary Committee invited the speakers to debate and to take questions from the audience, on the Meaning of Haiti's Bicentennial. All points of view will be heard about the Haiti's proudly gained independence. Reception will follow/ Even open to the public/ Posters are available for your organization. Please contact: Pasoleil@aol.com or pauletteanne.smith@tufts.edu

Defilee and Her Daughters: Haitian Women and their Contributions to the Americas conferences: Atlanta, New Jersey

A national student conference, will take place on Spelman's campus on April 16, and on the University of Georgia-Athens campus on April 15. For information, visit websites: www.grady.uga.edu/defilee www.haitianstudentconference.org

and contact: Barbara Nesin, M.F.A. Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Art; Spelman College 350 Spelman Lane SW, Box 337 Atlanta, GA 30314 Phone (404) 270-5457

Buy Haiti Books

Buy Haiti Books at secured online store at www.haitibooks.com Proceeds from this activity will go toward projects financed by the Saint-Louis de Gonzague Alumni Foundation, Inc. The SLGAFi foundation has launched an online store to offer books about Haiti. Payment by check or by fax is also possible; make to the order of SLG Alumni Foundation.

The newest addition is *Fort-Dimanche, Dungeon of Death* of Patrick Lemoine, a must-read book for every single Haitian and friend of Haiti.

"This is a sad part of Haitian history we ought not forget." This project is run by volunteers. Free shipping on all items. Contact haitistore@slgafi.org for more info.

Giving to Eritaj ... is also receiving!

Become a Supporting Member of Eritaj Foundation this year to help us reach our recruiting goal for 200 new members in year 2004, and earn the chance to win one of our 3 gift certificates!

GIFT CERTIFICATE POOL PRIZES:

\$300	to the 10th	supporting new member
\$500	to the 100th	supporting new member
\$1,000	to the 200th	supporting new member

HOW TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER & WIN PRIZES:

- 1) Call us at (508) 620-1424 with your Visa or Master-Card to sign in as a Supporting Member, with a donation of \$120 to Eritaj Foundation.
- 2) You will receive a receipt for your donation and will need to submit it to receive your prize.
- 3) The winners will be disclosed on Thursday, December 2, 2004, along with a list of dates new members signed in.

We thank the eight supporting members. If you have pledged, please send your check or credit card number.

Faith & Love In Action cares

At Faith & Love In Action, we care for 36 children at our two orphanages located in Carrefour and in Jacmel. Also, we frame an existing orphanage in crisis of 27 children in Carrefour. We operate two primary schools with a total of 350 needy children at the remote area of St.Rock/ Carrefour and in Madeleine/Les Cayes. We provide housing, education, nutrition and medical care since 1995. We urge Haitians and friends of Haiti to support our work because it is such a great challenge to provide for the unfortunate with the meager resources available. Please contact Marlaine Alix. Email marlinalix78@hotmail.com

Nos Eglises, Notre Force: Our Churches, Our Strength

A partnership with churches and mission projects to research, evaluate, promote and support faith-based undertakings in Haiti in the areas of health, education, community organizing, relief and development.

The aim is to create more communications between these groups, to develop healthy partnerships and to build on the successes of some highly positive approaches of these interventions.

Statement from the Our Churches, Our Strength Advisory Members

Eritaj does excellent work supporting several not-for-profit community agencies in Haiti with various grants for education, health care, food and shelter. But Eritaj goes beyond simple monetary support and funding. Their goal is to promote self-help and ownership of programs so the Haitian

people themselves feel responsible for their efforts.

Rev. Richard Leavitt,
Congregational Church

The work of this foundation could not be more important than at this time as the nation continues to struggle for economic justice. It is urgent that we all do whatever is in our power and ability, to respond to the people of Haiti.

The Eritaj Foundation provides such an opportunity for assistance to reach the people of Haiti directly. I commend you in recruiting congregations to use Eritaj as the vehicle to provide such assistance. Thank you for the vision in setting up this foundation and making it possible for all of us to do our part.

Brian S. Kelley,
Retired Canon for Social Action
St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston, MA

Konbit Sante/ Health Partnership

Konbit Sante, was established to support the development of a sustainable health care system to meet the needs of the Cap-Haitien community with maximum local direction and support. Based in Portland, Maine, and established in January 2001, Konbit Sante has fashioned a true twinning partnership with the Northern Department of the Ministry of Health of Haiti, and the Justinian Hospital (JUH) in Cap Haitien. A unique model of broad community, health, and medical partnerships assisting and empowering, not replacing, our Haitian colleagues through support and guidance was developed.

Volunteers do not visit Haiti to provide sporadic healthcare or clinics, or to take over the operations of the health care system, but rather to help

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Espoir Sans Frontières serves poor children and their families in Guilherme and Dompte

Hope Unlimited, a nongovernmental organization, works to promote community development and education in two rural communities in Haiti, Guilherme, South of Haiti and Dompte, near Fort Jacques in Petion Ville. The organization's main office is located in Port au Prince since its implementation on October 17, 2001.

The organization runs two community schools for young children and strives to be inclusive, taking in less advantaged children regardless of ability to afford the modest fees. The schools in both communities are Montessori-method, based upon Maria Montessori's philosophy to help succeed.

Another important area of Espoir Sans Frontieres' work is capacity building. We monitor the formation of small, self-help groups to carry farming and other generative activities and provide workshops and training on survival skills and gender equity. Our current objectives include: 1- building a school for special needs and handicapped children; 2- train more teachers to care for handicapped children; 3- expanding our training services to include, civic formation, leadership skills and environmental protection; 4- work diligently to diminish the rural exodus phenomenon by helping individuals in their communities to improve their economic situation. Espoir Sans Frontieres receives financial supports from its board members, occasional socio-cultural activities and the Guilheme Education Opportunity of Chicago, Illinois.

For information about Espoir Sans Frontieres, please contact: Gertrude C. Sejour, 28 rue Gabart Pétion-Ville Haiti Phone: 257-7661; 257-7557; 404-3583 Emails : espoirsansfrontieres_haiti@yahoo.fr or gertrude@acn2.net

Konbit Sante *Continued from page three*

the people of Cap Haitian improve their own capacity to provide needed health care. As a friend in Haiti wisely told us early, "Haiti is like a car that is stuck in the mud. While we definitely need some help to push it out, we don't need someone else to drive the car". During our frequent trips, we have tried to understand the system of care that exists, and identify areas in which some assistance will help the health care professionals working there be more successful. To date, more than 38 volunteers have made 75 visits over 9 trips to Cap-Haitien to provide support, education, care, equipment and supplies. All volunteer trips have been self-supported. All funds have been raised through local solicitation, and used exclusively to provide support for organizational expenses in Haiti. In fact, Konbit Sante currently has no paid staff positions in the US.

Konbit Sante's major accomplishments to date include: 1) the restoration of an x-ray department that had not operated for more than two years; 2) the installation of a computer system within JUH and the placement of a satellite for internet access; 3) the procurement and delivery of two 40 foot containers of needed equipment and supplies; 4) the provision of additional oxygen to the operating rooms so that twice as many surgical procedures could be preformed; 5) the development of

sustained health specialist partnerships in urology, gynecology, internal medicine, nursing, psychiatry, and dermatology; 6) the establishment of a Sister Cities relationship between Portland and Cap-Haitien, and perhaps most significantly; 7) the recruitment and hiring of a Haitian internist, Dr. Michel Pierre, to work full time providing care and education at JUH, and assisting us in identifying areas of need. Dr. Pierre was brought to Portland Maine for five weeks with Konbit Sante's support, to study infectious disease, and observe how a large teaching hospital in the US functions. He has transformed the internal medicine department at JUH, dramatically improving both the quality of care, and the quality of the resident teaching program.

Konbit Sante will continue to form supportive individual professional connections between practitioners in Portland and Cap-Haitien similar to those already established. Pediatrics, general surgery, orthopedic surgery, trauma, ambulatory care, and family education are all areas for development. We hope to expand on our relationships in Cap Haitien, and assist in the establishment of community-based programs using Haitian professionals and community health workers, agents de sante, initially to improve TB treatment and care. Konbit Sante also hopes to coordinate and promote community-wide

conferences on topics such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, maternal-child health, tuberculosis, maternal mortality, and trauma. Conferences such as these would include Haitian professionals and organizations and NGO's based in and around Cap-Haitien.

The positive relationships and friendships that have been formed between the people of Portland Maine and Cap Haitien have been beneficial to everyone involved, but most importantly, have ultimately resulted in improved healthcare for the people of Cap Haitien. To learn more about Konbit Sante, please visit www.konbitsante.org.

Support Eritaj Programs

Adopt a Child

\$120 full adoption; \$60 school tuition; \$30 books & supplies

Femmes en luttres

Helping Hands

Eritaj Chronicle

Method of payment:

1. Check or money order (to Eritaj Foundation, Inc.)

2. Credit card: Visa
MasterCard

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Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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