



# N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

"We Stand Together" SUMMER 2021

## Meet Moïse & Roger, Two of Our Deaf Students

### Who We Are

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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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Deafness is a particularly isolating disability, and at St. Vincent's some 87 students are deaf or so profoundly hard of hearing that hearing aids are of no use. Since Père Duveaux's arrival on July 1, 2019 he has promoted sign language training for all faculty. The training involves faculty giving presentations and telling stories in sign language. Then, under a facilitator's supervision, everyone offers their critical analysis. It is this kind of approach which will enable all SVC faculty, in time, to communicate with deaf students and residents.

Unemployment is high in Haiti - around 80%. But, at the downtown Brace Shop the technicians, who are older SVC students or graduates, are deaf. The Medical Clinic and Brace Shop staff have designed a training program to ensure a succession of deaf prosthetic workers who not only help those with mobility issues, but, in the process, can also earn a modest wage. Teachers at the Santo 17 campus identify deaf students with significant manual dexterity and recommend them for this training. While the SVC Brace Shop is the least expensive one for individuals needing prosthetic limbs or braces, it is not the only one in Port-au-Prince. So, this training also enables deaf SVC graduates to seek employment elsewhere.



*"I am Roger Jonelson, a 16-year-old deaf man who loves life. I live with my disability from birth. This year I am in my eighth fundamental year, and next year I will be leaving the Center to continue my classical studies. However, I really like the functioning and the structure of the Saint Vincent Center.*

*Thanks to the Center I can communicate with other deaf people. I benefit from the generosity of the Center for my studies. I am happy for this gesture. I feel proud to be here. That's why I help by doing yard work and being ready to serve others. Regarding my studies, I want to stay in boarding school and then continue my secondary studies elsewhere and become a professional to be independent." (Written in English: Roger's third language.)*

*"My name is Moïse Vincent, a child of St. Vincent's where I was placed during my infancy and still reside today. I began my studies in pre-school and now, I am in the eighth year of fundamental studies. I live with a physical deformity; I am also deaf. I use a wheelchair to move around. I use sign language to communicate with my fellow students and friends who live here.*



*In fact, I am happy and I rejoice to have found this family. I live on what I am given at the Center and the organization CAHSAV helps with my nutrition. Thanks to St. Vincent's, I learn craftsmanship, I watch television, and I learn to play games, etc."*

*"Then, after my studies, I would like to become a teacher at St. Vincent's in order to help the children with a physical deformity. My dream is to travel to other countries to enrich my knowledge and to find a job which will train me to help other handicapped children." (Translated from the French.)*

## SVC Envisions a New Medical Center in Downtown P-au-P

Recent SVC newsletters have shown pictures of the razing of the earthquake-damaged blue building and rebuilding of the perimeter wall at the Medical Center. In June, the work was finally completed, months after the original date, due to violence in downtown Port-au-Prince. Still needed is the razor wire, for security, atop the wall, but its harshness will be softened by the bougainvillea to be planted along the inside of the wall, creeping upwards to obscure the wire.

With the blue building demolished, the staff and the board now have a clean palette for envisioning a future facility. As part of the demolition process, septic and water system locations have been identified, a clear plot plan and soil conditions documented, and a structural assessment of the current building completed. Not surprisingly,

this assessment indicates that the current building would not survive another earthquake of the magnitude of the one suffered in 2010. And Port-au-Prince lies over a seismic fault. While the building is considered safe for current use, SVC has begun to plan for a new facility which is both hurricane and earthquake resistant.

The Medical Center staff envisions offering new services downtown including on-site physical and occupational therapy, dental care, day surgeries, and a pharmacy. These new services will not only enhance patient care, they will also make this care more easily attainable for families who often travel great distances to the Medical Clinic. Currently, St. Vincent's Medical Committee and Long Range Planning Committee are working together to define the full program and

the attendant space needs. Once finalized, that information will be shared with several architectural firms which will bid on creating the master plan for the site.

Currently the Medical Center offers orthopedic, pediatric, and vision care as well as a state-of-the-art x-ray service and a laboratory for blood and urine testing. Also, the Brace Shop fashions braces, prostheses, and crutches for the physically disabled, as well as casting corrections for club feet.

The architectural design work can proceed apace despite the downtown violence. Construction cannot begin, however, until St. Vincent's has raised the necessary funds and the area is free of turmoil. So, stay tuned for updates!



### Education Continues for Santo 17 Faculty

A principle of St. Vincent's mission is to "ensure opportunities for continuing education and certification of all teachers". Director Père Duveaux has adhered steadfastly to this principle. A grant from St. James' Church, New York City has enabled the hiring of staff from the Racine Institute which specializes in teacher training. Following the closing of classes in June, and conditions permitting, teachers will participate in additional classes designed to enhance their teaching skills in a variety of subjects. (See below.) These sessions will continue over several years.

Faculty participate in a sign language class, at left.



# "How Does Your Garden Grow?"

Abundantly is the answer! With the aid and advice of several agronomists, St. Vincent's has begun to irrigate the vegetable garden strategically. The impressive results - carrots, leeks, spinach, peppers, cabbage - enrich the nutrition of the daily campus diet. While one of every five Haitian children suffers from malnutrition, that is not the case at Santo 17!

Furthermore, the agronomists are helping to design a school-wide curriculum which will involve hands-on participation in the gardens. Under supervision, the students will learn the fundamentals of responsible agriculture - and resulting nutrition. The topsoil at Santo is healthy and the sun is plentiful. Responsible irrigation means precious water is not wasted. The hot mid-day meal for some nearly 300 students, faculty and staff is more nutritious than ever before.



# A Tragic Death Diminishes the SVC Family

Hired in 2017 as the SVC courier, Jean Rony Jovin was always happily available to help anyone with any task. He was more than a courier. He was a much-loved member of the family. In mid-May after having withdrawn funds from the bank, he was robbed and shot. He did not survive the attack.

Assisted by two other priests and a deacon, Père Duveaux officiated at the funeral at St. Syméon Parish in Croix des Bouquets. Staff from St. Vincent's formed the choir and some of the blind residents also performed on violin and accordion. The congregation overflowed with members of the SVC family.

In his address, Père Duveaux denounced the violence raging in Haiti, expressed condolences to Jovin's family and thanked the SVC Board for its emotional support and for covering the cost of the funeral and burial.

Only in his 30's, Jovin leaves a young child. St. Vincent's has created a wall mural and plaque so that his memory will always be honored.



Created by his SVC family, this Santo 17 mural honors the memory of Jovin.

## SVC Receives New Wheelchairs

The March newsletter introduced you to *Wheelchair Works for Haiti* and its Occupational Therapists, Mary Jo Wagner and Merry Kaulbach, who work tirelessly to source wheelchairs and then, in concert with SVC adult resident, Adrien Kenson, tailor them to students' particular needs.

Mary Jo and Merry have recently connected with the Walkabout Foundation which provides a variety of wheelchairs - free! The result is that 14 wheelchairs are now en route to Haiti, albeit by a circuitous route (by air from the US to Cap Haitian and then overland from Cap Haitian to Port-au-Prince). But, when they arrive, the ten new students requiring wheelchairs will be fitted, and some of the older students who need new and different wheelchairs will be helped as well.

Because travel is severely curtailed due to in-country violence and COVID, the eminently capable Adrien Kenson will do all of the adjustments by himself at Santo 17. He has been well trained!



Kenson, who himself is confined to a wheelchair, modifies, updates, and repairs wheelchairs for St. Vincent's. Above left is the condition of one of his recent projects; above right is the final result after Kenson worked his magic.

## Sports Equipment Enlivens the Day

Despite their disabilities, St. Vincent's students are keen on sports. There is not, as yet, a playground on the Santo 17 campus, but a recent generous gift has enabled the purchase of the kind of equipment which we take for granted in U.S. schools: volley balls, soccer balls, marbles, jump ropes, whistles and stop watches for races, goggles for eye protection, even some sports jackets to indicate teams.

Eager for daily exercise, either individually or collectively, SVC students now have that opportunity. Their delight in physical activity is obvious.



*Cassandre Shekinah Paul*



## The 2020-2021 Academic Year Has Ended

It has been another year of political turmoil and violence in Haiti combined with the resurgence of COVID. And yet, 192 students (93 girls, 99 boys) completed the academic program which began early to compensate for time lost during the previous year.

Fourteen students in the ninth grade took the national exam in June. It's still too soon to know the results.

Classes for calendar year 2021-2022 will commence on September 6, 2021. Augmenting the current 192-member student body, St. Vincent's expects to welcome 30 additional students; and, as noted elsewhere in this newsletter, add the study of agriculture to the curriculum.



*The structure that will house the water purification system for Santo 17.*

## SVC Board Elects A New Director

Welcome Cassandre Shekinah Paul. At its May meeting Directors elected Cassandre to a three-year term on the SVC Board. She has trained as an Administrative Assistant with the Sisters of Christ the King and is in ongoing management studies at Quisqueya University. Currently, she is Secretary of the Essence-Elle Foundation (FEE), a non-profit, created mainly by women in 2017 to serve the Haitian community through better social integration and to improve the living conditions of the most disadvantaged. She has been an active volunteer at St. Vincent's for several years and has helped to raise awareness, with both the government and the general population, that people with disabilities are quite capable, and that, as part of society, they have the same needs and rights as anyone..

## Thank You, New Hampshire!

St. Vincent's Campus is poised to have its own potable water system. SVC proposed a Sustainable Development Grant to the Diocese of New Hampshire, sponsored by St. Andrew's Church in New London. Both the Diocese and the Parish responded generously, and St. Vincent's is now ready to place an order for the water purification equipment.

Quite simply, it is not safe to drink tap water in Haiti. And cholera, introduced into Haiti by UN troops from Nepal, has made it even less safe of late. Thus, bottled or treated water is the necessary recourse. Recent topographical and soil studies at the St. Vincent's Santo campus indicate that the area least likely to be contaminated (due to slow percolation) is, fortuitously, adjacent to the administration, kitchen and dining areas where the well is currently located. It is here that the facility housing the new potable water system will be located. One 700-gallon tank will hold the untreated water while the second 700-gallon tank will hold the filtered, UV-treated daily water supply. Any surplus will be shared with teachers and neighbors.

# Could you Consider a Gift that Keeps on Giving?

Not only **could** Virginia ("Ginny") Wolfe consider such a gift, she **did** something about it! Earlier this year, St. Vincent's received a bequest from her Charitable Gift Annuity: a trust arrangement that pays a fixed, partially tax-free, income for life and, upon death, is disbursed to individual and charitable beneficiaries designated by the donor.

A graduate in political science from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Ginny went on to receive a Master's in Education from Lehigh and a Jurisprudence degree from the University of Wisconsin. A long-time member of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Madison, she travelled to Haiti several times with the Diocese of Milwaukee's Haiti Project.

It was on one of these trips that St. Vincent's touched her heart. Her heart-felt lifetime support has now continued.

The Charitable Gift Annuity which Ginny set up is known as a "planned gift." There are many varieties which can benefit the donor, and others, during their lifetime with the ultimate distribution, usually to a charity, coming at death. The best known form of a planned gift is, of course, the bequest.

Could you consider a bequest to St. Vincent's Center? Perhaps you'd like to endow your annual gift? If you'd like more information about other forms of planned giving, contact Ken Quigley, SVC Board President at [khquigley@comcast.net](mailto:khquigley@comcast.net) or (717) 796-1852.



## Support for St. Vincent's Center

The \$600,000 annual operating budget supports the School, downtown Medical Clinic and Brace Shop. That means salaries for teachers, administrators, caregivers, physicians, technicians. It covers food, security, maintenance, medical and office supplies, educational materials, transportation, fuel (for generators, vehicles, and the kitchen), social security, hospitalization, wheelchair repair - and much more. That \$600,000 is s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d to the max. So, your help is deeply appreciated.

You may send your 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 tax deductible to the full extent of the law. To make a gift of appreciated securities or from your retirement fund, please contact Ken Quigley. (See left column on front page of this newsletter.)

## North Dakota Provides a Year's Worth of Brace Shop Materials



Last year, North Dakota Episcopalians outfitted the new medical lab at the downtown Medical Center. This year they have made a gift which will provide **all** of the materials which the SVC Brace Shop uses to fit and make prosthetic limbs and braces for the poorest of the poor in Haiti.

Purchasing these materials in-country helps the struggling local economy as well as ensuring a steady supply for the prosthetic technicians to keep apace of the need. Correcting a club foot takes a myriad

of supplies, as the young child's foot is torqued many times before it is straightened. Each of these sessions requires a new cast and ultimately, often a brace, for five years or longer. North Dakota's generosity greatly facilitates this life-changing work.



ST VINCENT'S  
CENTER

This newly designed logo for St. Vincent's will begin appearing on our materials establishing a strong, recognizable image common to all of our communications.