



N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

"We Stand Together"

WINTER 2016

Who We Are

CMMH

The Children's Medical Mission of Haiti is a 501(c)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. It also serves as an umbrella organization for related missions in Haiti and facilitates and organizes the Haiti Connection Conferences.

SVC Board

The St. Vincent's Centre Board was formed by Bishop Duracin in April 2016 and is comprised of Haitian and American members. It provides operational oversight to the Centre. Its mission is to provide children with disabilities in Haiti special opportunities, support, and resources to learn, grow, and reach their full potential in their life's journey to adulthood.

Collaboration

The Children's Medical Mission of Haiti and the new St. Vincent's Centre governing board have been working together since the board formed in April 2016. Both groups will seek greater collaboration and coordination of efforts for all partners and interested groups supporting St. Vincent's.

St. Vincent's Breaks Ground for a New School at Santo 17 Move Expected by Early 2017; Medical Clinic Remains Downtown

Six years and 10 months after the 2010 earthquake destroyed most of the buildings of the St. Vincent's Centre for Handicapped Children in downtown Port-au-Prince, construction of a new school began at Santo 17.

In early November work crews started renovation of the main building at Santo 17 for dormitories and administrative offices and a health-care room, plus construction of classroom buildings, a chapel, kitchen, library, music room, bathrooms, water infrastructure, a boundary wall and soccer field. The seven-acre site, about a 20-minute drive from the airport, sits on level ground that allows all facilities to be built on one level – a major improvement for wheelchair-bound and other physically-handicapped students.

A focused effort led by FBC Construction, Haiti with oversight by Andy Ripp of MSAADA Architects, promises a possible move to the new facility by early 2017. Eventually the school will move from Site 2 in downtown Port-au-Prince (claimed by the government for its downtown reconstruction). The brace shop and health clinic will continue at Site 1 in downtown Port-au-Prince.

Major grants from the Children's Medical Mission of Haiti (CMMH) and Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) – each at \$100,000 – are funding the reconstruction. Gifts from Dr. Mary White, ERD, and the Episcopal Church paid for the land purchase. Total cost of the reconstruction and furnishing of the new facility is expected to come in at about \$300,000.

Additional costs associated with transportation, moving, and contingencies raise the total needed to about \$400,000. Your continuing support is vitally needed.



Work begins on the boundary wall and house interior. View of the main house.

St. Vincent's Board Begins Strategic Planning Process

With the move to a new facility in a new location, St. Vincent's faces new challenges and extraordinary opportunities. The Board's Strategic Planning Committee has begun a process of gathering information and hearing opinions from various stakeholders to help shape a viable and productive future for the Centre.

Its mission statement sums up the goal: "to provide children with disabilities in Haiti special opportunities, support, and resources to learn, grow, and reach their full potential in their life's journey toward adulthood."

Some of the initial thinking includes a focus on providing quality education for children

who are deaf, blind, and physically disabled as well as preparing them for a productive life beyond St. Vincent's.

The school will serve as a boarding and day school and will phase out its role as an orphanage, partnering with other institutions that provide this level of care.

Students will receive medical care, nutritious meals, and the resources needed to help them address their physical limitations. Each student will receive individualized educational goals and vocational training and resources.



Meet Cereste Cherisme

Cereste Cherisme, a former deaf student at St. Vincent's, has been a technician in the SVC brace shop since 2007. He and the other technicians specialize in creating made-to-order braces and prosthetic devices. He is proud of the work he does and enjoys being able to help the people of Haiti in this special way.

Handbells Get Much-Needed Repair

Saint Vincent's is well known for its handbell choir. Comprised of blind and visually impaired students and adults, the choir has performed hundreds of times, entrancing audiences with their talents. But because of damage sustained in the 2010 earthquake and years of use, the bells became tarnished, cracked, and out of tune.

With help from Dirk Martin, former music teacher and blindness rehabilitation instructor at St. Vincent's, and Hope Lennartz from Friends of Saint Vincent, Inc., the rehab project took root. Hope made the arrangements stateside. The bells were packed and shipped to Schulmerich Carillons in Pennsylvania for restoration. While there, the bells were polished, tuned and repaired. Some even needed to be recast in order to repair hairline cracks.



After their much-needed repair, the bells returned to the Centre in early November. The handbell choir held a debut concert on November 9th to everyone's delight.

Eyeglasses Enable “Blind” to See Thanks to Team from SCO

A team from the South College of Optometry (SCO) in Memphis, TN visited St. Vincent’s in May and October and distributed some 154 pairs of prescription eyeglasses and 217 pairs of sunglasses.

Dr. Alicia Groce and optometry resident Dr. Kelly Varney represented SCO and its student chapter of VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity), an International organization dedicated to providing free quality vision care services to people around the world.

In May SCO performed visual assessments on 409 children and adults. They distributed 74 pairs of prescription eyeglasses to some of the patients they examined, but they also took measurements back with them to the U.S. When they returned in October SCO delivered an additional 80 pairs of glasses which had been made specifically for the patients they met.

Kelly and Alicia shared a story of one young student who needed to be escorted by friends everywhere she went. After she got her glasses, though, her life completely changed. Suddenly she could be seen running up stairs and around the campus on her own. The people who knew her were astonished at the difference...it was truly a miracle for all of them.



Drs. Alicia Groce and Kelly Varney distribute glasses to children at St. Vincent’s.



New glasses not only correct site but add a little style.

SCO plans to return to St. Vincent’s each year. Their intent is to offer glasses to everyone who needs them, even providing a backup pair whenever possible.

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Teachers at St. Vincent’s Raise Concerns

One of the first and more significant concerns faced by the new governing board at St. Vincent’s focuses on the teachers. This fall the teachers formally presented a petition to the administration of the Centre asking for several key items. They wanted an increase in salaries and a fixed salary schedule based on levels of teaching. They wanted basic school supplies and equipment and fans for the classrooms. They also asked for more communication between the diocese/school administration and the teachers.

The new administration under the leadership of Pere Frantz Cole, Director, and Aurelie Fievre, Administrative Manager, and with help from the Board, responded immediately by purchasing fans and equipment and school supplies. Regular meetings were held and additional means of communication have been put in place.

The issue of salaries remains a sticking point since additional funds must be raised in order to increase salaries. Also, families who are able to pay tuition have been encouraged to do so. The St. Vincent’s Board will begin to focus on new sources of revenue to help address teacher salaries.

A Message from the Chair Of the St. Vincent's Board

By William S. Craddock



More than 250,000 people died in the devastating earthquake of January 2010. Six months later, I found myself part of an Episcopal

support team sent to Haiti to work with clergy and lay leaders on trauma and wellness. It was during that trip that I had my first visit to Saint Vincent's Centre, an Episcopal school in Port-au-Prince for disabled children. It was founded by the Sisters of the Society of Saint Margaret in 1945.

School was in session, and the classrooms were filled with eager students --some blind, some deaf, some with missing limbs--all focused and engaged in learning. I heard a choir singing a familiar hymn. I peered through an open window to see over a dozen teenagers led by an adult choirmaster. Everyone in the room was blind. They were joyfully singing, "*Li te resevwa lemond nan men I'.*" Although I don't understand Creole, I knew the tune and could sing quietly to myself: He's got the whole world in His hands.

Six years later, I was asked by Bishop Duracin to develop a new board of directors and revitalize Saint Vincent's Centre. It's been an amazing journey, and I'm proud of the progress taking place as outlined in this newsletter and on our website – www.stvincentshaiti.org.

The SVC Board of Directors remains deeply committed to providing our students with a quality education and the support they need to live their hopes and dreams. We earnestly ask for your ongoing financial support and continuing prayers as we prepare for our new beginnings in 2017.

Hurricane Matthew Wreaks Havoc in Southern Haiti, Places Stress on Staff, Sparks Price Increases

Hurricane Matthew plowed through the southern peninsula of Haiti in early October, devastating towns and villages and destroying roads, bridges and other infrastructure. Fortunately, Port-au-Prince was spared major devastation. Students and staff braced themselves for the worst, but experienced only strong winds and significant rain and flooding.

Nevertheless, the storm affected St. Vincent's as families of students and staff were impacted; medical teams were called to the south; the water pump at the Centre stopped working requiring the purchase of water. Prices for food and other basic necessities spiked. And fear of cholera and other diseases caused the Centre to stock up on medical supplies.

Thanks to the many who remembered St. Vincent's in this time of yet another natural disaster in Haiti.

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

St. Vincent's approaches this New Year with a new school, new hope and a new vision. You can participate in that vision by supporting the children of Haiti with special needs whose future depends on us in so many ways. Nutritious food, clean water, a safe and clean residence, medical care, an excellent education, a place to call home and so much more – are in your hands.

Please join this special cause – send a gift today. Send a check by mail to the Children's Medical Mission of Haiti, 925 Hertzler Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055. Or make an online donation by visiting <http://stvincentshaiti.org> and clicking on "Donation."

If you have questions or need additional information about a special gift, a planned gift for the endowment fund, or a designated gift, please contact Jennifer Wickham, the Development Coordinator for Saint Vincent's Centre. Email: stvincentshaiti@gmail.com