



N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

Newsletter of St. Vincent's Center for Children with Disabilities / CMMH, Port-au-Prince
 "We Stand Together" SPRING 2023

Who We Are

Members of the St. Vincent's Center Board

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- Aurélie Fièvre
Miami, FL
- Paul Glover, Treasurer
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- Cynthia Jaar Handal
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- Sister Kethia Jean-Simon
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- Ernso Jean Louis
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- Alan Yarborough, Vice President
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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.

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"This is Our Life!"

Given the deteriorating security in Haiti, many medical professionals are understandably leaving Haiti for the safety of Miami and

Montreal, where there are large ex-pat communities.

Two pediatricians have departed our Medical Clinic; and two new ones have joined the staff. We also have a new physical therapist.



Dr. John Erickson Moïse, Director of the Medical Center, also serves as an attending physician providing orthopedic care.

Amid this exodus, however, at an early March SVC Medical Committee meeting, three of our physicians voiced their commitment to stay. "This is our life" they said, "we cannot do otherwise." As they honor their vows, other hospitals and clinics in Port-au-Prince are closing due to gang violence. Our patient numbers swell in response, as we become more sought after.

We have slowly, but steadily, expanded our services. The converted shipping containers are

almost ready to open as a physical therapy clinic and pharmacy. While we are a year behind schedule, our progress is a considerable achievement given the present-day difficulties in Haiti.

The Clinic staff have reviewed resumé's, interviewed potential pharmacist candidates, and reached consensus on a final choice. Soon, we will be offering that new service to the community - with the additional hope that it will provide some revenue.

The long-term plan calls for the medical clinic and brace shop to be financially self-sustaining. Given the 50% rate of inflation in Haiti over the last two years, that plan is still far from completion, but we are on course as we expand our services to the poorest of the poor and still reap a modest income.

St. Vincent's School Opens for Spring Semester

Five months after the original opening date in early September of 2022, the government ordered schools to reopen in January. Attendance was low at first. As of early March, however, some 180 of our 227 students were able to attend class. Two buses run daily from downtown Port-au-Prince. Our mobility-challenged students are the ones largely at a disadvantage, as the buses do

not accommodate wheelchairs. They must make do with lessons at home which the faculty send to them.

Our teachers, meanwhile, are challenged by the cost of transportation. For many, it eats up some 75% of their salaries. This is due to both the scarcity and extraordinary expense of fuel. Despite that and the daily violence, they come.



Their commitment in the face of hardship and danger is commendable - perhaps beyond the comprehension of those of us safely housed and well-fed in the United States. It is difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend what daily life is like for Haitians.

St. Vincent's Expands the Size of the Board of Trustees

Trustees are charged with holding an organization in trust for seven generations. That means that these people must envision and plan for the long term, ensure that the finances and their controls undergird that plan, be in constant communication with each other and organizational leadership and work collaboratively daily. **The St. Vincent's Board is the guardian of St. Vincent's Center, Haiti.**

St. Vincent's has no paid staff in the United States. Thus, the Board must be a working Board which means the members do hands-on work, largely consisting of fundraising, as our reason for existence is to support the school, medical center, and brace shop. In order to better serve SVC, the Board has expanded its recent membership with five talented individuals.

The Rev. Kesner Ajax currently runs Maison Naissance, the Birthing Center, in Les Cayes. An Episcopal priest for 32 years, he is perhaps known to many as the current head of the Haiti Partnership Program and the former Director of the Bishop Sharp Institute.

Paul Glover is a member of the SVC Finance Committee and the brand new treasurer of the Board. He brings to this position years as a chief financial officer and a chief executive officer, as well as other significant Board experience.

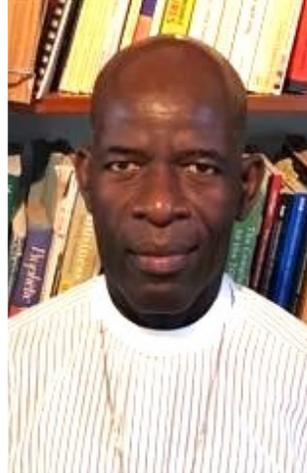
Pastor Ernsou Jean Louis is committed to economic development and has supported the training of young entrepreneurs. That's the reason he

returned to Haiti from Chicago. He owns one guest house in Port-au-Prince and is building another. He is also the active pastor of a non-denominational congregation.

Webster Paraison is a newly retired lawyer. He currently works with many small businesses in Haiti. Haiti uses Napoleonic law, which is different from U.S. constitutional law, and it is the law we must observe in Haiti.

Alan Yarborough, the new Board vice president, lived and worked in Haiti for three years and is fluent in Haitian Kréyol. Alan works in The Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations, is on

the Board of Episcopal Communicators and recently launched his business, *Habits of Discourse*, offering trainings in civil discourse.



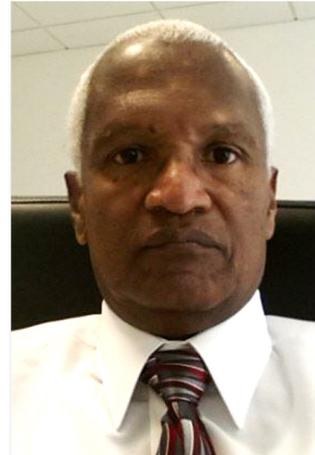
The Rev. Dr. Kesner Ajax



Paul Glover



Ernsou Jean Louis



Webster Paraison



Alan Yarborough

Board Elects Officers, Adopts Budget for 2023

At its March meeting the SVC Board elected the following slate of officers for 2023: Ken Quigley, President; Alan Yarborough, Vice President; Shekina Paul, Secretary; and Paul Glover, Treasurer.

They also adopted a budget for 2023 and voted to approve the development of a master plan for the Santo 17 campus.



Teacher Training Continues with Help from St. James, NYC

Sometimes it is difficult to know if a student has cognitive issues or is a slow learner because of visual or hearing impairment. The late February SVC teacher training, funded by a grant from St. James Church, Madison Avenue, NYC, focused on this.

Led by psychologist Yolenny Rodríguez Fortuné, who works with both students and their families, the workshop addressed how to work in the classroom and the aid that children with disabilities need. Dr. Rodríguez also emphasized the importance of each student's self-esteem - that they should not feel devalued because of their impairment.



She reinforced the need for each teacher to be unfailingly patient and to have wisdom and understanding so that the children feel confident in the environment in which they evolve.

The next training session will continue to focus on teaching techniques for the disabled as well as learning and using sign language and reading and writing Braille.

Former Classmates are now Next-door Neighbors

You've read a bit about Clairucianne and Mackenson in previous newsletters. The former is fluent in four languages, a successful seamstress with only one finger, and a new mother.

Mackenson, who lost both his mother and brother in the 2010 earthquake, is in his final year of medical school and is a new father.

Both applied to Food for the Poor's housing program and were rewarded with small, two-room homes, built adjacent to each other! Their homes still lack electricity and water; and Clairucianne and Mackenson are looking for a nearby water connection and the possibility of solar power. For now, having a roof over their heads is already a dream come true.



Our Mid-day Meal is Vital

"Food insecurity" is a nice, bland term that doesn't begin to describe the situation in Haiti. **Hunger desperation** is more like it. A few years ago, one in five Haitians suffered

from malnutrition. Today, it is now one in three. People are literally dying from starvation.

Our hot, nutritious mid-day meal for everyone at St. Vincent's School - students, teachers, caregivers, maintenance, and administrative staff - is critical to their health. For many, it is the only meal they will receive in a day. So, we focus on ensuring that it is as nutritionally-balanced as possible.

That's the prime reason we have an organic garden: to grow as much of our own fresh produce as possible. Food for the Poor provides rice and beans on a regular basis. And, of course, we purchase food at an increasingly expensive cost. We now have our own potable water. Healthy minds need healthy bodies to do their best work. So, while St. Vincent's School focuses on teaching, we understand that the body must be nourished as well. Your support makes this possible.



Perpetuate What You Value

We commit our lives to what we care about: our families, friends, faith, work, changing lives for the better. Most of us support those entities financially during our lifetime. A bequest can perpetuate that commitment. Would you consider remembering St. Vincent's Center in your estate plans?

St. Vincent's has been blessed by some generous unrestricted bequests in the past few years. In our endow-

ment, the income from these bequests undergirds nearly half of our operating budget. We must raise the remainder with your gifts every year. While we do not have a lot of donors - about 250 last year - everyone is deeply valued, because you make St. Vincent's sustainable. You are the ones who daily feed students and faculty. You are the ones who enable our psychologist, Dr. Yolenny Rodríguez, to help heal lives

shattered by violence and chaos. You are the ones who torque club feet and supply the braces. In short, you are the ones who change lives.

As you ponder what you do, would you also please consider perpetuating your support of St. Vincent's with a provision in your estate plans? You can endow your caring and continue to change and bless lives.



International Day of the Handicapped

Every year in early December St. Vincent's celebrates the International Day of the Handicapped. This year the celebration was modified because of general insecurity in the country and the high cost of travel. About 120 people participated in the event which featured just two activities: the great Mass of Thanksgiving and a reception in the Jean Rony Jovin Bar Resto. Administrative staff, teachers, parents, and some guests attended.



Clockwise from Left: Entrance to the new Medical Center PT room and pharmacy; wires from the solar panels; interior entrance to pharmacy.



Despite gang violence, lack of fuel, and problems with customs, the retrofitting of the containers at the Medical Center is approaching completion. The units will house an enlarged physical therapy department as well as the new pharmacy. Both will provide much-needed services for the patients visiting the Center.

Support for St. Vincent's Center

Please make checks payable to St. Vincent's Center and use the enclosed envelope or mail your check to:

St. Vincent's Center, Haiti
925 Hertzler Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Or, go online to our website www.stvincentshaiti.org and click on the *Donation* button. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. To make a gift of appreciated securities or mutual funds please contact Ken Quigley at khquigley@comcast.net or call him at 717-645-2989.