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First
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NOUVEL FONDWA

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Dear Friends;

As we are writing you this letter we are very aware of the political turmoil that the Haitian people are experiencing today. We also are thinking of the Christmas season, the season of hope, which is coming very soon. We hope against all hope that some day we will harvest the fruits of the struggle for democracy in Haiti. The past months have been very busy for us at APF as we have worked to establish our Sustainable Economic Development Program in Fondwa. As you know, this program is for us a symbol of empowering the poor to take their destiny in their own hands. This is our way of keeping alive the flame of hope for the poor living in Haiti. Even though the situation is very hard, we dare to quote one of our ancestors: *'If this country is reduced to ashes, on the same ashes we will rebuild it.'* We at APF are moving ahead and trying to do all that we can to help some peasants improve their living conditions in this country.

Our most recent news at APF is a partnership we are developing in France through the Lycee Agricole of Ressins, in the region of Lyon. A group named *Solidarité Ressins - Fondwa* has been formed with the purpose of helping the work of APF. This group welcomed Sr. Simone this past summer when she was in France for medical treatment on her throat, and then financed her hospitalization there. (We are glad to say Sr. Simone's medical report is good.) *Solidarité Ressins - Fondwa* has given us three scholarships for young people from Fondwa to study in France. The organization is now working on a project to build the Fondwa school and improve the Fondwa road.

Our second big news item is the arrival of two specialists from Cuba, a veterinarian and a soil conservationist, who have come to spend at least a year working with us on the agronomic portion of the Sustainable Economic Development Program. They will be focusing their energies on the pigsty, the chicken coop, and an agroforestry project.

The other small businesses in the Sustainable Economic Development Program (the restaurant, the bakery, and the educational tourism program) have been well under way for many months, and all three have by now become part of our Fondwa routine. Of course we have encountered problems, but with determination and creativity we find ways to continue.

As we look back on the past eight months, though, it is not the projects themselves that most stand out for us; it is all of you who have helped us, directly or indirectly, as we work to realize our dreams for Fondwa. We have been truly blessed in our visitors this year. We warmly thank all who have come to support us here in Fondwa, as well as all of you who are part of our work in so many ways: those who support the clinic with medicine or medical teams; those who have worked to send groups to our educational tourism program, or who have yourselves come; those who have continued to generously offer financial or technical support over the years.

We are especially glad to have this chance to thank the many generous families in France, and in Opfikon (Switzerland), the parishes in Moutier (Switzerland) and St. Michael (Remus, Indiana, USA), FUMCOG (Philadelphia, USA) and FOKAL (Haiti), who have offered their continuing financial support to us.

We thank all of you who are working in the background, for your efforts to stay in solidarity with us in Fondwa. Our God, who so loves the poor, and whose word can be trusted, has promised that our efforts will not be in vain. May our loving God bless you all and pour kindness upon each one of you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2000 to each of you.

--- Fr. Joseph Philippe

Guest Book:

Fondwa Welcomes Old Friends and New

APF has been extremely fortunate over the past months in the generosity of friends who have come to share their considerable expertise with us.

Gabriel Gardet and Jean Thibaudier visited for several weeks in March. They were mandated by the new organization, *Solidarité Ressins - Fondwa*, to come to evaluate our needs in Fondwa and to organize the follow-up of the *Celpal* works here. Gabriel and Jean became convinced of our need for a school building and the improvement of the road in Fondwa, and spent much time meeting with people and exploring possibilities for these projects. When they left us, it was with a promise to help find financing to build a school near the APF center, and to look into funding for a road as well.

In early June Don McKnight and Carolyn Krantz came from California to spend two weeks with us. Experts in computers and grassroots training, they worked with our staff at our secretariat office in Port-au-Prince, providing training in office skills and helping get our old computer system up to speed in the computer age.

We were privileged to have three graduate student interns donate large parts of their summer vacations with us this year. Josiane Georges, a Haitian-American currently in the masters program in international development at American University in Washington, DC, spent most of the summer living with the sisters at the orphanage and lending her expertise to the clinic and the restaurant, focusing on bookkeeping and publicity. She also worked with the

Guadeloupe, spent most of his time and energy on the children's pig project at our Fatima House Orphanage. He lived with Edrix Alcime in the APF Center and became a firm friend to all of us. Thomas hopes to return to Fondwa for several years after he completes his masters degree.

Teresa Dyar, a student at Wharton School of Business in Philadelphia, chose to spend the international experience element of her program at *Fonkoze*. For the first part of her stay in Haiti she focused on APF as an example of a peasants' organization which receives investment funds from *Fonkoze*. We were lucky to have her in Fondwa while she visited the Commercial Center, the restaurant, and the bakery. Teresa

plans to continue to work for *Fonkoze* and APF while she finishes her studies, arranging for ongoing programs to bring future Wharton students to help us.

And finally, Kathy Sheetz, who has brought American medical school teams here for the past several years, made a number of visits to Fondwa over the past months as she helped us document our Fondwa-Cuba program on videotape.



Partnerships:

Cuba & Fondwa

Two specialists from Cuba arrived in Fondwa on October 8 to spend a year implementing the agronomic elements of the Sustainable Economic Development Plan, as agreed in the accord signed by APF, *Fonkoze* and the Cuban government. Cuba is currently a very generous donor of technical professionals for Haiti, but the common structure they work within is governmental.

APF is exceptionally privileged to have Dr. Julio Simon Maure, a veterinarian, and Norberto Banos Fernandez, an agronomist who specializes in soil conservation, dedicating a full year exclusively to our needs at Fondwa. Dr. Simon is of Haitian descent, and already speaks Creole; Norberto is currently in the throes of intensive language classes with APF staff members. Both have already begun their projects as well; they purchased six piglets to begin the pig project, and have been busy touring the region and getting to know the farmers they will be working with.

Dr. Simon and Norberto will start to implement a ten-year plan prepared by Cuban experts in sustainable rural agronomic development, with reforestation as a key element. In November they will be joined by two specialists, one in water sources and another in agroforestry, who will come from Cuba to spend a few weeks working with the Fondwa team.

France & Fondwa

With the scholarship help of *Solidarité Ressins - Fondwa*, APF sent three young people to study in France this September. Emmanuel Beauvais, who had been teaching in the school and working as a outreach organizer for APF, is in Lyons for one year to study alternative energy. Cadet Dorelian, who had been in charge of the APF radio station and working as bursar for the school, will spend two years at the Lycée Agricole de Ressins in Nandax, near Roanne, where he will study building construction. Cristophe Rodrigue, who for several years had been the assistant administrator of APF, is also in Lyon, doing an intensive program to study water management, which will enable us to use the runoff water from our mountains.



Update:

Sustainable Economic Development Project

The Commercial Center in Tonngato (Fondwa's market town, on the road to Jacmel) has been fully functioning for six months now. The Fonkoze branch bank is increasingly busy, as rising insecurity in Port-au-Prince causes more province-based organizations to move their banking business out of the city. The wholesale dealers in Tonngato are also beginning to keep their funds with *Fonkoze*.

The Bakery opened on March 15 and is thriving. We have far surpassed our original production goal of 4 to 5 thousand loaves a week, and are now baking 14,000 loaves weekly. We sell wholesale to *ti machann* (street sellers) who travel up to 5 hours to purchase our bread and carry it back for market days in their regions.

The bakery is currently employing 15 people, nearly all of whom were able to return to the countryside from Port-au-Prince when this job opened up. The bakery's biggest challenge is keeping its machinery running in the face of the heavy use it gets. At the beginning of August our electrical generator broke down and the bakery was out of service for the entire month. We now have a rudimentary back-up power system in place, which is a major step in ensuring the long-term stability of the bakery.

The restaurant is working hard to find a market. With our location, and both inside and outside dining, we had expected to cater to the needs of passersby on the Jacmel road. While we will continue to serve this group, it appears that our greater market lies in catering to organizations. At the beginning of

October the nearby coffee factory asked us to cater a number of large meetings, when we served up to 90 meals per sitting.

There are many possibilities to make the restaurant profitable, but due to lack of working capital for the last 6 months, profitability has eluded us.

We are looking for a small grant to make improvements, such as a backup 2.5 kw power source consisting of an inverter and storage batteries. That will help us to move to profitability, as we lost many clients when our generator went out of service for the month of August.

We warmly invite guests visiting Fondwa and returning Haitians from the diaspora to visit our mountaintop patio

dining room and enjoy Haitian cuisine in a beautiful setting - and at the same time help the peasants of Fondwa.

The Educational Tourism Program has now hosted a total of seven groups. In the past eight months we have had the pleasure of introducing a variety of visitors to Fondwa: members of *BUST* (Black Unity Spiritual Togetherness); the *Fonkoze USA* Board of Directors; a group of *Fonkoze* workers and friends from Pennsylvania; a teen group from *Ministry of Money*; a group led by Max Blanchet (a Haitian-American friend from the San Francisco area); and a small group of individuals who responded to our advertising brochure.

The tourist groups are especially satisfying as we know we can offer visitors an opportunity they cannot easily find: the chance to meet and talk directly and at length with third-world peasants about the challenges of organizing their community to improve their lives.

Our calendar is already filling in rapidly for 2000. Anyone interested in organizing or joining a group should contact Fr. Joseph at the address at the end of this newsletter or Sr. Anita Von Wellsheim at 1-800-275-4805 or at her email: avanw@rscf.org



Restructuring in the Fondwa School

We recently made a few changes in the APF school in Fondwa. We have created a separate administration for the kindergarten classes. Sr. Carmelle, who received training in early childhood education in Trinidad last year, is in charge of this section and supervises our three other preschool teachers.

We have moved Anselot Philippe from the APF Secretariat Office in Port-au-Prince to the school, where he is helping Sr. Simone as the assistant general director of the School. He has also replaced Cadet Dorelian as the bursar while Cadet is studying in France, and is supervising Alerte Louis, who continues as dean of studies. The school started the academic year with about 550 students. We expect to have nearly 700 students before the end of the year.

Our main problem with the school is our inability to pay the teachers' monthly

salaries. We take this opportunity to thank Christine Fauveau (a former administrator of Ceipal in Lyon, France), who asked her guests at her wedding to make a donation to the APF school rather than giving her a gift on this occasion. She collected about \$3,000 US and gave this money to the school. We thank her for her generosity and her kindness. We used this money to pay our teachers for the month of July and to cover some expenses at the opening of the academic year.

We are very grateful also to *FOKAL*, a Haitian organization which has helped us pay the teachers for the last three years. We thank each one of you who have helped us or who continue to help us in one way or another with the APF school. The education of the children of Fondwa relies on people like you. We are very blessed to count you as our partners. It is through your continuing support that we are able to continue this work.



news from . . .

Sisters of St. Antoine

October 4 was a momentous day this year. Sr. Carmelle and Sr. Simone chose this date, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, to make their perpetual vows to the *Community of the Sisters of St. Antoine Fondwa*. The sisters founded the community together with Fr. Joseph, and October 4, 1999, marks the official start of the community in the eyes of the ecclesiastical church.

The same day Sr. Marie-Ange Désilè was formally received as a novice, and Miracia Alexis as a pre-novice, in the community. The vows were received by Fr. Joseph during Mass at the Fondwa parish church of St. Antoine, in a celebration filled with music, dancing, and joy.

(For those of you who were aware that Sr. Simone had lost her voice some months ago, you will be glad to hear that thanks to her summer treatments in France she was able to sing and recite her vows in full voice!)

Fatima House

The addition to the orphanage house is completed - temporarily, at least! The sisters can now eat in a refectory, and there is room for them to receive postulants who are expected to come.

The children, meanwhile, flourish. We currently have 32 children, 5 adults, 4 dogs, 1 cat, 2 piglets, and 1 turkey living together. (The pigs and turkey aren't expected to have a prolonged stay!) Six of the children are in kindergarten at the APF school, 18 in elementary school there, and 5 in the secondary school. The final 3 students teach at the APF school during the morning and go to school in Leogane every afternoon, where they are finishing the years that aren't offered yet in Fondwa.

The house is always busy, usually noisy - and always happy to welcome visitors!

Radyo Zetwal

Radyo Zetwal Peyizan Fondwa (Peasants of Fondwa Radio of the Stars) is on the air, despite difficulties. We need to increase our amplifier from 15 to 150 watts. Due to lack of money for gas and to continue with staff training, we have reduced our broadcast time to three hours each evening. As it is, it still costs us about \$1,000 per month to do the work that we are doing.

As you know, the radio station is a powerful instrument for us to educate our people and to empower them to take responsibility for their own lives. Please let us know if you want to help or if you have friends who would like to. Whatever you can do will be very appreciated.

If you wish more information on the APF Radio Station, you can address your mail

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.

Fondwa Clinic

The clinic has been extremely fortunate in friends who have been sending us medical supplies throughout the year. Notably, Amitiè de Sartrouville (France), Duke University, and Rich Gosser of the Haiti Solidarity Committee from Pennsylvania, have sent many boxes filled with antibiotics, analgesics, and other much-needed medicines.

In the absence of such donations, we must purchase our medicines in Port-au-Prince. Some medicines cannot be found, or can only be found at prices that are beyond the ability of the peasants to pay.

Our clinic policy is to charge patients for medicines, as, in the words of the CDC, *'Free medicine is poor medicine'*. But thanks to the regular arrival of gift boxes, we have been able to keep prices low enough for most peasants to be able to purchase what they need. And for those who cannot afford to buy even essential medicines, the donations allow us to grant 'credit'.

The clinic also welcomed a number of medical teams over the past months, through the auspices of St. Croix Hospital in Leogane (between Fondwa and Port-au-Prince). St. Croix hosts a US medical team every week, and they list Fondwa as a site for those who want to leave the hospital setting and experience rural medicine. In addition to the care given, these teams often leave unused medicines for us. In these ways the hospital is becoming an ever more important supporter of our small clinic.

We have also been the grateful beneficiaries of the generosity of two dentists in the past months: Dr. Gus Gustafson and Dr. Don Trawick have both come to spend a few days to provide dental care for the peasants of Fondwa - under conditions quite different from those of the average dental office in the States! These visits have been particularly appreciated because we have been without a dentist at the clinic for over two years now, and this is the only dental care APF has been able to offer.

APF Center

With the arrival of the two Cubans we needed to optimize our usage of space in the Center.

The former radio space has been renovated to provide bedrooms for the Cubans, and a new structure containing showers and toilets has been built behind the dining room. The space formerly used as credit union and store is being turned into office space for the APF technical team.

For those readers who remember the dark, narrow passage leading into the dining room - that corridor is now gone, along with the storage rooms and cupboards on either side of

it, and an additional bedroom and bath for long-staying guests are in that space.

And still we are challenged for space at times.