



## WINDOWS ON OUR WORLDS

News from *PARTNERS IN PROGRESS (PIP)* – Spring 2010

### Fondwa Community Begins the Long Journey of Post-earthquake Recovery



Complete recovery from the psychological trauma, disruption of livelihoods and massive destruction of buildings - brought on by the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that recently devastated the Fondwa community - may take years, but PIP's partners in the *Association of Peasants of Fondwa (APF)* have already begun the long journey on the road to recovery. Temporary living space has been constructed of plywood and tin on the site of the former tree nursery. Nearby tents and several wooden structures, built with assistance from Canadian military reservists, provide sleeping quarters for the **Sisters of St. Antoine** and the children of **Fatima House Orphanage**. Another tent serves as a field clinic to provide primary medical care to the community.

Defying all odds, the **St. Antoine School** reopened on March 8 with approximately 400 students receiving instruction under tarps and temporary shelters. Day laborers from the local community continue to remove debris and rubble from the school campus with shovels, wheelbarrows and their bare hands. Establishing an interim, transitional school has become a priority for school principal, **Sr. Simone Achille**, and for PIP and other partner organizations that support the school. Preliminary planning to replace the collapsed school with a new, permanent structure is underway.



Students of the **University of Fondwa 2004 (UNIF)** returned to start clearing the UNIF campus on March 10 and began classes on March 15 at two separate locations. Tents, being used temporarily for both classrooms and dormitories, are scheduled to be replaced soon by re-purposed "sea containers" purchased with support from friends of PIP.

### Intensified "Soil Health" Initiative Responds to "Earthquake Refugees"

More than 500,000 "internally displaced persons" (IDPs) have abandoned Port au Prince following January's massive earthquake and almost 200,000 of these have relocated to Haiti's Artibonite valley where *Partners in Progress (PIP)* is partnered with the community of Deslandes. PIP's Deslandes collaborators in the *Centre d'Intervention Jeunesse (CIJ)* estimate that these "earthquake refugees" have caused the local population to swell by 10% in just two months. Arriving "*ak de men vid*" ("*with two empty hands*"), these "earthquake refugees" have increased the demand for resources (food, water, shelter) in a community that faced famine conditions in 2009 resulting from the destruction of crops by back-to-back hurricanes that struck the region in the Fall of 2008.



In response to the heightened demand for already-scarce food resources, PIP's CIJ partners are intensifying the Deslandes "**Initiative to Improve Soil Health and Increase Food Security**". Integrating indigenous knowledge with contemporary scientific research, this initiative includes farmers from neighboring communities of Duvaut and Mogé and promotes low-input, sustainable (agro-ecological) agricultural methods (such as

composting, alley-cropping, poly-cropping, cover crops and "green manures") to increase both the quantity and nutritional quality of food produced locally. The proliferation of multi-purpose trees via several satellite tree nurseries will also increase available amounts of feed, fiber, and fuel – important secondary elements for meeting the increased demands made by a population expanded by the sudden influx of "earthquake refugees".

## **Deslandes “Earth Block” School to Model Eco-friendly Construction**

PIP’s Delandes partners, the CIJ (“*Centre d’Intervention Jeunesse*” or “*Youth Intervention Center*”), are strongly committed to developing an ecologically sustainable, economically self-reliant and vibrant community infrastructure. A key component of this vision is the CIJ school that enrolls more than 300 elementary students and is the most popular in the region. Its students regularly score highly on standardized national exams and the campus is a focal point for community meetings and cultural activities.

With financial and technical support provided by PIP, CIJ recently began work on a new “**Earth Block**” **School Construction Project** that will provide a permanent replacement for the current open pole and corrugated metal school building and will promote economic development opportunities in sustainable building by incorporating “compressed earth block” (CEB) technology in the school construction and by laying the groundwork for an “earth block” factory and training center. CEBs use a mix of locally available clay, sand, water and cement (5%) and offer an affordable, environmentally sensitive alternative to concrete with superior resistance to hurricanes and earthquakes. Because earth blocks transpire moisture, earth block buildings are better able to regulate inside temperatures and provide a healthier and more comfortable indoor environment.



In March 2010 consultants, **Jim Hallock** and **Adriana Duran** from the **Tierra y Cal Institute** in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, provided training to a nine member crew in the use of an Auram (manual) block press to manufacture earth blocks for the school construction. Working in collaboration with **Brandt Proferne**, a talented, local architect, the team finalized the layout for the new school complex. Additionally the team designed a new school kitchen based on discussions with the women who comprise the kitchen staff. Some 17,000 blocks have already been produced and the first school building is scheduled for completion by September 2010. It will serve as a demonstration pilot building for additional CEB construction projects in Deslandes and other parts of Haiti, where post-earthquake reconstruction is expected to continue for several years.

## **PIP “Junior” Partners Contribute to Give a “Hand UP” to Children in Haiti**

PIP is very fortunate and most grateful to have so many loyal and generous “partners” who provide the resources needed to carry out its mission, but the generous fundraising efforts of children and youth to help PIP provide a “hand up” to people in Haiti are especially worthy of note.



Seven year old **Grace Lieb** of Ligonier, PA, her sister Elsa, and some of their friends wanted to help children in Haiti and decided they could raise money (with the help of Grace’s mom, **Becky Lieb**) by selling lemonade and hot dogs at the annual community celebration of Fort Ligonier Days. Grace and her co-workers contributed over \$40 to PIP’s “**Skip a Lunch, Save a Child**” program! Grace is following in the footsteps of 10 year old **Claire Sirofchuck**, a previous “Fort Days” contributor to the **St. Antoine School Lunch Program** in Fondwa!

**Mrs. Patrice Ferlan’s** fifth and sixth grade religious education class at **Holy Trinity Parish**, Ligonier, PA distributed “*I am loved*” pins and raised more than \$900 for the **St. Antoine School** in Fondwa by taking donations after Sunday services!

Sixth grader, **Maiti Keen**, from **Sacred Heart Parish**, Pittsburgh, PA decided on her own to forego gifts for her birthday and instead asked her family and friends to make a donation to benefit Sacred Heart’s sister school, the **St. Antoine School**, in Fondwa, Haiti. As a result Maiti’s friends and family contributed \$300 to the **Hearts for Haiti Fund** which helps pay teachers’ salaries at the school in Fondwa!



### **Partners in Progress**

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