

# OUTREACH TO HAITI

*espwa, our newsletter of hope*



H E L P I N G   H A I T I A N S   H E L P   H A I T I A N S

## EDUCATION THROUGH OUTREACH TO HAITI

### *Dealing with the Whole Child*

Outreach to Haiti has served the impoverished Port-au-Prince neighborhoods for over 25 years. Two of Outreach's core initiatives are the Education Sponsorship and Maternal and Child Health Care programs.

As there is very limited free public education in Haiti, only about half of the children attend school. Of those who attend school 60 percent of the students do not remain in school beyond the 6th grade. The literacy rate for adults over the age of 15 is 54 percent. Economic, social and health issues often limit the ability of good students to remain in school and realize their full potential.

As a relatively small agency we may not be able to significantly alter these statistics. But like the Good Samaritan we are called to address the needs of those with whom we come in contact the best that we can. For the 233 students in our Education Sponsorship program this means giving them every opportunity to stay in school and progress as far as their abilities can take them.

Our approach to education is holistic. What allows us to make that claim? For starters, we do more than simply pay tuitions and strive to be fully engaged in the educational process. We monitor students' performance and attendance and provide remedial help if possible, conduct age-appropriate events and workshops designed to expand the students' experiences beyond the academic curriculum and provide life skills and financial literacy training to older students. We recently added a fledgling internship program. These supplemental services are generally unavailable to students outside of our program often attending the same schools.

Each year every student is eligible for complete physical and dental examinations



*Waiting her turn outside the Outreach clinic.*

through the services of our on-site Maternal and Child Health Care Clinic. The clinic includes a laboratory and pharmacy and these services are routinely available to any student if needed. On occasion the examination indicates results that we cannot address directly and students must be referred to outside medical providers. Often the referral involves vision care and the need for corrective lenses. Sometimes it is more serious and the referral is to a heart specialist, oncologist or a surgeon.

If you invest in a child's future by sponsoring a student in our program, the returns can be life changing.

## INTERNSHIPS: A Foot in the Door for Haitian Students

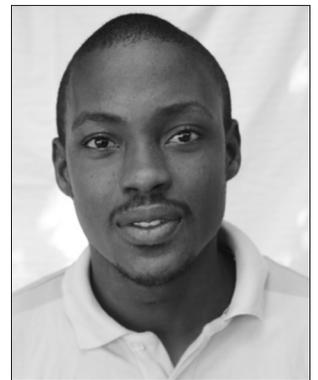
*By Dennis Petruzzi*

It was a long time ago, but I still remember my first day working as an intern at a CPA firm in New York City. I remember the gray flannel business suit and the wing tipped oxford shoes I was wearing. I remember too how nervous I was about making a good first impression and wanting to make the most of the opportunity that I had been given. Then, as it is today, an internship meant a foot in the door and a better chance at getting a full time job in a chosen profession.

That is why I was so excited to hear that with the support of the Tom and Julie Wood Family Foundation in Indiana, Erol Ezerbe,

Outreach to Haiti's Education Director, had arranged eight internships for our post secondary students. This would be a chance for these eight students to prove the value of the grades listed on their college transcripts and the skills and attributes reflected on their resumes.

Ernso Vaincouer a Civil Engineering major is interning with SECOSA an international construction company building schools and roads in Haiti. About internships, he says:



*Ernso Vaincouer, a civil engineering major, is interning with an international construction company building schools and roads in Haiti.*

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Most Reverend Michael R. Cote D.D.  
Bishop of the Diocese of Norwich

In Haiti:  
Joel Jean-Louis  
Operations Manager  
Fr. Frank Rouleau  
Chaplain and Twinning Director  
In U.S.:  
Dennis and Sue Petruzzi  
Management Team  
James Michel, Board Chair

*Photos in this issue by Kyn Tolson*

## JUST A CLICK AWAY!

Learn more about our work and how you can assist children and families in Haiti.

Visit our website:  
[www.outreachtohaiti.org](http://www.outreachtohaiti.org)

Follow us on **Twitter**:  
@outreachtohaiti

**Facebook**:  
[www.facebook.com/OutreachToHaiti](http://www.facebook.com/OutreachToHaiti)

Join our emailed listserve by sending your email address to:  
[info@outreachtohaiti.org](mailto:info@outreachtohaiti.org)

You will receive short updates on happenings concerning our outreach mission and other Haiti-related news and events.

## OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Sponsors are still needed for

### Outreach To Haiti Education Scholarship Program

Sponsor a student and change a life.

#### ANNUAL COST OF TUITION

Primary School Student:	\$425
Secondary School Student:	\$500
University Student:	\$2,000
General support:	Any amount

For more information, call  
860.848.2237



*University students  
Chrisline Alexis, Jimmy  
and Yamile Perez discuss  
their upcoming  
presentation  
to guests at  
Outreach to Haiti's  
Norwich Mission House.*

## Jimmy Kervens Jean-Felix, Ambassador

*By Eroid Ezerbe, Education Director  
and Dennis Petruzzi*

You will not find his name listed in any official government directory nor will you find diplomatic plates on the motorcycle he uses to commute to classes, but Jimmy Kervens Jean-Felix is very much an ambassador for Outreach's Education Sponsorship Program and for Haiti.

Jimmy, who carries a double major in Language and in Business Management from the State University of Haiti, spends many hours in and outside the classroom in pursuit of his academic goals. But out of a sense of responsibility, a desire to make the most of his opportunities and a willingness to give back he somehow finds the time to do so much more.

Every Saturday, Jimmy and his younger brother, Riguerson, who is also an Outreach to Haiti beneficiary, tutor younger students in need of additional help with their studies.

He frequently is invited to speak with international groups at Outreach's mission house on the topic of the Haitian Education System and what it is like to be a student in Haiti.

In his business college, Jimmy is part of a student group called Solidarité Universitaire et Citoyenne pour le Développement (Academic and Civic Solidarity for Development). The group organizes community service activities and fosters an environment in which all of its members can develop in every aspect of their lives.

Last summer Jimmy participated in a program funded by the U.S. Department of State. The purpose of the program was to provide international students with a deeper understanding of the United States, while enhancing their leadership skills. He spent 4 weeks at Virginia Commonwealth University

(VCU) where he attended classes, conferences and seminars focused on U.S. history and government. Jimmy spent his last two weeks at Georgetown University, where he had the opportunity to visit some of the historical places in Washington and to meet with U.S. Congressman Bobby Scott of Virginia.

His experiences in the States inspired him to be even more involved in his community. He and some other students started two Department of State sponsored projects on their return to Haiti. One is a safety initiative entitled A Conference on Traffic Accident Reduction and the other is an environmental project called Jeunesse Verte Haitienne (Green Haitian Youth).

More recently, Jimmy spent a week in the U.S. participating in the "8th Annual VCU Political Science Student Research Conference" during which he presented his research paper on the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti. Back home now, Jimmy is working with a doctoral student from King's College London as a Translator/Research Assistant. The research project is examining housing and resettlement issues in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake.

Jimmy continues to make the best of his opportunities and dreams of achieving a doctorate in either business or language. He is very grateful for what Outreach to Haiti is doing for him. He says: "I understand that heroes have great power and great responsibility. In my life I have been given a lot of things and the only way I can show everyone that I was deserving of those things is to pay it forward. I mean to do for others what people have done for me."

We present Jimmy Kervens Jean-Felix as an ambassador for our education program and for his country. He is a witness to the power of opportunity given, taken and returned in kind.

# Post-secondary fields of study key to Haiti's future

**H**elping Haitians Help Haitians appears on the masthead of this newsletter and has long been the tag line of Outreach to Haiti. But it is so much more than a tag line. It is a value that runs through every part of our mission.

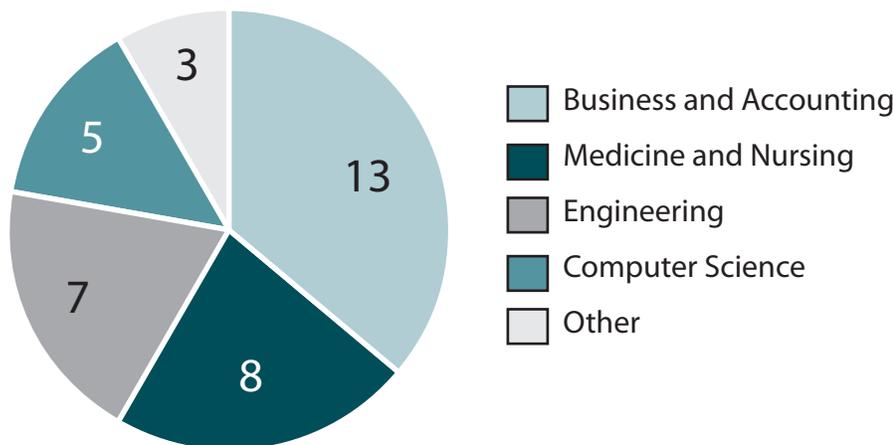
The value is evidenced in many ways. It shows through in the support we provide to the work of rural and urban parishes and orphanages through our Twinning Program. With the help of their United States twinning partners, local pastors and their staff run schools and clinics in direct service to their communities. Outreach takes pride in the fact that our direct services are provided by Haitian administrative and medical staff and that we make every effort to empower and support them.

One of the more significant ways Outreach strives to help Haitians help Haitians is through our Education Sponsorship Program. Here in the United States we view education as an investment in the future of not only our children but of the country. It is no different in Haiti. When children enter kindergarten they begin a process that every parent hopes will lead to a better future. In Haiti that means not only improving the lives of the students and their families, but developing needed skills that will lead the country out of the grip of oppressive poverty.

Outreach has a growing post secondary program that now contains 36 students. It is no coincidence that these students have chosen fields of study (see pie chart) that will position them to address fundamental development needs of their country.

## Post-Secondary students' fields of study

36 students total



## INTERNSHIPS

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"Internships are another world compared to school. It is where I feel that I am at the end of my dreams. If I could find a better word than "thanks" I would offer it to Outreach to Haiti. This program is like an oasis in the desert."

Speaking about her internship experience at internet provider Access Haiti, Benite Noel says "This program means a lot to me. It introduces me to the values of the society and even influences my behavior. Because of this opportunity, I am sure I'll become a person that I have never imagined before." Benite is a natural leader who participates in planning meetings about her university's future and heads up her internship group.

Today, it strikes me that my long ago experiences as an intern, though separated by time and distance and distinguished by gray flannel and wing tipped shoes, is not all that different from the experiences of these two students. Even in these trying economic times, young people in the United States are blessed with many more opportunities than those available to their young brothers and sisters in Haiti. But aren't their dreams the same?



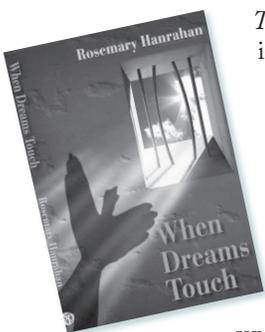
*Benite Noel interns with an internet provider.*

## Purchase a book and benefit Haiti

Rosemary Hanrahan Edwards, former executive director of Outreach to Haiti, has written her first novel, *When Dreams Touch*. Her experience as a physician involved with international and public health non-profit organizations in Haiti is the inspiration for the book.

*Caught between the 1980s' HIV/AIDS global pandemic and the devastating January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, three women strive to realize their dreams. Pregnant and uneducated, 16-year-old Adelaide trades her dream of escaping the grinding poverty of her rural village for hopes of a better life for her unborn child. Kate, a young American physician, often finds her roles as mother and wife to be in conflict with her childhood dream to practice medicine in a third-world country. Giselle, a university-educated artist, lives in Port-au-Prince. While she sympathizes with the plight of her fellow Haitians, she envisions her and her family's future as a comfortable life in the United States. When the violent 1991 coup d'état erupts in Haiti, these three women's lives intersect and are forever changed. Despite different cultures and life circumstances, the women share a vision of a better future for their children and the troubled country of Haiti.*

*When Dreams Touch* may be purchased at Amazon.com. All proceeds from sales of the book will go to health and education programs in Haiti.





Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti  
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## Dreams: We Could do More

Supporting tuition payments and books and providing basic medical and dental care is certainly giving Haitian children the immediate educational opportunity they might otherwise not have. As you can see from the personal stories in this newsletter many have taken full advantage of these opportunities, are most appreciative and are committed to using their gifts to benefit others.

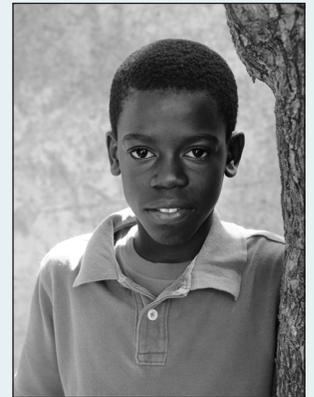
We do, however, continue to dream of doing more by:

- Increasing the number of students that we can send to university
- Having more internships and vocational training opportunities
- Providing more after-school and summer tutoring
- Offering music, art, dance and language instruction and sports and physical fitness activities.
- Taking day trips to the countryside or the beach
- Instituting neighborhood improvement projects like general safety, recycling, small gardens or water collection and conservation.
- Creating an adequate and dedicated space for a computer lab
- Having sufficient funding available to address the more serious medical needs of our students.

We know dreaming is not enough. Many of these dreams are finding their way beyond this newsletter to our grant proposals and PowerPoint presentations. We recognize that these are challenging times not only for nonprofits but for grantors and donors. But be assured, we will keep working to make these dreams come true and your partnership in them is much valued and appreciated.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE—SPONSOR A STUDENT

*Emerson Alisme is in the 5th grade and is a good student. He comes from a large family of three boys and three girls. He loves math and dreams of becoming an engineer. For \$425 annually, you can help Emerson to achieve his goal. You would be lifting up a child and his whole family.*



*A young student gets after-school translation help with a letter to her sponsor.*