

Thinking Haiti: We returned from the US nearly 3 months ago, accompanied by a VIM volunteer and anticipating the return of a Georgia team making an annual visit. Bob made his presence known as the "resident photographer and entertainment coordinator" for children, dogs and us.

The team funded work on the Dent Grien school plus ran a mobile clinic for 4 days that treated nearly 400 people. At the time we were attempting to start a clinic, but of the 400 people seen, approximately 90% of the complaints were related to insufficient food and diet and unsafe or unavailable drinking water.

A medical missionary advised any assigned physicians would stay only a few months unless offered \$1000.00 US a month or more. After a meeting with the Ministry of Health the committee turned attention to potential resources for development of industry and education to improve the quality of life of Sud La Gonave.

Bob took his movies and wonderful photos plus 35 Haitian Prayer Angels and returned to KC and a couple of weeks later a repeating Kansas Team arrived. They continued renovating work on the guest house, applying quality paint and entertaining children. The team leader remained with us when the team left and she and Joe finished the trim and cleaning of the guest house.

The rudiment of a development association was formed and agreements made with a Haitian organization active on La Gonave for 25 years. Currently, 20 persons from 11 communities are receiving 3 weeks training in organizational skills; agriculture; animal husbandry and fishing cooperatives. The school is located at Non Jozen and was transportation provided by World Vision. Our horizons are expanding.

Two other groups seek organizational help. Some skilled women wish to start an educational program to teach tailoring, embroidery, crocheting and eventually cake and cookie making with some professional instruction. They have one sewing machine and we are pricing new treadle machines. A related group of artisans want to develop traditional fabric art, painting and beadwork to be marketed in the US. We struggle to develop a marketing program for the beautiful Haitian Prayer Angels, hand carved and finished by a SaP woodworker and employees.

We look to the future with a cooperative relationship with the Haitian Methodist Church. Other relationships are growing with agencies like us, striving to improve industry, education and life in general on SLG. More than 100 women, excited by the first ever Methodist Women's Conference, reached out to unchurched poor last week. Now, they are excited to organize for mission, aware they have sisters all over the world that share their needs.

Haiti Outreach is nearly stocked to bring water to two thirsty areas as we look forward to another return to the US to tell the story of La Gonave. The Birthing Kits have confused many who were familiar with UMCOR Layettes, and the birth of new projects is a confusion of who and how. Birth is always a bit uncertain, but it is where life begins. There is evidence of new life on sud la gonave.

.....*Shirley, La Gonave, July 10, 2009.* www.centralumclawrence.org