

"Stuff & Money"

Yesterday, KEC celebrated the 33rd annual Bishop's Round-up, a mission event that provides food, funds and supplies for many local and international missions to the poor. For all these years churches have contributed close to a quarter million worth of "stuff and money" for the poor. Participation waxes and wanes, yet the outcome remains relatively stable. I think the best part, aside from food for the hungry, is the spiritual "feeding" that is done when the "community" gathers to work, chat and share mission concerns. This year 180 youth stayed the night to work early, setting up for worship and displays and work in the barns plus share worship.

We were blessed as many stopped by the Haiti display to inquire about the people of La Gonave and the future for missional relationship on the island. Several asked about individuals by name and current conditions, especially on the south side. Various former team members met and shared experiences, covering 30 some years of mission.

The current "weather report" from the island is 3 weeks of rain and temperatures below 90 with much illness resulting. Newly planted gardens will grow rapidly if they don't wash down the hills.

The new association is buying and selling more fish and trying to purchase a small boat motor and more igloos. Father Roosevelt lost a borrowed boat motor to the sea in a harrowing experience. He needs help to replace it. The Catholic (are they denominational?) fly boat "bailed" us out of several emergency situations and I assume he also needs to replace the original motor. Motors are life on the island.

The goat park is in need of fencing and a water source before it can receive the 100 goats planned. Leaders will provide 50 goats hoping that 50 strong goats will be donated. Offspring will be given to newly trained and organized small groups of peasants.

(The connotation of the term peasants was negative to us at first, but in Haiti refers to the vast number who live dependent on the land and sea and at the mercy of nature and world economy.)

We have been invited to meet with President Paul, when we return in January to reinforce the Association for development of zone 6; meet with scholarship students; and visit well projects. Yesterday, we were asked by several if we would let teams accompany us on these shorter visits to the island. We anticipate direction from Pres Paul concerning projects of the church which would present opportunity for teams.

Near the end of Round-up they asked if we could load the UMCOR Birthing Kits churches brought for the Haiti mission. Surprised, we asked for help as there were so many we needed a trailer to bring them home to prepare for shipping! What a day of love and fellowship! We are renewed!

Pastor Shirley, about La Gonave, Sunday, November 15, 2009. www.centralumclawrence.org