

# St. Vincent's Trustee Named Board Chair of Food For The Poor, Haiti

Gérald Oriol, Jr. is both a noted public servant in Haiti, having served twice as the Minister for Inclusion of People with Disabilities, and an experienced trustee of non-profits. In June, he was selected Board Chair of Food For The Poor, Haiti. FFTP, as it is fondly referred to, has been a long-time partner of St. Vincent's, providing the school with rice, beans, and cooking oil. Gérald succeeds outgoing Board Chair, Episcopal Bishop Ogé Beauvoir. We wish him well in his new role and look forward to a continuing Partnership with FFTP.



(Left to Right) FFTP President and CEO Ed Raine and Gérald Oriol, Jr.

## We Need You Now!

In the United States, we award the Congressional Medal of Honor to those who have acted with extraordinary valor in war. Haiti is, right now, an active war zone; and this newsletter details the daily acts of courage of our staff, students and their families. There are no medals for them. But the need to keep them alive and even flourishing amid the strife is vital. With Medical Clinic closure, we have no patient fees, but we have 28 families queued for orthopedic care and we are paying those doctors. And those doctors need medical supplies. We also have those 160 students coming daily to class and for meals. The demand for St. Vincent's services is there today, and we need your support for these valiant people today.

Please make your gift online at [www.stvincentshaiti.org](http://www.stvincentshaiti.org) or mail your check to:

St. Vincent's Center, Haiti  
P.O. Box 1433  
New London, NH 03257



Learn more and support our work at [www.stvincentshaiti.org](http://www.stvincentshaiti.org)

*Thank you for your support!*

## Our Trustees

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### Questions? Please contact:

Paul Glover  
[pwglover3@gmail.com](mailto:pwglover3@gmail.com)

or

Elizabeth M. Lowell  
[elowell236@aol.com](mailto:elowell236@aol.com)

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

Federal Tax ID number: 62-1564456



Give a gift today online by scanning the QR code.

When you do, please consider selecting the box to cover the processing fees to ensure that all of your gift goes toward helping the children of St. Vincent's Center in Haiti.

*Scan me!*

CMMH/St. Vincent's Center, Haiti  
P.O. Box 1433  
New London, NH 03257

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## Where Do We Go From Here?

In one word: forward. We go forward.

Since the destruction of the downtown Medical Center and Brace Shop, we have focused on short and longer-term solutions to the loss of space. Our assumption is that nothing is recoverable in the near term, but there are still patients in need of care, and our doctors are ready and willing to return to work. So Père Duveaux and Dr. Moïse are working with our architect Hervé Sabin to try to identify facilities that we could rent.

Meanwhile, some 28 families of orthopedic patients have contacted Dr. Moïse requesting care now. They are able to come to the Santo 17 campus, so part of the short-term solution is to make our School Infirmary a Medical Clinic Annex. We have an internal care physician dedicated to the School population who began work on May 1st.

Continued inside



Entrance to Medical Center and Brace Shop



One or more of our orthopedic surgeons from the downtown Clinic will now join him on campus. Our Physical Therapist is already on site, as is 24/7 nursing care. A recent gift purchased air conditioning for the infirmary and a ramp to the PT space. We are ready.

Renel Pierressaint is also ready. He has been a bootmaker at the Brace Shop for seven years. Hearing the shots near the Clinic on that fateful day that we closed, he gathered his tools and fled to his home. He is still able to do his essential work.



*Adult resident mentoring a student*

The onset of extreme violence reduced our initial student attendance to those who were residents at the School. But, we have seen the student numbers grow - from 40 to 60 to 90 to now 160 every day. All faculty are present. Our adult residents play a critical role in mentoring the students; they have lived through previous bouts of national violence. Our ninth graders are absorbed in studying for their national exams. This is our "new normal." Imagine the relief these young deaf, blind, and wheelchair-bound students feel as some sense of normalcy returns to their lives! No longer stuck at home with no resources, they can focus on their education and enjoy their classmates' companionship.



*Ninth graders studying for national exams*

We are feeding some 200 students and staff daily. Because the cost of food has doubled in the last 18 months, we have already spent in the first half of this year the money we had budgeted for the entire year. We continue to pay all salaries. It is nothing short of amazing that St. Vincent's has restored services to this high degree. It's all been done quietly; there is no fanfare. Faculty, staff, students, and doctors are all unheralded heroes.

There are daily cautions. Despite the transitional government's naming of a new Prime Minister and his selection of a cabinet, the violence has not slackened. At a very basic level, it means that Père

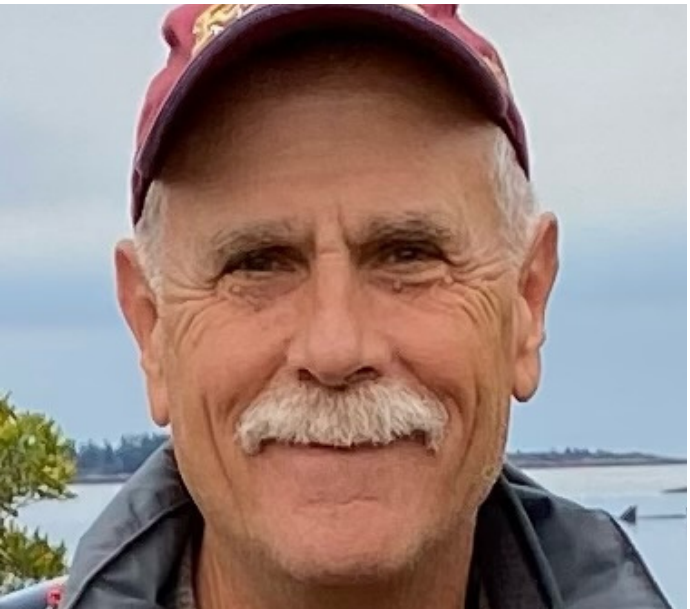
Duveaux is not safe wearing his clerical collar as he bikes to and from work, nor is it always safe for the students to wear their school uniforms. Père Duveaux must "take the temperature" daily and advise them whether to wear uniforms or blue jeans and simple tops.

On another level, as part of our moving forward, we have measured, room by room, the usage of electricity on campus, so that when it is safe to bring and install solar panels, inverters and batteries to campus, we are properly prepared and knowledgeable about the amount of wattage needed. Rooftops have been measured and older students selected to learn about installation and maintenance.

Our Haitian Trustees have been invaluable as we tread this path forward. Their knowledge of how to get things done, their willingness to use their connections, their wisdom in considering long-term solutions have been offered in daily telephone conversations, even as they suffer food insecurity and displacement from their own homes. Their compassion and commitment to St. Vincent's knows no bounds.

## St. Vincent's Board Elects new Trustee and Treasurer

In early June, the Trustees enthusiastically elected Michael W. Quinn, of New London, NH to the Board and as Treasurer. Mike's resumé boasts an impressive array of financial skills and experience as well as myriad volunteer activities. He brings to the position of Board Treasurer the hard-to-find, yet critical, skill sets so necessary for fulfilling that job. A graduate of Ohio University, Mike has also done advanced work in leadership training and finance. He responded to his election by saying "I appreciate the chance to be part of something so important at such a difficult time."



## A Donor Recalls Meeting Sister Joan During Turbulent Times

Doug Cospers wrote of his time in Haiti and meeting Sister Joan. In a subsequent telephone conversation, he recalled not only her work, but also her street smarts in conducting that work. With his permission, we share from his letter.

"I met Sister Joan when I was a young traveler visiting Haiti in 1989, during less turbulent times than now but coup-filled nonetheless. I stayed in a guest room at the school and had the privilege of occasional conversation with Sister Joan, then 83, who told me the story of the beginnings of St. Vincent's. She used a wheelchair then because of her arthritis and had a gaggle of keys on a retractable keychain at her waist. Around her neck on a piece of string, she wore a six-inch wooden cross. She knew a vagabond in search of himself when she saw one and was generous with her wisdom. It was a time of occasional coups across the way at the palace. A young woman sold bananas down the street from St. Vincent's. Sister Joan told me that as long as that young woman was there, all was clear. When she disappeared, Sister Joan locked down the school and retired to her "coup room," an interior room with no windows. She allowed me to install a telephone connection in the coup room so she could communicate from there. During my brief stay, I came to appreciate what she and the staff were doing for the children with disabilities in Haiti – the least fortunate of all in the least fortunate place in the world, in my opinion.

I since have visited many of the hard spots of the world as a traveler and a journalism trainer, mostly in post-conflict countries. Never in my travels have I seen more challenging conditions for living. And now, as you know too well, it is worse.

Thank you and the St. Vincent's family for all that you have done, and do, for Haitian children."

Haiti's tortured history has endured many coups and many different governments. Throughout St. Vincent's 79 years, we have persevered in our mission of caring for and educating children with disabilities. We adapt, as we must, to keep everyone safe, but we have never wavered in our mission.



*Sister Joan with students*