

# N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

"We Stand Together" JUNE 2018

## Who We Are

### Members of the St. Vincent's Center Board

Dr. Gretchen Berggren  
*Tucker, GA*  
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*  
Elizabeth M. Lowell  
*New London, NH*  
Sophia Saint-Remy Martelly  
*Port-au-Prince, Haiti*  
Valerie Mathon  
*Port-au-Prince, Haiti*  
Dr. Susan Nelson  
*Memphis, TN*  
Fabiola Poisson  
*Port-au-Prince, Haiti*  
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*

### Our Mission

To provide special educational opportunities and life skills training to children with disabilities in Haiti .

### Contact Information

Website:  
[www.stvincentshaiti.org](http://www.stvincentshaiti.org)

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*If your plan is for 1  
year, plant rice  
If your plan is for 10  
years, plant trees  
If your plan is for 100  
years, educate children*

*Confucius*

*SVC blind students return to  
class after lunch.*

## St. Vincent's Hires Impactful School Principal; Begins Process of Transforming Education in Haiti

Education moved front and center at St. Vincent's with the hiring of Irvika Francois as principal of the school in April.

As reported in December, the teachers at St. Vincent's and the Education Committee of the Board have taken on the ambitious goal of improving instruction at the school and providing long-term vocation guidance for each student. The hiring of Irvika is a critical first step.

One of Irvika's initial goals is to provide instruction in Creole for grades one and two with French taught as a foreign language beginning in grade three – a logical step for children whose primary language is Creole. She also plans to introduce new approaches to teaching that engage the children in creative learning as contrasted with the traditional approach of memorization and rote learning characteristic of many Haitian schools.

New lesson plans are now required of every teacher. This summer she will lead three teacher training workshops for the school's 51 teachers.

Irvika worked in the Haitian Ministry of National Education and Professional Training helping to develop curriculum and influence educational practices in Haiti. Most recently, she led a UNICEF study on out-of-school children in Haiti. She holds a master's degree in Applied Linguistics from the University of Sophia and

is a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Technology and Leadership from the University of Florida.

The new principal is fluent in multiple languages including English, Spanish, French, Creole, and Japanese. She taught primary and secondary students for some 20 years before focusing on curriculum development and new approaches to teaching reading, math, and linguistics in Haitian Creole.



*Irvika Francois, SVC Principal*

## Haitian Official Describes SVC As a Pillar of the Disability Movement

*In April, during the St. Vincent's Center Board meeting in Port-au-Prince, several board members met with Dr. Gerald Oriol, Jr., Secretary of State for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities. In response he wrote the following regarding his connection with the Center.*

"I consider St. Vincent's School for Children with Disabilities an important institution and a key partner for my agency, which serves an estimated one million persons with disabilities throughout the country.

St Vincent's has a long-standing commitment to the Haitian government's mission of increasing access to healthcare, education and training for children and young adults with disabilities.

Throughout my lifetime, St. Vincent's has opened its doors and its heart to hundreds of

children with disabilities, many of whom would not have had the opportunity to attend school.

In an environment where many international organizations come and go, St. Vincent's has remained a committed partner and friend to Haiti since 1945. Following the devastating earthquake of 2010, it continued to serve Haiti's children with disabilities, despite the loss of students, staff and facilities.

Many other organizations working in the field of disability look to St. Vincent's for guidance as it remains a pillar of the disability movement in our country. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with St. Vincent's on this most important work. In order to shine brighter, Haiti needs the talents of all of its citizens, including those with disabilities."

### It Takes a Village and Then Some

**D**r. Stan Shaffer, Board Member, and Pere Frantz Cole (Fan Fan), Chaplain and Director at SVC, have assembled a list of more than 100 agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations, churches, dioceses and more that have collaborated, supported, engaged with, or have the potential to link up with the mission of SVC.

Food for the Poor, for example, has provided desks, and classroom supplies. Friends of St. Vincent's has focused on educational resources. The West Tennessee Partnership makes semi-annual visits each year to complete health assessments for each child and staff members at SVC. The Haiti Rehabilitation Foundation, associated with the Episcopal University of Haiti, uses SVC as one of its fieldwork sites. Wings of Love Foundation in Haiti helped plant trees. Matpar Haiti, Eko Depot, and Dominos Pizza provided paint, tools, and food for the Haitian volunteers who painted the school buildings.

The Southern College of Optometry makes regular visits to test vision and provide glasses.

If your organization would like to join this growing list of partnerships please contact Stan or Fan Fan at [stan.shafer@me.com](mailto:stan.shafer@me.com) or [colefrantz@gmail.com](mailto:colefrantz@gmail.com).



### Wall Repair

Recently, a major section of the wall required restoration. A new employee of the Center, Dolphin Mentor, Supervisor of Property & Grounds, managed the project, hiring workers and purchasing supplies – a major savings from having to contract out the job. In addition, there are many maintenance and upkeep issues at the new site including a needed ramp, water control projects, lighting, ventilation for the kitchen, and the development of playgrounds. Dolphin attended the Trade School at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and is skilled in many of the disciplines required for maintenance of the school facilities.

## Adult Residents Begin Transition to Independence

For years SVC wrestled with how to help the children who completed their studies at the school and had nowhere else to live or family to support them. SVC defines itself as a school for handicapped children, not a residential community for disabled adults.

As the Center transitioned from downtown Port-au-Prince to Santo 17, the needs of the school and the needs of the adult residents gained greater focus. Eighteen adult residents moved to Santo 17 in September and most continue to live in community at the Center. Four have job assignments at the Center such as wheelchair repair, computer/software support, barber, and musician. Since then several found other opportunities and left the Center.

Those remaining formed a committee and developed a comprehensive plan for independent, communal living. They see themselves as family and want to remain living together. While details of their future plans remain unclear, a number of ideas have emerged. They want to continue their education finding jobs to support themselves; they want to live together, helping one another as family; they are looking into cottage industries. Also there are exploratory discussions underway with

L'Arche Community to consider a new alternative community that blends physically disabled adults with cognitively disabled adults.

"The group is both terrified and exhilarated," Janet O'Flynn, head of the Haiti Rehabilitation Foundation, reported to the Board in April. She is working with a Transition Committee to explore viable options for housing, creative job development, and communal living.

The SVC Board agreed to provide ongoing support for the group assisting with funding to rent a house close to downtown, assist with adaptations for special needs in the house, and develop a plan to seek funding for their communal home and its operations.

As the adults move out of Santo 17, the Center will be able to be a boarding school as well as a day school. School Administrator Aurelie Fievre reports that she has received numerous requests from parents of children with disabilities seeking full-time boarding facilities. This is especially important for families living outside of Port-au-Prince.



Top Left:: Grayson Lusk Hussong spent another semester at SVC working with the children. She has now returned to the U.S. to complete her education. She poses with Jean Robert, a mainstay of the institution. Board members contributed more than \$8,000 to SVC in her honor. Above, a blind student in class with his brailier. At left, students enjoy their daily meal.

## CMMH and SVC Merge Boards Become One Organization

Following votes by the boards of CMMH and SVC in April, the two organizations became one – legally known as the Children’s Medical Mission of Haiti dba (doing business as) St. Vincent’s Center for Children with Disabilities.

The merger gives SVC its 501(c) 3 non-profit status under U.S. law. CMMH grew out of a diocesan partnership with the Diocese of East Tennessee and was formed in 1993 under the leadership of the Rt. Rev. Robert Tharp, its bishop. It has been a primary source of funding for St. Vincent’s for many years.

Also, during the meeting the board elected officers for 2018. They are:

- Bill Craddock, Chair
- Cynthia Handal, Vice Chair
- Stan Shaffer, Secretary
- Ken Quigley, Treasurer



*A nutritious meal is now part of the daily routine at SVC.*



*Board members view the additional land available at the new Santo 17 site imagining what possibilities it presents.*

## 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 Center  
P.O. Box 771142  
Memphis, TN 38117

Or go online to our website [www.stvincentshaiti.org](http://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](mailto:khquigley@comcast.net) or 717-796-1852.



*Librarians examine new books to be placed in the library at SVC.*