



# N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

"We Stand Together" FALL 2021

## Meet Jean Marc & Ricardo, Who Happen to be Blind

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Full details on board members can be found on our website: [www.stvincentshaiti.org](http://www.stvincentshaiti.org)

The Rev. Inel Duveaux  
Director

#### 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

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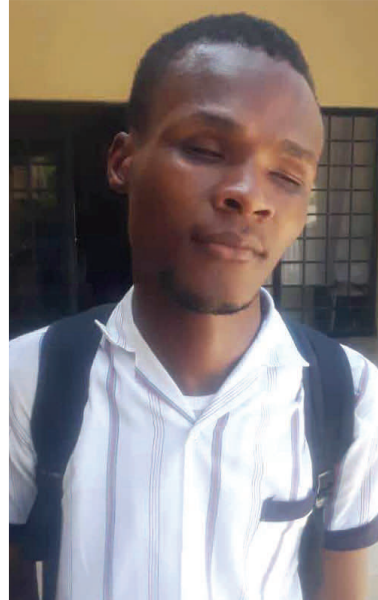
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*Here are stories from two of our blind students in their own words. See page 3 for additional stories about teaching the blind at SVC.*

Jean Marc writes "I was sick from birth, and my parents waited a long time to take me to an eye specialist. Although I had surgery and appropriate care, I became blind and arrived at St. Vincent's in 2008. I was uncomfortable at first, but as I met the teachers and other disabled people like me, it made me stronger. I watched them evolve and progress as if nothing had happened and so, I gained confidence and forgot my handicap."

"My best experience was with the other children at the Center - not letting themselves be discouraged by their handicap. These children have learned their value to society, and they set big goals for their future. I think I have helped them understand that they are human beings with rights like everybody else in society. By giving them all the techniques, such as braille writing, they have valuable tools at their fingertips."

"I am no longer at the School (Jean Marc has gone on to higher education) and adapting outside is difficult, but I am doing my best. The methods of learning here, especially braille writing, have been favorable; and I still use them. I am finishing my classical studies and planning what I will learn as a professional."



**Ricardo is in his 8th year at SVC**

Ricardo, who is blind, came to St. Vincent's in 2009 and is now in the 8th year of fundamental class.

"I feel divinely good. I am well treated and well supervised. At the beginning, I was not able to adapt properly, but I made new friends who still support me and familiarized me with new techniques like braille. So, I was able to go up the hill and fully understand all the lessons. Today, I proudly say that I understand everything very well. While here, I apply what I

learn - to find opportunities to give back what has been given to me. After my studies, I intend to find a job to have adequate means to help the Center in turn."

"When I was in Jérémie, I never expected to meet other children with disabilities. But, here I did, and they gave me confidence in myself. Meeting these kids is the best experience of my life. So my advice to the younger students here is to take their studies seriously, to be disciplined and attentive to their teachers. I remind them that society offers nothing to anyone, especially people with disabilities. If we do not educate ourselves, we have nothing to offer society."

"Thanks to St. Vincent's, I am the person I am today. So, I want to take this opportunity to thank all who had the vision to create the Center and the people today who work to ensure that we have this place which welcomes us."



**Jean Marc is pictured with his fellow student Judith who suffers from scoliosis. She came to St. Vincent's 21 years ago and currently attends cooking school. Judith also loves to sew and design costumes. See more of her story on page 5.**

# School is Open!

The earthquake delayed the opening of schools in Haiti from September 6th to the 21st. Since some 900 schools in the south were destroyed by the earthquake, St. Vincent's was thankful to have intact, newly-painted facilities.

As is customary in the country, the majority of students stay home from classes for the first week. So, St. Vincent's opened with 83 students, approximately half of the usual number.

Compounding the size of this absence is the daily violence in Port-au-Prince prompting even more parents to keep their children at home. Also, the bus drivers refuse to stop at some of the pick-up spots. All schools in the P-a-P area are experiencing the same situation. Fortunately, 90% of the faculty were able to get to Santo; and classes commenced - with the joy of renewed friendships and deep dedication to study.



*Clockwise from top: The newly painted classrooms at Santo 17. Students in classroom. Parents arrive with children on opening day of school on September 21. The gazebo which will become the Bar/Restaurant for on campus drinks and snacks (see story on page 5); Classroom with small children.*



## How St. Vincent's Teaches Its Blind Students

Braille is a form of written language for blind people in which characters are represented by patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips. Braille, audio (tapes), and manipulation are the three methods which St. Vincent's uses for training the blind.

Children ages three to five use manipulation. Thereafter, SVC uses the braille machine, the braille touchscreen, and the braille tablet. Students learn black braille in the dark room which enables them to use the telephone.

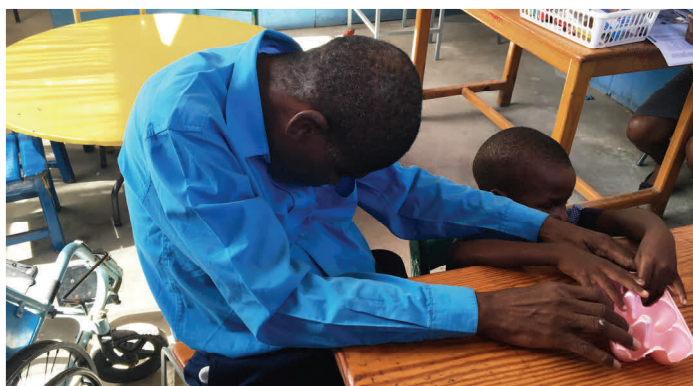
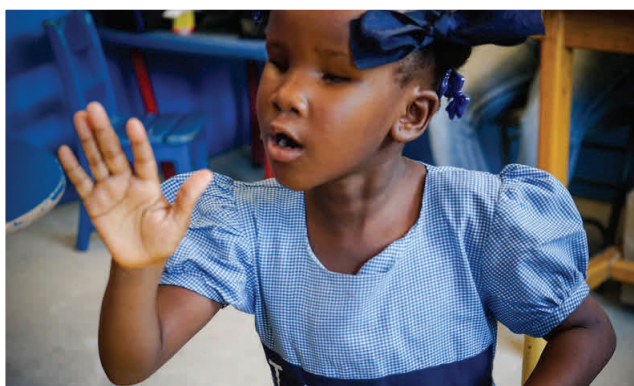
Classes are tape recorded; and there is always a blind teacher who can help adapt the lessons. For math, there are several assistive devices, one of which is a sound calculator. A braille photocopier, the termofom, is used to copy homework and lessons, and a braille printer is used for the transcription of books. St. Vincent's needs more of all of this equipment, both to train

more teachers and to integrate more blind children into the student body.

Access to learning for the blind is complex. Teacher training, availability of a multidisciplinary team, and appropriate materials are essential. St. Vincent's remains the only educational institution in Haiti which has the necessary devices to welcome a blind child from pre-school through ninth grade. Both material and human resources ensure the quality and inclusive education of the SVC blind students.

With the founding of St. Vincent's in 1945, Sister Joan Margaret brought the hope to blind children and their families that they could participate in society. Some SVC graduates have completed their formal and university studies and found

employment. Others are pursuing higher education now. (See the article on the Friends of St. Vincent's in this newsletter.) All are grateful to the St. Vincent's community and its partners for the invaluable support which enables the students "to become trained citizens, able to be useful in the community and in the country, through quality education. Mèsi anpil."



*A blind child's first lesson in Braille, with Jimmy*

## Meet Jimmy, a Blind Professor

Sister Joan welcomed the blind Jimmy to St. Vincent's when he was three. St. Vincent's has been his home ever since. He learned to read and write with braille machines, and says "I was taught everything at the Center." As his interest in music grew, he learned to play first, the piano, and then, the accordion; and he frequently accompanies the SVC choir.



In 1979, Jimmy became a teacher of the blind because his skill in reading and writing braille was deeply proficient.

He says that the adaptation to teaching was "not too difficult because we all knew each other." Jimmy is teaching still, and notes that "the conviviality that exists among us sometimes makes us forget our disabilities."



He really likes his job as a teacher. "I like to share my knowledge with the children. I find myself in them, and I have been lucky to have super smart kids in my different classrooms. Showing how to read with fingers is no small feat. I feel respected; and I think St. Vincent's does an extraordinary job with disabled children. We could, however, use more teaching materials to enable children to learn better."

# Transforming Shipping Containers

It looks like a shipping container, and indeed, that is exactly what it is...now.

Currently, there is a worldwide shortage of these containers, so St. Vincent's was fortunate to locate four in good condition. Two have been delivered to the school campus, where one will become the office of the psychologist.

Presently, she displaces the school nurse, because there is no extra room. The second one will become the school's physical therapy site. (There isn't one right now.)

**One of the two containers located at Santo 17 that when retrofitted will serve as a physical therapy room.**

The second pair has gone to the downtown Medical Clinic to house an expanded physical therapy department. They will "live" where the old operating room existed on the recently re-walled and cleared half-acre Rue Paul VI location.

All four will undergo major retrofitting. Each will require ramps, doors, windows, electricity, air conditioning, office furniture, and equipment. They may still resemble shipping containers, but their purpose will be totally transformed to meet the health needs of the Haitian population.



## Can We Make a Difference?

In the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, we read "Love is patient. Love is kind." And love - your love - is what makes the difference in Haiti. It has been a horrific - hellish - year. And yet...

This time, **Haitians** directed the earthquake relief effort. That's a monumental change from 2010. Instead of losing buildings and lives, St. Vincent's sent doctors to the south and cash directly to beleaguered families. At the same time, it kept both the Clinic and School open.

In the 75 years since Sister Joan Margaret started St. Vincent's, there have been many improvements ...

- The School has grown and moved to an attractive campus where it now produces both vegetables and fruit in an extensive organic garden. This year, it is installing its own potable water system.
- The Medical Clinic and Brace Shop have been added. There are five orthopedic surgeons, four pediatricians, an

ophthalmologist, a psychologist, a new x-ray machine and technician, and a new medical analysis lab.

- Shortly, we will greatly enhance our physical therapy services and add a pharmacy. Food For The Poor arranged for Medical Clinic staff and residents to receive the vaccine for COVID-19. The newly re-walled Clinic provides safety and security for patients and their families.

In this ravaged country, progress is slow - and not always visible. But, St. Vincent's plans carefully and comprehensively. We intend to be here for years to come, meeting the needs articulated by those whom we serve. Love is patient...75 years and counting.

Love is also kind. Consider the following:

Soinette, who could not walk properly as a child, is now Haiti's Minister for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities.

Dieumene, who has no arms, is majoring in psychology at the University of Kansas, planning to be a psychologist.

Jimmy, who is blind, now teaches the blind.

Mackenson, who lost both his mother and brother in the 2010 earthquake at SVC, is now in medical school.

Clauricienne, who has one finger, makes her living as an accomplished seamstress.

Kenson, in a wheelchair, repairs both wheelchairs and braille machines (which have 296 parts!).

Judith, with severe scoliosis, is on her way to being a chef.

Samuel, in a wheelchair, is now an accredited bookkeeper.

There are just a few examples of lives changed at St. Vincent's. There are many more.

Can we make a difference? We can. We have. We do.



# Friends of SVC Enhance Adult Residents' Lives

It is easy to focus only on the children and forget the other aspects of St. Vincent's which makes us a **Center**.

Foremost among these are the adult residents—those who have graduated from St. Vincent's school but call the Center home—whose intention is to give back to the community that has cared for them for so long. Many of these residents have lived at SVC for most of their life; most scarcely remember their birth home. Walking faithfully alongside them for nearly 30 years, guiding them, advocating for them, and helping them achieve their personal goals, are the Friends of St. Vincent's (the Friends), a US-based 501(c)(3).

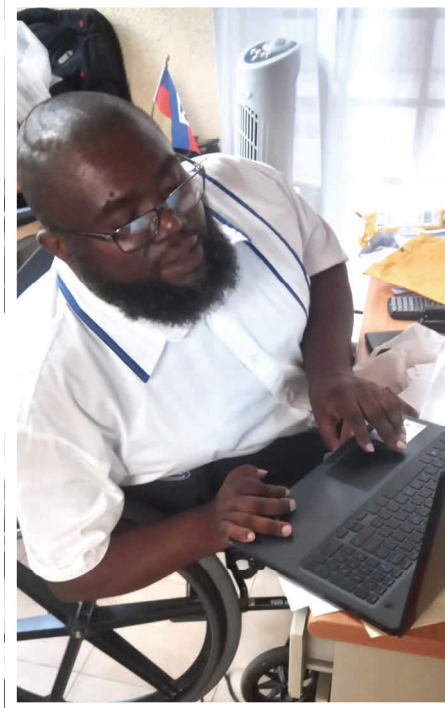
For several years the residents have dreamed of opening and operating a snack bar at the Santo 17 campus where they can serve staff and visitors. The Friends have largely financed the construction of the Bar/Restaurant, which is still in progress. It is where Jovin has been memorialized.

In addition, Friends have funded a year of cooking school for Judith so that she can be the head chef at Bar/Resto. Judith came to SVC 21 years ago at age eight with severe scoliosis. A talented dancer and choreographer, she also loves to sew and design costumes. She's great with children and is extremely patient and thoughtful. Judith is passionate about living in a way that shows others that people with disabilities can live robust, productive lives. Her progress at cooking school is a testament to that belief! Her creations look delicious!

The adult graduates of St. Vincent's have formed their own non-profit and registered it with the Haitian government called CAHSAV, the French acronym for *Center of Support and Lodging of Saint Vincent's*. Samuel Elizaire, (SVC's assistant controller) is the president of CAHSAV, principal accountant for the Bar/Resto and responsible for training other CAHSAV members so that each can have a role in the operation of Bar/Resto.

Zacherie will handle the sale of beverages (all non-alcoholic).

The Friends have also awarded academic scholarships for 2021-2022 to Rosana, Jean Léonard, Frenel and Jean Marc. Additionally, they are providing transportation to and from



**Samuel Elizaire, Assistant Controller for SVC, and President of CAHSAV, at his desk at Santo 17.**

school, books, Brailers, phones, supply fees and uniforms, as well as a tutor for the blind adults to supplement their learning at their respective universities

which are not equipped to support blind students.

Rosana is a courageous young woman who is visually impaired and doing her best in school. Her deaf classmate, Jean Léonard, is interested in technology, especially computers and photography. Jean Marc is also visually impaired. His parents lost their home in the earthquake in Jérémie. Finally, Frenel, also from Jérémie, is visually impaired and beginning his first year at University. All four of these residents have flourished in school, passed their exams, and been promoted. They are to be commended for their determination and success.

The CAHSAV members are focused on giving back; and Friends of St. Vincent's is building their capabilities to do just that. By personally befriending CAHSAV members, working closely with them, identifying potential, and funding newfound skills, FOSV strengthens the entire St. Vincent's community. This is a ministry to celebrate!



**Friends of SVC funded a year of cooking school for Judith who will become the head chef at the snack bar. She is also a talented dancer and choreographer.**



## St. Vincent's Responds to the Earthquake

In a matter of minutes following the earthquake, SVC Medical Director Dr. Moïse was on his way to the Port-au-Prince airport. From there he was helicoptered to Jérémie, where at Saint Antoine Hospital, he saw 154 patients in the week, performing surgery on 60 of them. As orthopedic surgeons are in low supply and high demand in Haiti, he continues to fly down one day a week to operate.

On the receiving end of the most critically injured who were airlifted from the south to Port-au-Prince was Haiti's **only** trauma surgeon, Dr. Pierre Marie Wooley, an SVC Trustee. In the first week following August 14th, Dr. Wooley operated on 15 people who had a crushed pelvis. Needless to say, these were long and complex surgeries.

Meanwhile, at Santo 17, Père Duveaux's cell phone rang incessantly. Because he came to St. Vincent's from Jérémie, he knows many people in the south and has a trusted network of colleagues and former congregants there. He mobilized them into an on-the-ground team who spread out into the furthest-flung regions where no help had yet arrived. St. Vincent's Board and other donors responded immediately to his appeal and Père Duveaux's team directly delivered aid to several hundred families.

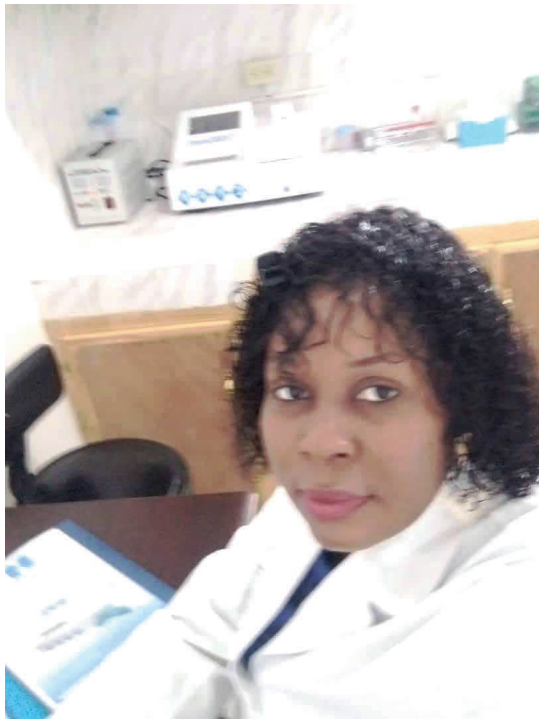


Several SVC Trustees in Memphis organized a donation to fund meals for the medical staff and patients, so that the doctors and nurses did not have to leave the hospital to eat, and the patients, whose families were still in the south, could be fed. They also funded the purchase of locally-available medical equipment to make surgeries go more quickly.

All of this is in addition to keeping the Medical Clinic and Brace Shop open and staffed - and the School ready to receive students as it opens. It was never a matter of "either/or." It was, quite simply "**both/and**". Although there simply is never enough SVC staff to do everything that needs to be done, no one hesitated a moment in responding to the earthquake's devastation.

***Dr. Moïse, SVC Medical Director, saw nearly 200 patients in Jérémie, in the week after the August earthquake in Jérémie performing 60 surgeries like this.***

This "**both/and**" commitment continues, as it must if St. Vincent's is to remain true to its mission and respond to the most recent suffering.



***Rosemarline P. Beausejour staffs the analysis lab at the Medical Center which provides a vital service to our physicians. Thanks to the Diocese of North Dakota and St. George's, Bismark, ND for funding this new service.***



***Thanks to the Japanese Embassy, SVC was able to install a state-of-the-art x-ray machine which has received extensive use since its inauguration in October 2020. Technician Lafont Lapointe sets up the scan.***



## Violence Claims A Second Victim At St. Vincent's

Since 2003, "Gougou" has been the unofficial doorman at the Medical Clinic. Because he could neither speak nor walk normally, his mother brought him to St. Vincent's at an early age.

Despite the efforts of the teachers, he never really adapted to school; and every afternoon, after classes were over, he loved to accompany the actual doorman to his post. Eventually, he left school and stationed himself at the Medical Clinic gate. Given a small gratuity for his welcoming presence, he carried out his main activity with seriousness and passion and was known to all passers-by.

He was also active at Holy Trinity Cathedral, faithfully distributing the service bulletins every Sunday. Gougou's real name was Patrick Joseph. This child of God was found badly beaten, and unconscious on the evening of August 9th.

Surrounded by members of the St. Vincent's family, he died the next day. On August 19th, his funeral was held at Holy Trinity Cathedral. Père Duveaux was the preacher and Deacon Ernsö Plantin, SVC Chaplain, was evangelist. May he rest in peace and rise in Glory.

## The Medical Clinic Has a New Fuel Tank

While this is a decidedly unsexy topic for an article, it nonetheless relates directly to the volatile situation in Haiti. When the Japanese Embassy donated the x-ray machine to St. Vincent's, it stipulated that there must be electricity 24 hours a day. At that time, the government was regularly providing electricity to the downtown Port-au-Prince area. However, "just in case", SVC purchased both a generator and a 100-gallon fuel tank as back-up. That was a fortuitous move.

In the past few months, the government has sharply curtailed its electrical output. Also, there is now (once again!) a critical fuel shortage in Haiti. When available, according to the economic "law" of supply and demand, the cost of fuel is higher than ever before. To keep our promise to the Japanese Embassy and to ensure that the Clinic always has power, St. Vincent's purchased a 300-gallon tank to hold diesel.

So, while "unsexy," this tank means that there is **always** power at the Clinic. This is in contrast to some of the hospitals in the earthquake-stricken south, which have had to close because they have no fuel for their generators.

Haiti holds unexpected surprises, as this past year has shown, often tragically. SVC's flexible, nimble, creative leadership has learned to pivot. In this particular instance, patients are the immediate beneficiaries.



***The new 300-gallon diesel fuel tank at the Medical Center is located next to the powerful generator helping to provide electricity to the Center every day, all day as needed.***

# It's Easy to Give from Your Retirement Account



For those of us 72 years or older with an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), we must take an annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), which is based on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Uniform Lifetime Table and the preceding December 31st value of that IRA. The amount is taxable as income...unless we give it directly from the IRA to a charity. The process for doing this is simple and direct.

You contact your account manager and say that you wish to give to St. Vincent's Center, Haiti from your RMD. You are sent paperwork requesting the name and mailing address of St. Vincent's and the amount

you wish to donate. You'll also need St. Vincent's Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN), like an individual's Social Security Number. It is 62-1564456. You must sign the request. Once received by your account manager, a check is processed and mailed to St. Vincent's. Because you are not taking this amount as income, it is not taxable to you. However, it is also not eligible for a tax deduction. Because this contribution lowers your overall income, it results in a lower tax for you. Depending on the size of your gift and your personal situation, it could be a significant savings.

## Make A Difference!

You can. You have. You do - make a difference, that is. You have paid the salaries of teachers, physicians, caregivers, brace shop technicians, and administrators. With 80% unemployment in Haiti, many are the sole support of an extended family. That means you have nourished hundreds. You have bought food and educational materials, office and medical supplies and fuel. You have provided for security and social security, maintenance and transportation, wheel chair repair, hospitalization and sadly, this year, funerals and earthquake relief. You have changed lives. In a chaotic country, you have made a difference for hundreds of children with disabilities. You have given them quality education and medical care and launched them on the path to productive citizenship.

We ask that you, please, continue to do so.

You may send a check to:  
St. Vincent's Center  
925 Hertzler Road  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Or, you can go online to our website [www.stvincentshaiti.org](http://www.stvincentshaiti.org) and click on the *DONATE* button. All gifts are deductible to the full extent of the law. To make a gift of appreciated securities, please contact Ken Quigley directly. His information at the bottom of the left-hand column on page 1 of this newsletter.

