

ERITAJ CHRONICLE

A newsletter for the friends and supporters of Haiti

November/December 2004

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Contaminated water comes in handy.

Wish List

- A budget for Eritaj for the next fiscal year to cover services and operations, including that of a part time office assistant.
- A greater collaboration between the helping community and the Haitian state for Gonaives and areas; efficient and effective inclusion of the Gonaives Disaster Relief Committee towards rebuilding the town.
- A nonviolent holiday season for Haiti, the Middle East and other places in turmoil. May those affected by the loss of loved ones be strengthened and find peace!

Gonaives Disaster Relief Committee

Six individuals traveled to Gonaives during the week of October 22 through October 20, to help to establish the Gonaives Disaster Relief Committee there. As many institutions abroad are motivated to help Haiti after Hurricane Jeanne, it is imperative that the leaders of Gonaives are included in those efforts. Fourteen churches have sent members to form the committee in addition to College Peniel des Gonaives, the Centre d'Accueil and the Volontariat pour le Development d'Haiti. The Director of the Caritas's office in Gonaives has agreed to receive the monthly budget for the committee.

The Gonaives Disaster Relief Committee has commissioned the leadership of this town to assist with its reconstruction. It will coordinate distribution of the 3 containers that are going to Gonaives with the help of Gonaives de Demain in Massachusetts, Christian Alliance in Texas and Haitian League of

New Jersey. The committee is encouraged to approach distribution networks in Gonaives to offer support. We are asking the helping community to enlist this constituent. In addition to efforts from Haitian groups, organizations such as Oxfam, Unicef, Care, the Red Cross, ACF, CRS and UNDAC are reported to be working in Gonaives. As the cornerstone of the city, the members of the committee can be helpful in the distribution process which has been a very challenging undertaking, due to the scope of chaos Hurricane Jeanne brought, the despair of the Gonaives people to get access to the assistance and reported activity of armed gangs trying to seize the goods.

The common aim is to alleviate suffering in Gonaives which lost over 3,000 people in the floods and left hundreds of thousands shattered. The best way of helping is to integrate efforts while emphasizing the need for transparency

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Massachusetts and New York Groups Help Haiti After Hurricane Jeanne

New York

By Dr. Marcien Pierre, Executive Coordinator (edited by Mirlande Butler, Eritaj Foudation Inc.)

Three New York based Gonaives organizations, Kombite Gonaivien Inc., The Association des Anciens du College Immaculee Conception (AACIC) and L'Alliance Gonaivienne (ALGO) converge into one entity called "Kombite Gonaivien Relief Fund" to strategize to help Gonaives after hurricane Jeanne. This effort receives the support of the Alliance, a number of Haitian organizations serving Haitian American chose to support KG, greatly enhancing our fundraising scope. Presently, we have collected \$40,503.42 so far, including \$9,000.00 collected by the Alliance. There is a promise to match funds collected, We received a contribution of \$800 from Northrop Grumman employees, which also has a matching fund program.

We sent our first 40ft container full of goods (mostly clothes, food and water) on October 9, 2004. We have already collected enough to fill a third container the week ending October 23, 2004. On the docks in Staten Island, we are filling two other containers: one that contains mostly mattresses donated by the Ramada Hotel chain and the other one is filled mostly with gallons of bleach and water that the office of the Mayor was able to collect for us. From the onset of the effort to the end of the first stage, we would be able to ship out at least six (6) containers of goods destined to be distributed to the survivors of the flood by The International Red Cross, Care International, and The Catholic and Protestant Charities of the city of Gonaives. We would like to thank everyone who has cooperated so far. If we fail to mention any organizations, let us know and we

will do so in our upcoming updates.

Association of Haitian Physician Abroad (AMHE); Caribbean American Network (CAN); Consortium for Hatian Empowerment (CHE); Haitian American Alliance (HAA); Haitian American Association for Political Action (HAAPA); Haitian American United for Progress (HAUP); LASCH; Loving Hearts for Haiti; NAAHD; National Coalition For Haitian Rights (NCHR); Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees: "18 Mai" Committee

Massachusetts

A number of Haitian organizations in the Boston area have joined forces to form an ad hoc committee, the Boston Hurricane Jeanne Relief Fund for Haiti. The group meets every Tuesday at the HAPHI's office in Mattapan Square. The committee thanks the generous donors who helped us to collect \$40,000 so far. This amount has been deposited into a special Citizen's Bank account or collected by the organizations. The group will focus on providing materials and school supplies to support the re-opening of schools in Gonaives and other affected areas. It will

distribute medical supplies and drugs to alleviate the public health emergency resulted from sanitation and other dire conditions after the flood.

The Boston Relief Committee plans to deliver the school and medical supplies to Gonaives and other areas in December. Now that the media has moved away from Gonaives, the Boston Relief Committee will assist the people of Gonaives during the holiday season which will be particularly strenuous for the flood survivors. We are counting on the good faith and support of all Haitians and the Boston Friends of Haiti to help make our efforts a significant one for the people of Gonaives. The Fund for Haiti Committee includes Gonaives en Marche, Gonaives de Demain, CCHER, the Haitian Multi Service Center, Saint Matthew's Church and HAPHI. For more information about this effort, please contact Oswald Neptune at (617) 298- 8076

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For once a drip
of clean water-
Gotta share it!

American Organizations help in Haiti

Charter Public School

The Benjamin Banneker Charter Public School presented the Eritaj Foundation with a check for \$795.52. The check was made up of donations from students and their families, staff, friends of the Banneker.

The Banneker is K - 8 school in Cambridge serving 360 students from Cambridge, Boston and surrounding areas. Most of the students and many of the staff at Banneker are Haitian nationals and felt very proud to help the victims of the flooding there in this way.

After the assembly, Mirlande Butler visited classrooms and spoke to the children about the hope and positive attitudes of the families in Haiti who are preparing to rebuild their lives after the devastation.

Artists Relief Fund For Haiti, New York

The past few months we have seen Haitians and the world come together to help those who were affected by the tragedy in Gonaives. Artists Relief Fund for Haiti, along with Heritage Konpa Magazine is proud to have contributed in the relief effort in Gonaives, and our goal is to continue to do so.

We would like to thank all those who have shown their concerns and support by donating cash, food, clothing, and their time. We want to particularly thank New York Medical College for their tremendous generosity. The nation of Haiti needs us more than ever, and we are happy to work with Eritaj Foundation in their humanitarian efforts.

Seniors For Peace

Seniors For Peace, a group based in California, has been actively involved in collecting funds to help the city of Gonaives after hurricane Jeanne. The

group is well on its way to reaching the \$10,000 goal set. They supported Doctors without Borders, the Eritaj Foundation and the Haiti Action Committee.

The members of the group have been very dynamic. Last week, Seniors For Peace hosted an awesome event to inform the community about Haiti and Dr. Pierre Labossiere attended as keynote speaker. Some Haitian staff from the Center also spoke at the event. The group was very interested to learn about Haiti and its history.

Cohasset Friends of Haiti pitch in

About a month ago, our Boston newspaper carried a tragic story of a family in Haiti who perished in one of the horrendous hurricanes. Overcome with my brothers and sisters' plight in Haiti, I recognized that this was an all too familiar tragedy. Usually, I'd have given it some thoughts and prayer period. Not this time! Haiti clung to my mind and heart, engaging me to act in any way possible.

I just want to express how open and

willing to help the people I contacted were. Every organization I belong to is gathering food, clothing or presenting a monetary donation. We all want the Haitian community to know that you are respected by us and not forgotten. God must be watching over you and me. A bientot mes amis, JoAnn Haynes

Tulane University Legal Assistance Program

The Tulane University Legal Assistance Program made a generous contribution to help the hurricane victims of Gonaives, in memory of Nicholas Havard Bingham.

Nicholas was the nephew of Mr. Fred King, who is one of the attorneys who works with the Tulane University Legal Assistance Program.

Over the summer, Nicholas was killed tragically while vacationing off the coast of Africa. Nicholas lived life to the fullest, and profoundly impacted all those with whom he came in contact. The Tulane University Legal Assistance Program hopes that Nicholas's selfless, caring spirit will live on, helping others, even after his death.



Pictured l-r: Anthony Lockhart, Deputy Director; Chandra Banks Gooding, School Wellness Coordinator; Lenora Jennings, Executive Director; Mirlande Butler, Eritaj; Robert Bridgeman, BBCPS Board of Trustees

Gonaives Disaster Relief Committee

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and comprehensible allocation of resources. Twelve thousand dollars from the fund raised through Eritaj went to support this committee which is ecumenical and heterogeneous in nature. It will thrive on the good faith of its members and the ability to work together with the helping community toward restoration of the devastated area. We gave another \$5,000 to the Gonaives de Demain group toward the purchase of a truck which will serve to carry the goods collected in Boston to Haiti. The truck may be used or sold subsequently to bring additional income for the town. We have also sent \$2,000 to the Texas-based Christian Alliance to help with their 40-foot container collection.

We want to acknowledge the works of the international institutions which stood at the forefront to reduce further deaths and despair after Hurricane Jeanne. By establishing makeshift health care centers and pouring hundreds of thousands of bags of rice and other non perishable food, their staff braced to do what



McCall Middle School carried clothing drive for Haiti. Mirlande is shown there with some of the children, Rep. Paul Casey, the school Principal and Bonnie Noland who directed the undertaking

Haitians couldn't do. We appreciate the efforts of many institutions in Massachusetts, New York, Florida and other states to support the Haitian community after this unprecedented disaster. We particularly want to thank the Bridgeway Charitable Foundation for using Eritaj as a vehicle to help organize the leaders of Gonaives to take part in the relief efforts. We want to thank the media,

including the New England Cable News for featuring our work, and the Metrowest Community Newspaper for sending its staff to Haiti with us and for featuring Eritaj many times in its paper. To all the friends, old and new ones we made in the process, we experience firsthand, your caring and generosity, and that makes our own efforts worthwhile.

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