



# NEWSLETTER

## Country Update

Haiti is experiencing some of the worst economic and political hardships ever in their history. It has created an extremely unstable and volatile country. Gangs have taken over and the political system has crashed.



This map shows where the gangs are currently claiming their territory in and around the capital city. At any given time or day, the gangs will try to expand their territory into their rival's area. Gang wars are a constant in the country. Because of the extreme gang

activity in the capital city, the main street that heads to the north of the country has been choked out and cut off by the gangs. They have taken control of the main intersection that takes you out of the capital city and if you think you could sneak through, you will be noticed and you will be robbed, raped or kidnapped. Because of this being the only road into the capital, we cannot get into the city for any supplies. In country resources are limited and yet we still see God provide the supplies needed to carry on with classes in a limited capacity.

*"I told myself the shots are too close to us, and we should try to leave," "L" says. "But they were already storming the neighborhood. I went back inside the house with my wife. I was so scared I was shaking. I did not know what to do. They mostly kill young men. My wife hid me under the bed and covered me with a pile of clothes. My nephew was hiding in the wardrobe." Soon men entered the house, hitting his wife, and demanding information on local gang members. L's nephew tried to run and they shot and killed him. The husband remained in hiding and in torment.*

*"I wanted to run away. I wanted to cry out. What hurts me the most is that when I was under the bed, I couldn't see but I could hear those men raping my wife. They were raping her, and I was under the bed, and I could say nothing."*

Afterwards the gangs set their house on fire and he and his wife fled in different directions. They are currently living apart. Both are staying with friends and relatives, but he hopes they can set up home again with their young child.

This is just one account out of the 10's of thousands out there. Gangs are using rape as a weapon in their rival areas. Refusing these sexual demands will lead to retaliations including killing and arson attacks.

Little did we know the ways God would use the ALOH New Life Training Center. The training center has been a place of safety, respite and security for women who have been through unspeakable atrocities.

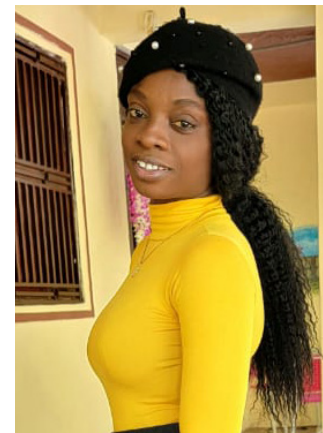
The house is full. Full of women who are learning how to find joy again. Full of laughter, peace and stability. At the same time, ALOH is fully aware of the chaos ensuing all around them.

## Meet Marie

A Light of Hope would love for you all to meet the newest staff member. Marie comes to us from Port au Prince. She comes from a large family having 10 siblings. Growing up her family used her as a restavek (child slave to another family) to make money. She describes growing up as a living hell. She was always sad as she watched other kids with their parents and she lived elsewhere as a restavek. She craved being able to go home to her mom and family.

Because of her experiences, she has a heart to help families so they don't have to use their children to make money.

At 26 years old she has finally finished high-school and has gotten herself out of Port au Prince to work with A Light of Hope and help other women. She will be the full-time cook at the training center and serve alongside the women that come through the doors.



## 2022 Year in Review

Despite the numerous obstacles ALOH faced in 2022, classes were able to continue on a smaller scale. With so much crime and unrest in the country, we needed to be more strategic and low key in our approach as not to draw attention to ourselves. This would only put a target on our ministry. So, we adapted and adjusted our approach and continued forward. In spite of all these obstacles, God has used your continued support to accomplish:

- **1 Pathfinder class** was held (3-month class).
- **13 weekly skill set classes** were held.
- **3 Bible Study Leadership classes** were held.
- Director Dieula was able to take **much needed time** away for her mental health.
- **2 Amazon wish-lists were completely filled** and all crucial supplies made it to the center.
- The yard of the training center **got a major overhaul** and now the flooding is no more.
- **2 more staff** were hired on, Marie and Jenny.

Thank you to each and every one of you who have come alongside A Light of Hope in 2022 to make all of this possible.



## A few words from Dieula

Oh, where do I even start?? 2022 was a difficult year for us at the training center because of the situation in the country. It was hard to get supplies for our classes due to so many areas taken over by gangs. We had to stop teaching some of our skills set classes and think through how to go forward and adapt.



Here we are in 2023 and I am extremely grateful for a new year. I am super excited for the changes that have been made for the good of the ministry. Even with the current situation of the country, we still want to be able to keep reaching out to women in whatever ways that we can.

We decided to add two new skillset classes which will provide more learning opportunities and job security for women. We will be adding professional make-up application and event decorating. We keep seeing how women are craving to learn these things, but still can't afford to take the classes. We have also witnessed a lot of women from previous classes are using what they've learned to open their own little businesses. A lot of life skills is what keeps women going, because in Haiti they can have a degree in something but they still won't find a job. **We are happy to be able to welcome women at the center not only to learn about the Word of God, but also to learn something that can help them in the future.**

We will also be starting a kids (girls) club. With the instability and unrest of the country, a lot of times schools have to shut down. This means kids have to stay at home. God has showed us that we have the opportunity to create a safe place for young girls to come when not at school. They will learn bible stories as well as memorize verses. They will also have a time to play games and use their creativity to make crafts.

I am so grateful to all of our supporters who have made these things become a possibility. I pray that you will continue to support us through 2023 as we take on these new endeavors.

## Current Needs

Unfortunately, there is an immediate need that we are asking for your help. Our solar/battery power system that powers our house has literally gone up in smoke. This is the main source of power for the training center since electricity is so scarce in the country. With the extreme cost of fuel (\$35.00 a gallon) we rely on this solar/battery system to keep the home powered 24/7. For the past 3 months there has been very limited power in the house due to the batteries dying. The need is for 12 new batteries to be able to get our system back up and running. Each battery will

cost roughly \$250.00. Our goal is to upgrade to all lithium ion batteries that will have a much longer life span and little to no maintenance. This is a huge yet immediate need. Would you be willing to partner with us to help get the power back on in the house? There are 2 ways to give:

**Mail check or cash to:**  
A Light of Hope  
PO Box 151042  
Grand Rapids, MI 49515

**Or online:**  
[www.alightofhope.org](http://www.alightofhope.org)