

# N'AP Kanpe Ansanm

"We Stand Together" SUMMER 2020



## Who We Are

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

The Rt. Rev. Mark A. Bourlakas  
Roanoke, VA  
Aurélie Fièvre  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Cynthia Jaar Handal  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Sister Kethia Jean-Simon  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Elizabeth M. Lowell  
New London, NH  
John Mutin  
Memphis, TN  
Dr. Susan Nelson  
Memphis, TN  
Fabiola Poisson  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Kenneth H. Quigley, President  
Mechanicsburg, PA  
Ary Theodore, Esq.  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Dr. Pierre Marie Woolley  
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

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

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

Ken Quigley: (717-796-1852)  
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## SVC Prepares for the Covid 19 Pandemic

Forty residents in lockdown at Santo 17 are safe, quarantined from outside visitors, and helping each other in this stressful time.

Père Duveaux, SVC Director, had the foresight to purchase two months' worth of soap, non-perishable food, and face masks. He has set up hand-washing stations around the campus and forbidden any staff to enter until they have showered and changed clothes. He has hired a nurse who now resides at the Center to help, especially with the younger children; and he has expanded their cramped dormitory space so that the children can be further physically-distanced. Kitchen sanitation has been improved and the space fully ventilated.

Education continues for the residential students. Three teachers and several adult residents help to teach a variety of subjects to the younger children. An art and macramé teacher comes regularly. In addition, for the non-residential students, the teaching staff at SVC has sent worksheets home to parents encouraging them to work with their children on various subjects over the summer. Older residents work with the younger students on similar worksheets.

Père Duveaux also purchased and distributed health kits to 82 families in the area that included buckets, soap, and Clorox as a means to help prevent the disease.

Plans are well underway for the opening of school most likely on August 3, the earliest date set by the government of Haiti to open schools throughout the country. It is not yet official. The early start adds 50 days to the school year as a means of making up for lost time earlier this year because of social unrest and the virus.

Various protocols have been put in place to address the virus when the students return in August – extra spacing in the classrooms, taking students' temperatures, regular hand washing, and a planned meeting with parents to review coronavirus safety steps that should be implemented at home.



Clockwise — Mr. Aly, Principal, uses one of the many hand-washing stations on campus; Jimmie Souffant, long-time resident who is blind, teaches Braille to young students; Mrs. Noel instructs residents on coronavirus safety protocols.

## Bold New Vision Emerges from Board Retreat in NYC

February found the full St. Vincent's Board and many Advisory Council members gathered in New York City to discuss in depth future options for the School and Medical Center. The resulting vision is bold, and work has already begun.

Retreatants agreed that the primary work should begin at the Medical Center, and that has happened. (See story on page 5). All of this has taken months of thoughtful deliberation and planning, as members of the newly-formed Long Range Planning Committee have met regularly by Zoom to consider options, review bids, and move the process forward.

Future decisions will focus on what other medical services could be offered at the downtown Port-au-Prince site. St. Vincent's is a trademark for handicapped children in Haiti. They come to us from all over the country, and the Medical Center is well-known in Port-au-Prince and beyond. Soon there will be space for expansion there. Conversations centered on the possible expansion of services currently offered: Ophthalmic, Pediatric and Orthopedic care and the addition of Occupational and Physical Therapy, Nutrition, and Speech Therapy. It was also suggested that there should be a medical clinic at Santo 17 as well. We will seek the input of our medical staff and our families before determining next steps.

And for the school at Santo 17, where do we start? Right now, St. Vincent's goes through only the ninth grade. If our students are to have better higher education and employment opportunities, we must offer classes through 12th grade as well as vocational courses. So, curriculum is the place to start. There is no curriculum in Haiti for children with disabilities and there are no books for the blind. Our families don't have internet at home. While designing and adapting curriculum, we must also offer teacher training. Père Duveaux has begun gathering CVs and certificates so that he can ascertain the kind of enrichment each faculty member needs.

And then, as form follows function, we must develop a campus master plan. Because we want to integrate art, music, sports and other extra-curricular activities into the school day and because the hours-long bus commute presently precludes that, we believe that a residential school is our best option. Some faculty are willing to be dorm parents.

Our 8.6 acre campus provides the space for residential housing, classrooms, playgrounds, playing fields, gardens and a guest house. It will take time and a great deal of money, which we must raise, but the Education Committee, under the leadership of Trustee Fabiola Poisson, is already hard at work. As they determine curriculum and educational program, the campus will begin to take shape. Please pray for this process - and for progress!

### SVC Board Holds Annual Meeting In April, Elects Officers, Adopts Budget of \$473,000 for 2020

Members of the SVC Board met by Zoom in April to elect officers, adopt a budget for 2020, and conduct other business.

Officers elected for 2020 include the following:

Kenneth H. Quigley, President (*Mechanicsburg, PA*)

Cynthia Jaar Handal, Vice President (*Port-au-Prince, Haiti*)

John Mutin, Treasurer (*Memphis, TN*)

Aurélie Fièvre, Secretary (*Port-au-Prince, Haiti*)

A budget of \$473,000 was adopted, an increase of more than \$100,000 over the prior year, reflecting costs of additional security, transportation, financial services, insurance, maintenance, and salary increases for administrative staff.

In addition the board adopted an updated set of bylaws as well as a set of policies to govern its endowment. The board hopes to hold its next in-person board meeting in Haiti in November 2020 if conditions of health and safety permit.



The St. Vincent's Board met for a three-day retreat in NYC at the House of the Redeemer in February to plan for the future of St. Vincent's.



## First-Ever Faculty Lounge

Two former classrooms, converted to coronavirus isolation rooms - and thankfully not needed for that purpose - have now been made one with the removal of a dividing wall. This is the new, first-ever, Faculty Lounge! Here are two brand new computers for exclusive use by faculty, along with desks and chairs for breaks in the teaching schedule.

## School Purchases New 15-Passenger Van; Repairs Older 28-Passenger Bus

Vehicles in Haiti must be built for endurance. Overcrowded, pot-holed dirt roads and 24/7 bumper-to-bumper traffic combined with right-on-the-road roadside stands, almost-impenetrable foot traffic, no traffic lights, and no traffic cops mean that cars - and drivers - are tested daily. It's not unusual for repairs to be undertaken right where the vehicle has stopped in the middle of the road, further arresting traffic. Heavy-duty SUVs, usually Japanese, are the vehicles of choice, because they have a longer life span than other cars.

St. Vincent's has been fortunate to purchase such a vehicle: a 15-passenger Nissan URVAN, which can be retrofitted to accommodate wheelchairs on the roof and back racks. This diesel-powered, air-conditioned van with cloth seats can now safely and comfortably transport SVC students and adult residents to medical, and other appointments beyond our Santo 17 campus.

In addition, the old 28-passenger bus (middle left) was totally refurbished and repaired and is now ready for use.



## Enhancements to Administration

Administrators now have new computers and a printer, (seen above in boxes) which will greatly enhance their work. Dinah Leon, our bookkeeper (and sister of former SVC Director Père Sadoni Leon) and Samuel Elizaïre, an adult resident and her assistant, are both learning QuickBooks - coming in on Saturdays to do so. Also, the administrative space has been subdivided by portable barriers for health, acoustical and privacy reasons.

## New Roles for Aurélie Fièvre

Many of you know Aurélie as the former Executive Administrator at St. Vincent's. She is now our newest Trustee, and we are delighted to welcome her in that capacity. She is also a brand new mother. Her daughter Zuri, which means "beautiful," was born in early May.

# Educational Program Gets an Overhaul and New Vision

Quality education is a priority of the board as well as that of our new Director of St. Vincent's, Père Inel Duveaux. He articulated his vision in a position paper distributed to the board during its recent retreat in NYC.

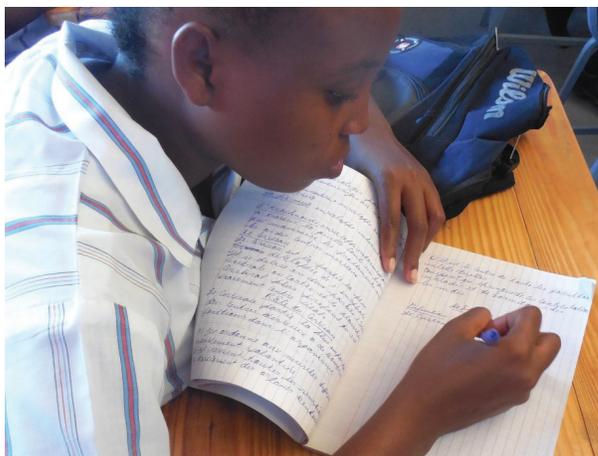
He said his goal was to “organize, structure, and re-orient the school.” To do so he has promulgated a set of regulations (and expectations) for students, teachers and parents. He has formed the school's Pedagogical Office that includes the director, heads of the first, second and third grade-level cycles, the heads of the blind, deaf and music sections, the head of IT and the human resources manager. And he has championed inclusive education, bringing children with different needs into common classrooms taking into account the needs of each.

He envisions the deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, motor impaired and fully abled children learning together with reasonable accommodation made to facilitate learning in all classes.

Some of the specific steps to be taken:

- ◆ Make all sections of the school wheelchair-accessible
- ◆ Provide continuous training for teaching staff
- ◆ Involve parents in the learning process helping them learn sign language and Braille
- ◆ Provide more Braille machines, books in Braille, and cards in Braille
- ◆ Offer individualized teaching classes for students with learning difficulties
- ◆ Schedule sign language and Braille classes for all students to promote communication, mutual aid and group work.
- ◆ Require all teachers to learn sign language in order to communicate with all students
- ◆ Introduce extracurricular activities such as music, macramé, and adaptive sports

This approach, he says, will enable everyone at the school to work together and help all to understand the challenges of disability more broadly. In addition, St. Vincent students with special needs will be better-equipped to attend ordinary schools after ninth grade and find their way to a productive, independent life, regardless of disability.



## Major Work Continues at the Downtown Medical Center

Yes, the downtown Medical Center is indeed closed right now, due to the coronavirus epidemic. **BUT**, a great deal of work is going on there to improve the overall services.

### ***A New 60-Watt Generator has been Installed***

Working closely with our Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, Dauphin Mentor, and our architect, Hervé Sabin, Père Duveaux has wisely used this time to meet the final condition of the Japanese Embassy's grant for a new X-ray machine, i.e., 24/7 electricity at the Center.

The new, powerful generator was installed on a specially-designed platform and linked to the main building's electrical service during the week of June 29.

The X-ray machine will provide immediate diagnosis for our orthopedic patients, and, at the same time, alleviate the need, inconvenience, and expense of travel to another site for a diagnosis. It will also become a source of revenue as other physicians in the city use its services.

### ***The Old Earthquake-Damaged "Blue" Building Will be Demolished***

For more than a decade a residual structure from the original downtown center sat in a corner of our property. Request for proposals to demolish the building and clear the debris are currently being sent to several contractors. We hope to complete the project by the end of July.

### ***A Geo-Technical Survey is Underway to Prepare the Site for Future Development***

As part of a longer-range plan, an engineering company has been contracted to complete topographical and geological surveys of the site to locate and document all significant structures on the site, both above and below ground, and determine suitability of the land for future development.

### ***The Perimeter Wall Will Be Repaired and Reinforced for Security***

After the old "blue" building is removed, the perimeter wall will be reconstructed making the site secure. Security cameras will be placed throughout the site.



*The workers pour concrete to build the platform for a large, new electrical generator at the Medical Center*



*The new generator was installed during the last week of June inside this fence-protected site and within the secure walls of the Medical Center.*



*This building on the Medical Center campus has been vacant since damaged by the earthquake in 2010. July will see its demolition and removal to make room for additional development of the downtown Center.*

## Lillie Hilton's Bequest

Lillie Hilton's long and generous earthly life ended at the age of 103 in April of 2019. She began her support of St. Vincent's Center in 1995 and never missed the annual opportunity to grow the Ordway and Lillie Hilton Endowment Fund: the fund which helps to undergird St. Vincent's annual operating budget. Board Chair Ken Quigley stayed in touch with Mrs. Hilton, updating her on SVC's status, hopes, and dreams for the future. Her interest never flagged. Nor did her support: She remembered St. Vincent's in her will with a bequest which will perpetuate her support of the operating budget.

Her generous spirit continues to touch and change lives for the better at Santo 17, the Medical Clinic, and Brace Shop. Our gratitude for her loving generosity is deep and abiding.

Bequests in a will, a life income gift such as a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust, gifts from a retirement account, a life insurance policy and other means of "planned giving" can mean the world to our ministry. Please contact Ken Quigley, our President, if you want to learn more about ways to consider St. Vincent's in your legacy giving.

## Remembering Karen Grass

Karen Grass retired from public school education in 2014. Karen was a longtime teacher and principal of a large elementary school in Virginia. Her education included a PhD in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. After retirement, she was involved in many projects that included state education assessment, nature courses, and adult education. When Karen heard about St. Vincent's School she expressed an immediate interest in getting involved in the education portion of the program. When the SVC principal visited Virginia, Karen arranged and escorted her to the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. Her continued correspondence with the SVC principal and the board convinced them that her talents were something that would benefit the school. After much discernment, Karen agreed

to join the board and after just a few months became a member and chair of the education committee.

In February of this year Karen attended the board retreat held in New York. She met other SVC board and staff members. Karen and her husband, Bill, were very excited about making their first trip to Haiti in March. They were planning to take many educational supplies and Bill had become an expert in repairing Braille machines.

On March 7th while driving to an adult education class, Karen suffered an aneurysm deep in her brain. She died the next day, March 8, 2020.



## Support for St. Vincent's Center

St. Vincent's work in Haiti focuses on both education at the School in Santo 17 and health at the School, the Medical Center and the Brace Shop. These latter two in downtown Port-au-Prince serve the poorest of the poor with ophthalmic, pediatric and orthopedic care and soon with diagnostic X-ray capability. Our projected operating budget for the coming year is \$473,000. Additionally, the capital project improvements (van, generator, computers, etc.) over the past few months have cost \$100,000, which we must now replenish. So, **please continue to help!** Your contribution will help us to continue to improve our services. Please consider a gift to:

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

Or, you may make a donation online at our website: [www.st.vincentshaiti.org](http://www.st.vincentshaiti.org). Because we have no paid staff in the United States, **all** gifts support St. Vincent's work in Haiti.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IN YOUR RESPONSE ENVELOPE.