



Children's Medical Mission of Haiti

• St. Vincent's Centre for Handicapped Children • Holy Cross Hospital • The Haiti Connection

Who We Are

The Children's Medical Mission of Haiti is a 501© 3 organization committed to providing support for the delivery of medical and educational services to the people of Haiti through St. Vincent's Centre for Handicapped Children, Port-au-Prince, and Hopital Ste. Croix, Leogone. It also serves as an umbrella organization for related missions in Haiti and facilitates and organizes the Haiti Connection Conferences.

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Sadoni Reflects On The Challenges and Triumphs Of St. Vincent's

The Rev. Sadoni Leon, Director of St. Vincent's Centre for Handicapped Children in Port-au-Prince recently answered a series of questions asked by Board Member Alice Clayton. Here is what he had to say about his hopes and fears for the center.

What are the greatest challenges for you right now at St. Vincent's?

Because St. Vincent's is also an orphanage, the biggest challenge is food for the children. The cost of living in Haiti is so high that sometimes we could afford to feed our children only twice a day—once

early in the morning around 7 a.m. and the other time at 1 p.m. Often in the evenings, some kids would come to me and say "Father, we are hungry." That hurt me a lot but I could do nothing to help them. So feeding 350 children at St. Vincent's is the biggest challenge.

The second challenge is paying teachers' salaries. Haitian law says that we cannot pay employees less than 70 gourds (\$1.75 US) per day. At the end of March, we had teachers who were making less than \$1.75 US per day. At the same time, a can of rice that could feed a family of four sold for \$3.12 US. Also, the teacher had to pay for a taptap (bus) to St. Vincent's every morning for a week, which totals \$3.75 US.

You can imagine the teachers' situation. It is challenging for me and most of the time I need to convince the teachers to continue to work with the children. It is terrible when as a priest, I am supposed to obey the law but cannot pay our teachers according to the law.

In a couple of months I imagine the situation at St. Vincent's could get worse and we will be faced with the decision of closing some programs or fire more than half of the employees. Our senators and deputies have just voted to increase the salary per day up

to 200 gourds (\$5 US). You can imagine that if we can't follow the law, we might have to close the doors or be forced by the government to pay the salaries.

What is the area of greatest need?

The greatest need for the next year is the teachers' salaries. This year, as I was new at this post, I asked them to be patient and give me time to raise some funds. They understood and accepted the work situation. But certainly by next year, they expect to be paid more money.

I pray that God will provide this money to St. Vincent's so we can continue to exist. I have to tell you that we have a school for the deaf which closed its doors because they didn't have money to pay the teachers. If the same thing happens to St. Vincent's, these poor kids will be out on the street with no one to take care of them.

What are the positive things happening at St. Vincent's?

One positive thing that has happened since I have been here is that the school is clean. The brace shop now has new facilities and is clean. The operating room has been restored and will be operational in three weeks.

The Administration office has also been restored and
(continued on page 4)



Pere Sadoni speaks during a special ceremony at St. Vincent's.

Improvements Brighten St. Vincent's

By The Rev. Canon Willard Squire, CMMH Board President.

I recently went to Haiti to visit St. Vincent's, have meetings with Fr. Sadoni, and meet with Bishop Duracin. I was pleased to see the improvements made to the main facility at St. Vincent's. The operating "wing" has been completely restored. There is a brand new gleaming white tile floor and all the walls have been painted in the operating room, the recovery room, the bathrooms, and the connecting hallway.

Each of the bathrooms in this area has new toilets, sinks, and the showers have been redone. The stairwell and the walls in the back hallway to the third floor have all been painted and there is now overhead cover of colorful corrugated glass (where in the past the stairwell was open to the weather).

The Brace Shop has been divided into rooms, to include a small office – and it was very active when I was there.

The downstairs administrative office is undergoing a makeover as well. All of the file cabinets have been taken out of the office, the office is being repainted, a new dropped ceiling installed, and a new air conditioner is to be put in place soon. The filing cabinets have been moved to a small room that is being redone as a stor-

age place for the archives of St. Vincent's.

The guest area has a newly built large dining table and two (slightly used) lounge chairs. Also, there is now a large refrigerator in the guest area for use of visiting volunteers.

The guest, staff and faculty dining areas now have cabinets hung on the walls to hold dishes and glassware; also there are now several large plants separating the two dining areas. There has been considerable painting throughout the facility, and the whole place just looked cleaner!

In speaking with children and members of the staff there seems to be a sense of hope throughout the community. The teachers remained concerned about their inadequate salaries, but are aware that the director was able to get some financial assistance to do some construction and refurbishing, but has yet been able to raise enough money to sustain higher salaries for the staff. I stayed in a guest room while in Haiti and was happy to have electricity and water all the time I was there (that was not true when I stayed there for about six months in 2005). I give thanks for Fr. Sadoni's good ministry as the Director of St. Vincent's as he remains committed to the children.

In meeting with Bishop Duracin, and discussing St. Vincent's, I was pleased that the bishop has decided to form a Governing Board for St. Vincent's. I look forward to working with him and Fr.

Sadoni to establish such a board, hopefully in the very near future. Overall, my visit to Haiti was a very positive experience. It goes without saying, that although there have been improvements, St. Vincent's continues to need our help.



A young student participates in a Montessori class at St. Vincent's.

"There seems to be a sense of hope throughout the community."



Canon Squire greets a student working with his Brailler



Children at St. Vincent's greet visitors to their classroom.



Dieumene Cloristin, a 17-year-old resident of St. Vincent's who was featured in our December 2008 newsletter, receives a new computer from Canon Squire. A parishioner from his home church gave the computer hoping to help her accomplish her dream of going to college.

Holy Cross Hospital Takes Steps Towards Recovery

Editor's Note: Transition and funding issues at Hopital Ste Croix have adversely affected its ability to operate in recent months. In-patient services were suspended; however an outpatient clinic continued as did the services of the Children's Nutrition Program. A newly formed board hopes to find the funding needed and begin providing the full services of this critical regional hospital. The Rev. John Talbird, chair of the hospital's governing board, commented on the current conditions at the hospital.

Although Holy Cross Hospital in Leogane is not admitting patients, much needed health care is being provided by an outpatient clinic, the Rev. John Talbird, member of the Holy Cross Hospital governing board, said in a recent telephone interview.

"There are two doctors living in Leogane who are currently providing outpatient care," Talbird said. One doctor, a pediatrician, is paid by the Children's Nutrition Program because he normally cares for those patients. The second doctor volunteers his time, Talbird said. Additionally, the Haitian government is paying two Cuban doctors and a Cuban nurse to work in the outpatient clinic.

Other services and programs have been ongoing including the eye clinic, laboratory and blood bank. The radiology facility is now operational after undergoing some repairs, Talbird said. Two programs have continued uninterrupted—the Children's Nutritional Program, which addresses malnutrition in children in the Leogane area and the University of Notre Dame's Haiti Project to eradicate filariasis, the mosquito-borne disease that causes elephantiasis. In



The guest house at Hopital Ste. Croix provides lodging for visiting doctors and medical teams as well as income for operations.

addition, the Children's Nutritional Program, after receiving a grant recently, is providing vaccinations to children.

Now that the outpatient clinic is operating, the doctors are eager to have beds for patients requiring observation, Talbird said.

"Until we have the money to hire three nurses, we cannot open the observation beds because we need 24-hour-care for the patients," Talbird said.

He said that the governing board hopes to re-open the hospital in late fall or the end of the year with the first stage being to provide the observation beds to support the work of the clinic.

Another promising development at Holy Cross Hospital is the search for a new hospital administrator. Advertisements for the position are being prepared and will be placed in Haitian newspapers. Additionally, the govern-

ing board and local doctors have begun work on a long-range strategic plan. Talbird traveled to Haiti in June to meet with Dr. Blair Gifford, an associate professor of International Health Management in the Business School of the University of Colorado. Gifford, who is working in Haiti as a Fulbright New Century Scholar for 2009/2010, will assist the board on a voluntary basis to prepare the strategic plan. He also helped the board write the job description for the hospital administrator, Talbird said.

Talbird believes that a qualified hospital administrator and a strategic plan will aid the board in raising much needed funds and in rebuilding the confidence of the Haitian community in Leogane.

"We need to let the Leogane community know that we are aware of the tragedy of the community hospital being closed, and we are doing all we can to get the hospital operational again. One of those things is to hire a qualified administrator who can manage the hospital into the future," Talbird said.

Holy Cross Hospital needs long-term financial commitments from individuals, churches and international health ministries, Talbird said, and he is encouraged by the interest shown by American partners in the hospital.

Another crucial source of funding for Holy Cross requires immediate attention. The guest house that provides lodging for visiting doctors and medical teams needs renovation and is seeking to hire a manager this summer to prepare the house for guests in the fall. When the guest house was in operation, it provided \$50,000 to

"We are doing all we can to get the hospital operational again."



Dividing the brace shop into specialized rooms, including a small office, was part of a general restoration of St. Vincent's that also included painting throughout, new tiles, renovated offices, new bathrooms, restored operating room, and improved guest quarters.

year to hold a clinic for our children and the staff. It is a good thing to have them with us.

What would you want people reading this newsletter to know about St. Vincent's?

You, who read this newsletter, I would say that St. Vincent is the largest school for handicapped children in Haiti. Without St. Vincent, the handicapped population is nothing. St. Vincent is the only place in Haiti where you can find prosthesis or an orthesis for a handicapped person. We know that all the world is facing an economic crisis and we know that the US is in a difficult time but we also know that you will help us because you don't want St. Vincent's—the oldest and largest institution for the handicapped children in Haiti—to close its doors.

Sadoni Reflects (Continued)

renovations to the guest house are proceeding little by little and we can receive guests now.

From where do you draw strength to do the things that need to be done at St. Vincent's?

We thank God for the motivation to work with the children at St. Vincent. We don't work only with our heads but with our hearts. God put people on our pathway to help us, to guide us. In this context, our big partners, CMMH, which provide money for the teachers' salaries. The Friends of St. Vincent are our second largest partners and they provide money for the program for blind children, for food and for some facilities. I also receive some money from the Presbyterian Church. This money allows us to buy medicine or medical instruments. And the last group which helps us is a new partner from Memphis, Tennessee, who helps us with medical care. They come two times a

Please Help

Each month CMMH wires \$8,500 to St. Vincent's School for Handicapped Children with a year-end bonus of \$8,500 for a total of \$110,500 per year. This regular cash flow constitutes about 60% of the school's entire budget. And that total is far short of what is needed for a school of this size and nature.

Teacher's salaries, which have not been raised in years, average about \$20 per month per teacher. This is a serious issue for the new director, Father Sadoni Leon. The money helps to pay for food, salaries, maintenance and supplies, medical care, fuel for the generator, transportation, electricity, water, telephone, internet, and much more.

You can also contribute toward the construction of the new guest quarters at St. Vincent's (see story on this page).

Your generous support of St. Vincent's and the other medical missions of Haiti is greatly appreciated. The need remains great.

The Children's Medical Mission of Haiti is a 501c3 organization. Tax-deductible gifts, allowed to the fullest extent of the law, may be sent to:

The Children's Medical Mission of Haiti
925 Hertzler Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Please call Ken Quigley at (717) 796-1852 for more information or if you are interested in making a bequest in a will or a life income gift, such as a charitable gift annuity, for the benefit of St. Vincent's, Holy Cross Hospital, or similar institutions in the Diocese of Haiti.

Construction Begins on New Classrooms

New construction began at St. Vincent's following the close of school in June.

It consists of three classrooms, a rest room with three toilets and a sink, a small room for the teachers, and a balcony from which the children can safely watch Carnival festivities. It is located on the second floor above the brace shop. The proposed budget for the construction is \$48,434.00.

A second phase of the project will construct three new guest rooms on a third floor above the classrooms. Each will have a private bath. Two rooms will have two beds and the third room will contain one bed. The proposed cost for the guest rooms is \$67,984.00.

The first \$60,000 for the project has already been raised largely from contributions of a supporting nonprofit group "Friends of St. Vincent's Center, Inc.," based in Connecticut, which has matched funding from the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut. Approximately \$60,000 in additional funding is needed to complete the guest room floor.

All persons interested in St. Vincent's are encouraged to contribute toward the cost of the second phase of this new construction. Having guests stay at Vincent's helps to build personal relationships and integrate the visitors into the life of the school.



Construction begins on additional classrooms at St. Vincent's on the second floor, above the brace shop.