

N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

"We Stand Together" WINTER 2017

St. Vincent's Opens School in New Location



Finally, after nearly eight years in temporary facilities because of the earthquake, in early September students of St. Vincent's Centre entered their new school at Santo 17 – freshly painted, newly equipped.

No more steps to climb or broken elevators to work around, the students now have plenty of room to walk, run, wheel, or stroll on some seven acres of level ground and one-story buildings.

Initial attendance was well below prior years in part because of ongoing street protests and transportation issues. But by early October enrollment reached nearly 200 students -- with 102 deaf students, 44 blind, or visually im-

paired, and most of the remainder with some form of physical disability. All families have committed to pay toward the cost of their child's education.

Currently there are 17 classrooms and a student/teacher ratio of 4:1.

The new property is surrounded by a security wall and includes boys' and girls' dormitories, 17 classrooms, a music room/library, administrative offices, common living areas, a chapel, and an infirmary. There is also ample room on the property for future development, including space for gardens and farm animals.



Tuition Gap Program Gains Support

Coinciding with the opening of school, the Board of St. Vincent's Centre launched a "tuition gap program" to help cover the difference between the cost of education and health care at the school and the tuition that families can pay.

St. Vincent families pay \$130 in tuition per year per student. For most of our families, that money is hard to come by. The annual cost per student at St. Vincent's is \$780 dollars (assuming 200 enrolled students). Thus the "tuition gap" of \$650.00.

Through November approximately 60 "tuition gap" sponsors have come forward. Our goal this year is 200. Please consider making a commitment to this vital program. You will receive information about our students, updates throughout the year, a special gift made by one of the children, and the knowledge that you helped to pave the way to success for a disabled child in Haiti. See page 4 about making a gift..



Who We Are

Members of the St. Vincent's Centre Board

The Rt. Rev. Mark A. Bourlakas
Roanoke, VA
William S. Craddock (Chairman)
Memphis, TN.
Cynthia Jaar Handal
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Dr. Diane Jean-François
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Sister Kethia Jean-Simon
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Sophia Saint-Remy Martelly
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Valerie Flambert Mathon
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Dr. Susan Nelson
Memphis, TN
Régine Désulmé Polynice,
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Kenneth H. Quigley,
Mechanicsburg, PA
Dr. Stan Shaffer
Kansas City, MO
Ary Theodore, Esq.
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Full details on board members can be found on our website:
www.stvincentshaiti.org

Our Mission

The mission of SVC is to provide children with disabilities in Haiti special opportunities, support and resources to learn, grow and reach their full potential in their young life's journey toward adulthood.

Contact Information

Website:
www.stvincentshaiti.org

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Teacher's Salaries Increase for the First Time in Many Years

The St. Vincent's Board bit the bullet. In September they raised teacher and staff salaries across the board to minimum salary levels based on teaching levels (pre-school, elementary, high school) and responsibilities. It doubled the amount of money required each month.

"We stepped out in faith," SVC Board Chair Bill Craddock said, "knowing that somehow, some way we will find the money. It was the right thing to do."

The tuition gap program was one initiative. Other fund raising events and special appeals will continue. One focus will be to increase the endowment fund which has been a reliable source of revenue over the years. "Keeping the draw from the endowment to five percent a year will maintain the spending power of the endowment in perpetuity," Bill explained. "However, we need to greatly increase its value to maintain the level of support required."

Please contact Ken Quigley at khquigley@comcast.net or 717-796-1852 to discuss ways to include St. Vincent's in your will, or as a recipient of a planned gift such as a tax free gift from your retirement fund, a gift of life insurance, a life income gift (charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust) or a direct cash gift.



FOSV Board Member Sonya Yencer works on art project

Friends of St. Vincent's Establish Fund to Honor Hope Lennartz

In May the Friends of St. Vincent's (FOSV) held a surprise dinner honoring Hope Lennartz, retired Chair and founder of the organization, for her more than 20 years of commitment to the children of St. Vincent's. The dinner was held at St. James Episcopal Church in West Hartford, CT.

FOSV unveiled "The Art of Hope" endowment with an initial funding of \$10,000. Its purpose is to underwrite the cost of a fine arts program at St. Vincent's. FOSV sees the arts as a critical component to the education and psychological development of the children. Board member Sonya Yencer notes that art is an integral part of Haitian culture as well as a big business. The Hope Fund will expose students to the many benefits of art and music – creativity, enhanced gross and fine motor skills, collaboration in groups, and communication skills.

To contribute send a check to St. Vincent's Center/ CMMH (see page 4) and designate your gift for the *Art of Hope* fund.



Pedagogy Team and SVC Education Committee Focus on Quality & Outcomes

A team of teachers at St. Vincent’s and the Education Committee of the Board have taken on an ambitious agenda of improving instruction at the school and providing long-term vocational guidance.

At a recent meeting, the Committee discussed broad curricula issues including the need for more teacher training, adapting Haitian curriculum for special needs children, introducing critical thinking modules, and exploring distant learning and internet resources.

They also focused on the need to develop a career (vocational) plan for each student through all grade levels so that when they graduate students will be equipped to contribute to society. An array of possible paths was discussed including internships, apprentice work, agriculture, industry, teaching, social work, and technology.

The Committee also discussed a master plan for the Santo 17 grounds including the possibility of engaging the students in meaningful and profitable enterprises such as animal husbandry (chickens, goats, etc.) vegetable gardening, and hydroponics.



The West Tennessee Haiti Project visited St. Vincent’s in October providing a health assessment for all students and staff. An outstanding video of the visit can be viewed on our website.



Presiding Bishop Voices Strong Support for SVC

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, expressed strong support for the work of St. Vincent’s Centre in a letter to Board President Bill Craddock this summer.

He noted the construction of the Santo 17 facility and praised the SVC Board for “the invaluable work of providing a safe and supporting haven for our physically challenged children in Haiti... It is a vital ministry that must be and continues to be an ongoing blessing to all. Thank you for your leadership in this endeavor.”

“The Episcopal Church stands behind your work and we are grateful for the recent opportunity to assist you in supporting this mission.”

Note: The Episcopal Church contributed toward the cost of the property at Santo 17 and its Development Office raised some \$60,000 for the finishing and furnishing of the new school.

International Day of Children with Disabilities Brings SVC Board, Committees, & Community Together for Special Event

By Elizabeth Lowell



Enthusiasm crackled like electricity through that second floor hotel conference room as Haitian and American board and committee members discussed plans for St. Vincent's educational program.

The sparks were almost visible as ideas flew through the air: a 15-minute ASL-visual program for deaf and blind preschoolers available throughout Haiti on cell phones; creation of THE landmark curriculum for deaf and blind students, beginning in First Grade in September 2018; training and coaching for Saint Vincent's (51) teachers so that our students pass their national exams and are equipped for productive citizenry.

And while the facilities' needs are great -- reliable drainage and cistern; solar power to relieve reliance on expensive generator fuel; a 20-passenger van; playgrounds and vegetable gardens -- we were of one accord that making our education program of premier quality took precedence above all other factors.

The clamor continued. "I'll do this." "I can handle that." "Let me talk with the Ministry of Education." "I think we could do this..."

And that Monday, December 4, found us at the new Saint Vincent's in Santo 17, half an hour from Port-au-Prince's teeming airport, but on seven and a half acres of mostly undeveloped land. The 17 classrooms where some 200 students spend six hours a day are airy and bright. The students themselves, arriving on three government-provided busses, greeted us with smiles, hugs, hand-holding and just general guileless affection. The love was palpable.

The Haitian Minister for Disabled Peoples, himself in a wheelchair, joined in the outdoor service and the festivities. White-clothed children danced the offering down the aisle, an *a Capella* choir serenaded the congregation, and all of us present felt blessed to be a part of this community.



Please Join This Mission of Hope & Opportunity

Much has been accomplished at St. Vincent's in the past year and much remains to be done. Please join this mission of hope and opportunity for the disabled children of Haiti. Send a check by mail to:

St. Vincent's Centre/CMMH
P.O. Box 771142
Memphis, TN 38117

Or go online to our website www.stvincentshaiti.org and click on the "donation" tab. All gifts are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

To make a gift of appreciated stock, a gift from your retirement fund, or any other means of planned giving, please contact Ken Quigley at khquigley@comcast.net or 717-796-1852.