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NOUVEL FONDWA

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F O N D W A

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*D*ear Friends;

These have been some very exciting months here in Fondwa. We have completed our work on the Visitors Center, which has been eight years in the building; we have seen the opening of a Fonkoze branch bank in Tombgateau (our market town); we have opened a restaurant and are preparing to open a bakery; and we have welcomed new international members to our local team. We are ready to stock our newly enlarged chicken coop and are in the midst of building our first pigsty, which will launch the pig-raising component of our Cuban-American Solidarity Project.

All of these have of course entailed even more hard work than anyone could have imagined -- and we anticipated plenty! We are full of hope that this work on the part of those here, which could never happen without the generous efforts of so many friends overseas, will bear fruit in stabilizing the economic situation of many of the peasants in the area. You can read about all of these projects in more detail in the articles that follow.

At the same time that we celebrate visible signs of APF's contributions to the region, we must not forget that APF also has a critical impact at other levels. I want to tell you a little story. As you may know, in Fondwa a police presence is not always very strong or very accessible. Often people take it upon themselves to exercise justice against criminals. This 'justice' can mean killing the person caught committing the crime. One day last month a large, noisy crowd gathered outside the APF Center. When our members went to see what was going on, they discovered that a thief had been caught. The crowd was getting angry and excited,

and it looked as if a lynching might happen. Because the suspect had been brought as far as APF property, our APF members felt responsible. They went outside to talk with the crowd and convinced them to keep the man at the Center until the police arrived. They then sent someone to Leogane to fetch the police. The APF members were unwilling to let the crowd take the man up to the main road because they knew he might be killed on the way. In the words of one member, 'That would be a terrible reflection on APF, if we let the man leave our property and then he was killed.' The APF members spent the better part of the day sitting alongside the road, talking with the people and keeping the crowd calm. After many hours the Leogane Police arrived and took the suspect into custody.

I think this is a wonderful example of the unseen work of APF. The APF members are Fondwa peasants, just like the people in the crowd. But APF is always teaching people to work collaboratively and responsibly to solve problems. On this particular day, that teaching saved a life.

I join with the staff and members of APF in thanking you all for your ongoing support that enables the work of APF, seen and unseen, to continue. I wish especially to remember Mrs. Meienberg for her long history of support to Fondwa. She returned to the Lord at the end of November. We pray that God welcomes her into the Kingdom and that her family find all the support that they need to go beyond their pain.

--- Fr. Joseph Philippe



APF and Fonkoze: New Partners in Sustainable Economic Development

Many of you are familiar with *Fonkoze*, a membership bank open to organizations and groups of street vendors, or *Ti Machann* (little merchants), of which Fr. Joseph is the founding coordinator. On January 30, 1999, *Fonkoze* opened a branch office just beyond the market in Tombgateau. In addition to its large micro credit lending program, *Fonkoze* offers savings account services, currency exchange, and a money transfer program that enables Haitians living abroad to safely and conveniently transfer funds to their families in Haiti. It also operates supply depots, which provide the local *Ti Machann* with wares at wholesale prices. All of these services are available at the Tombgateau branch. After years of working in close collaboration with *Fonkoze* (APF was a founding member organization of *Fonkoze*), we are glad to have our own *Fonkoze* branch here in Fondwa.

Fonkoze chose to combine the new branch site with their APF investment program (see last issue) by establishing a commercial center in Tombgateau. In addition to the *Fonkoze* office and a wholesale store this houses two newly-opened businesses: a bakery and a restaurant. The commercial center project will create job opportunities and business opportunities for the people of Fondwa and the surrounding areas. The center is surrounded by a shaded yard with tables and benches, and offers a veranda with a beautiful view of the mountains, where restaurant guests can eat.

The restaurant, which serves tourists and travelers on the Jacmel road as well as local residents and workers, can seat 20 indoors and an additional 20 in the patio yard. We also offer take-out plates and plan to sell through the local *Ti Machann*, with a goal of serving 200 plates a day.

The bakery construction is nearly completed and we expect to open for business in March. The bakery management team has been selected, and 7 employees have been sent for training in various bakeries in Leogane, Port-au-Prince, and Jacmel. The most critical aspect of establishing the bakery has been the oven. Most bakeries in Haiti use

wood-burning ovens, making bakeries one of the major consumers of wood in this rapidly deforesting country. After research into various energy sources, we have concluded that the most reliable for us at this time is gas. The bakery will primarily produce bread for wholesale distribution to the *Ti Machann* in Tombgateau and surrounding areas. Since there is currently no bakery in the Fondwa valley, the *ti machann* now go into Port-au-Prince to buy their bread. With a production goal of 4 to 5 thousand loaves a week, we expect the market for our product will be greater than we can meet.

The poultry house has been repaired and enlarged after the hurri-

chicks for 6 weeks, feeding them on a combination of local feed and purchased feed. A local APF member will be directly responsible for the care of the chicks and Edris Alcime will oversee the project. We have some concern about the market for chickens. We did receive many requests for chickens when we had our earlier smaller poultry project. However, some 80% of the chickens sold in the Port-au-Prince markets are frozen parts (legs and thighs) shipped from the US, and we do not know if we can compete with that market.

The pigsty is scheduled to be completed in April. Edris Alcime will be overseeing the project. Immediate responsibility for the pigsty will belong to an APF member who was selected because he has the needed experience with pigs, and because his land can provide necessary shade and a portion of the feed needed for the animals. We will initially buy piglets; after the first cycle we expect to be using pigs we have bred. We have researched the large markets in Port-au-Prince, which buy their domestic pork from Jacmel. However, up to 1/3 of the pork in the big markets in Haiti now consists of the 'waste

parts' (feet, ears, etc.) from the US pork industry. Again, we are not sure of our ability to compete. Both the chicken coop and the pigsty are pilot projects that will enable us to test the market and our ability to obtain

enough feed to successfully raise the animals. If the projects go well, we will build more sties and coops around the region.

The chair-making business is being evaluated for feasibility. Due to deforestation in the area, it may not be possible to start a business that depends on the availability of lumber. *

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cane, and is now ready to hold 500 chicks. The project had to be put on hold for a time because Hurricane George devastated the hatcheries in the Dominican Republic, which are the source of chicks for Haiti. We hope to be able to obtain 200 chicks in early March, and after that to purchase a batch of day-old chicks every 2 or 3 weeks. We will keep the

Educational Tourism Program Welcomes First Guests

February marked the beginning of the *APF Educational Tourism Program*. We have come to recognize that the Visitors Center, in addition to allowing us to welcome our international friends, offers us a rare means to create a business. There is a very good market in educational tourism, which offers people the chance not only to learn about, but to experience first-hand, a reality different from their own. We will invite persons living in the *first-world* to experience the realities and dreams of life in a developing *third-world* nation.

We are very excited about the potential for this program. Working for justice has two elements. We struggle for change to come to the peasants lives here in Haiti. But we also must work more intensively to educate those in the *first-world*. Justice can not come until these two aspects of the struggle join hands in true collaboration. The *Educational Tourism Program* enables us to engage more fully in joining the two.

In order to prepare for this new program, extensive work has gone into the final completion of the Visitors Center. It now is painted inside and out, topped with a beautiful sky-blue strip along the roof, and there are grillwork railings around the balconies. The end wall of the conference room is covered with a bright mural painted by the children from *Fatima House* (with some assistance from adults!) that depicts Fondwa. The lounge is equipped with soft chairs and cushions, a rattan rug, a bar, and Haitian paintings on the walls.

Extensive work has also gone into preparing the program. We have identified six major topics which will be studied: the history of APF and the challenges of educating people for liberation; ecology and agriculture; education and literacy training; healthcare; women's life; and

rural economic development. We have spoken with peasants who are knowledgeable in each of these areas and conducted practice interviews with them. In February we had two 'trial runs': a small group who visited us under the leadership of Rich Gosser from Pittsburgh, and a group from Louisiana, *Black Unity and Spiritual Togetherness* (B.U.S.T.), under

the leadership of Fr. Albert McKnight, C.S.Sp. It was a joy for us to be able to offer our new program to these friends who already had an interest in Haiti; we are now ready to move beyond our friends

and supporters and are preparing to advertise nationally and internationally. Anyone who is interested in joining, or forming, a group to participate in the program can contact Fr. Joseph at the address on the back page. *

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Clinic Welcomes Helping Hands and Needed Supplies

In the past few months the clinic has been the grateful recipient of several generous gifts, both of manpower and supplies. *Duke University* sent a medical team the first week of January. We were delighted to see old friends on the team, and to welcome new ones. This was their third visit in as many years; we now reserve the spot on our calendar, and wait to hear from them. A second medical team will spend a day with us at the end of February.

There are currently 200 Cuban physicians spending a year in Haiti, sent by the Cuban government to work with the Haitian health system in a gesture of solidarity with the Haitian poor. Through the efforts of Veronica Dorcine (see below), we are fortunate to have some of these physicians interested in visiting Fondwa and running a clinic for us.

We also continue to work to find dental teams that want to come, as we have been without dental care in Fondwa for nearly two years now.

Every visiting medical team is important to our progress. Not only do the patients benefit from the direct care they receive, but we also profit immensely from the ongoing education we receive from the visiting physicians. Thus these visits can influence the care our patients receive for years afterwards.

We have recently received two shipments of donated medicines and medical supplies, one brought by Rich Gosser's group when they came from Pittsburgh, and the other from Amitie Sartrouville in France. Such donations provide us with many medicines we either cannot find in Haiti or cannot afford to purchase. We thank all who purchase, collect, package, and mail or carry supplies for us. The service we can offer our patients is greatly improved thanks to your efforts. *

news from

The Sisters of St. Antoine

The community of the *Sisters of St. Antoine* of Fondwa is growing, and has every prospect of continuing to do so. Two young women are currently living with the Sisters as applicants: Evna Deshommes and Ilya Gazna. In addition to receiving formation from Sister Carmelle and joining the Sisters in daily prayers, Evna is lending her cooking expertise to the Tombgateau restaurant, and Ilya is realizing a lifelong love of teaching by taking one of the first grade classes at the *St. Antoine School*.

There are several other young women who are exploring the possibility of joining the community. The biggest problem is that there is no place to put additional people. In response to this, the Sisters home (the orphanage) is being enlarged. Two more bedrooms are being added on, taking up the side yard. When the Sisters first came to Fondwa six years ago, they were in two houses, each having two rooms; one of these will now have eight rooms. With 30 children, seven adults, two dogs and one cat currently living in the house, there will still be little room to spare! *

Fatima House

With help from *Aide a l'Enfance* (Save the Children)-*Canada*, we are undertaking a project that will see the building of a pigsty, a chicken coop, and a fish pond for the orphanage, with the dual intention of providing the children with more protein-rich food and with the beginnings of

an economic self-sufficiency program. *Aide a l'Enfance*, which sponsors sustainable self-help projects for children, is particularly interested in *Fatima House* because of the Sisters' philosophy that the children themselves are to be taught responsibility for their daily lives. (The children do

the cooking, cleaning, gathering of firewood, etc., and each older child has a younger child for whom they are responsible.) We look forward to starting on the pigsty as soon as the organization's fiscal budget comes through. *



Fondwa Goings and Comings

Edrix Alcime returned on November 9 from France, where he had been studying various aspects of agriculture, livestock raising, and meat processing. Since his return he has been immersed in helping with a wide variety of agricultural programs: establishing the poultry and pork businesses, helping peasants to start vegetable gardens, and setting up a weather-collection station, to name but a few. Edrix had long dreamed of being an agronomist and, thanks to his time in France, he has been able to return to Fondwa with the training needed for the work he wants to do.

Corey Hastings has become general manager of the *Economic Development Project*. Consequently, most of his business day is spent out of the Fondwa valley, either at the *Tombgateau Commercial Center* or visiting businesses, suppliers, etc., in this region of Haiti. As a result of this, he has moved out of his home below *Fatima House*, and is living with other Commercial Center workers in the building across from the Center.

Corey's former house is not empty, however. Jim Kuhn, an American businessman who recently completed a Peace Corps assignment as a small business consultant on the Caribbean island of Dominica, has just arrived in Haiti to work as a business consultant for *Fonkoze*. Jim's first months will be spent in Fondwa studying Creole and consulting on the various projects related to the Commercial Center. After that he will move around Haiti as *Fonkoze* needs him. *

Contributions to APF can be made out to APF and sent to:

APF
Box 13062
Delmas, Haiti

We respect all requests that donations be used for specific projects.