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First
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Dear Friends,

May this new millennium bring peace, joy and happiness to each one of you. We are not going to give up the fight for the freedom of the organized poor in Haiti!!!

We want to thank you very much for being part of this struggle for life and hope in Haiti and especially for your continuing support of our works down here in Fondwa. As you know already, the living hope in Haiti right now is the tenacity and the determination of the organized poor to move ahead in rebuilding this country at any cost. *'Déyé môn gen môn, se déyé môn istwa peyi n kache'*. As one of our ancestors says: "If this country is reduced to ashes, on the same ashes we will rebuild it." We are starving and fighting for the liberation of our Haitian people. We know that democracy is the way to go and democracy has its own principles. We have to take it or leave it. We have gone too far to leave it. Please continue to sustain us any way you can in this difficult process.

We are very sorry for not being able to keep sending this Newsletter out to you on a regular basis. We are still having a lack of personnel resources on this matter. However we are very pleased to share with you the following news items.

In this issue, you will read about the remarkable performance of the APF Clinic in Fondwa, our childrens center (Fatima House), our Educational Tourism Program and the impressions of Dale Easley (a teacher at New Orleans University) about this program, about a partnership between Duke University and our school in Fondwa, a project of soil conservation and the reconstruction of the road through Fondwa by PADF, the

comings and goings of volunteers and friends, and the evolution of the Cuban project in Fondwa. We want particularly to express our gratitude to Corey Hastings for these two years he has spent with us in Fondwa. We are very grateful to him for all the work he has done for us.

Going back to our Clinic in Fondwa, for the first time in our history we have performed five minor surgeries with the help of Dr. Samer Joudeh and the medical team from South Carolina at the beginning of this year. This was a wonderful way for us to open the third millennium. We are very grateful to them. We want to underline also the great work of Nancy Staples and some friends from the Presbyterian Church in Clemson, who help each child at our orphanage to have a very nice bag in which s/he can put his/her belongings. That is a great joy for all of the children and for each one of us who are trying to accompany them in their journey of life.

We are very grateful to each person who dares to continue to help us in spite of this ongoing political turmoil in Haiti. It is a very big part of our internal strength to know that you are still with us and that you are not going to give up the fight for the liberation of the oppressed ones in Haiti. Together, we can make it happen; we can break this cycle of violence and create a new world where all Gods children can live a decent life at peace.

Fr. Joseph Philippe, CSSP
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Flood Control, Trees & the Fondwa Road Paved!

The Pan American Development Foundation and the Haitian Government have recently undertaken a major flood control and water conservation project in the Fondwa Valley. With the cooperation of other international agencies, the project, which will encompass 12,800 acres and cost 16,000,000 gourdes, will ultimately result in 6km of paved road from the Jakmel Highway, past the APF center, and on to Kafou Mi.

PADF Project Director **Roger Girard** explained the project will have three aspects: first will be construction of barriers and canals on the hillsides and ravines in the area to control drainage from heavy rains which have been resulting in destructive flooding in the Leogane Plain. These barriers and canals will be lined with agricultural crops, such as pineapple, to hold the soil and provide food and income for the peasants. Work on this aspect of the project began in April.

Next is a major reforestation program which will bring in 300,000 trees of the peasants choosing to Fondwa. The trees will also hold the soil and provide income to the residents. The first 50,000 trees will arrive in May.

And finally, the Fondwa road which was originally built by the APF, will be improved and paved (!) to assist in flood control and to add to the economic development of the area. Work on the road is scheduled to begin in May.

The project will employ nine technicians from PADF as well as 480 peasants from the Fondwa and Citwonye areas. The work will be accomplished with a combination of paid labor and community service.

The project will bring other economic benefits to the area. For instance, five concrete reservoirs holding 24,000 gallons of water each will be constructed as part of the flood control program, but will also provide more accessible potable water to thousands of peasants. And, *Fonkoze's* Tomgato office will administer the funds and payroll.

"You must show the peasants the economic advantages for them if projects of this type are to be successful," Project Director Girard concluded.



A Tale of Educational Tourism

I watched as a young girl loaded her five-gallon bucket of water on her head, picked up another gallon jug, and headed up the hill towards home. She carried nearly 50 pounds of water... more, I think, than her body weight. A few minutes later, I trudged up the hill along the path she had taken. After perhaps 10 minutes climbing, I came upon her. She had stumbled and spilled the bucket of water. Back down the hill to the spring she'd have to go.

I had the opportunity to see life's daily struggles in Haiti when I spent May 25th to June 5th with the *Fondwa Peasants Association (APF)*. I particularly wanted to learn about water projects in the area, plus APF's community development program. After walking up and down hills to see springs and cisterns, meeting with peasant leaders, and visiting the school and clinic, I've decided to try to bring a student group here next year. The APF program is the best I know of for learning about rural Haiti.

The first thing I learned about is simply the difficulty of getting around. Walking a couple of hours per day for water is nothing unusual for the women and children of Fondwa, nor is walking three or four hours while sick in order to get to the clinic. On market day I was awakened at 3:00am as lines of people carried their goods past the visitors center up the hill to Tomgato. The walk is easier now than in the past because of the dirt and rock road built by the APF, the road being the highest priority for developing Fondwa. That road is soon to be widened and paved, then a tap-tap (public transport) may speed the trip uphill.

Only a decade or so ago, the walk up the road was shaded. Now the landscape looks more like Utah. Many of the trees were cut during the U.S. embargo of Haiti. They were used for making charcoal, which is used in turn for cooking, baking bread, and making rum. Today, the deforestation of Haiti has grown to over 95%. With it has come increased soil loss, declining agricultural productivity, and fewer water resources.

Reforestation programs in Fondwa are attempting to reverse the trends. However, you can't eat a tree, and it takes up land that could be planted with corn and beans. Ultimately, reforestation depends less on planting trees than on reducing poverty and increasing literacy. APF is addressing both through economic development and education programs. APF created the first secondary school in Fondwa. Its bakery is a tremendous success, providing jobs not only for its employees, but also for the numerous *ti machann* (small merchants) who resell the bread throughout the area.

If you want to learn about Haiti, come to Fondwa. The *International Guest House* program provides not only a pleasant base for your learning, but jobs for local peasants in the house and as interpreters and as local information resources. The cost of the program is reasonable; the education is invaluable.

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APF Guesthouse Hosts Friends Both Old and New

The APF guest house continues to host friends both old and new. Three new friends from the Albany, NY area spent time with us in February: **Jane and Ray Boisvert**, who teach at *Russell Sage College* and *Siena College* respectively, and **Ray Essiembre**, a nurse with prior experience in Haiti. All plan to return soon. Jane, who specializes in Haitian literature, would like to teach a class on the subject at the Fondwa school and Ray hopes to return with a medical team.

Long time friend **Kathy Scheetz and Tequila Minsky** both stopped by, and APF/Fonkaze stalwart **Winston Tellis of Fairfield University** made his last visit of 1999 and his first of the new millennium.

The new year brought possibly the most eclectic group to visit Fondwa in quite some time. The February 17th to 21st group included: **Leigh Carter**, the Director of *Fonkaze USA*; **Winston Tellis**; **Dr. Donald McKnight** and nurse **Karen Goodall**, **Marjorie Nunes**, a divinity student and **Gordon McCormick**, an investment banker, all from New York; **Lena Charles** from *B.U.S.T.* in Louisiana; **Rod Sias**, an architect from California; **Richard Boren**, a writer and environmental expert from Arizona; and Sisters **Barbara Jennings, CSJ**, **Janet Cashman, SCL**, and **Mary Ellen McDonagh, BVM**.

Three law students from *DePaul*, **Joe Voss**, **Angela Vassiliades** and **Jamey Kuiper** stayed with us for a day in March, along with **Peter Graeff**, a development worker who has been in Haiti for 25 years. And April saw old friend **Pat Labuda** pass through a couple of times,

once with her daughter, and **Kathy Scheetz** paid us another visit to do some more work on her video.

The next few months promise to be just as busy!



The CUBAN Project:

Moving Ahead, Right on Schedule

The Cuban/Haitian program for developing a sustainable economy in Fondwa is moving ahead right on schedule. This is the assessment of Cuban agricultural experts **Dr. Julio Simone Maure** and **Noberto Fernandez**, who have spent the past five months in Fondwa.

The first few months were filled with acclimation and adjustment. For instance, they learned that it was more efficient to take information to the people, dividing Fondwa into five regions, rather than to hold central meetings. And they discovered that meetings held at 2:00 in the afternoon, when most of the peasants work in the field had been finished, were better attended than those held at 9:00 in the morning.

But, as Simone and Noberto were making these adjustments, they were also becoming an integral part of the Fondwa community. And, as a result of their groundwork, many aspects of the 10 year plan for sustainable development are beginning to take form.

Working with three local agricultural trainees, the Cubans have established five model farms, one in each of the zones of operation. On most of the farm, planting is done according to traditional methods. But in one part, new methods advocated by the Cubans are used. For instance, instead of the traditional method of planting five or six seeds of corn in each hole, the Cubans recommend placing only one or two seeds per hole, leaving more space, and more nutrients, for each plant. And, while inter-cropping has a long history in Haiti, the Cubans offer improvements here, as well, adding new crops to the mix.

Crops from the February planting are just coming in, but the results are already encouraging. The next harvest should provide the peasants of Fondwa with enough evidence to decide which method to use in the future.

Animals will also be introduced into the integrated farm. On January 12, 1200 one day old Cuban chickens arrived in Fondwa. The chicks are of a special hybrid developed in Cuba to thrive in remote mountainous regions. Over 90% of the chicks survived the journey and the tenuous first days in the night-time cold and now are being distributed to farmers and groups in the area. All chickens are sold vaccinated, with a month of free medical care, and instructions on proper feeding and housing. About 200 of the 'mountain chickens' have been retained to establish a 'chicken school' near the APF Center for training students and peasants in their proper care, and the Fondwa school is also planning classes on the proper care of chickens and on the nutritional value of eggs.

The new chickens also give more meat and have better egg production than the traditional Haitian breeds. Instead of selling all four eggs typically produced, the peasant will be able to sell three and keep two for his own family, Dr. Simone pointed out.

The Cubans have new techniques for reforestation and erosion prevention as well. A nursery has been established near the APF Center and it is anticipated that 20,000 fruit and forestry trees will be planted in the first year, and 50,000 the next. Many of the trees, along with sugar cane, will be planted along drainage canals, reducing erosion while providing an income source for the peasants.

Speaking to a *Witness For Peace* group visiting in May, agronomist Noberto summed up the first five months saying, "We have established a relationship with the peasants and that is important." "It's beautiful," added veterinarian Simone, "to see peasants taking proper care of their animals now."



FONDWA Clinic

Thanks to visiting medical teams the APF clinic saw a record number of patients in the first part of the new year. 457 patients were treated in January and 476 in February. These numbers do not include the more than 300 children that a health team from *Duke University* examined at the Fondwa school and the orphanage as part of a nutritional study.

Dr. Bill Jones and his wife Andrea, from Gainesville, GA, saw 80 patients when they visited us on January 12th & 13th. And on Jan. 21st Dr. Jim Van Kirk brought a large team of doctors and nurses from Virginia and treated 150 patients on that one day.

The activity and record setting pace continued in February. Surgery was performed for the first time in our clinic as Dr. Samer Joudeh, an

oral surgeon from South Carolina, operated on five patients. He was here as part of a dental team organized by Dr. Gus Gustafson which saw an additional 60 patients. And on Feb. 28th the clinic saw another first, as a group of eye doctors visited. They treated 76 people, fitting many of them with glasses.

A group of *Duke University* students spent part of their January visit helping to write and record a series of singing health education spots that continue to be aired on *Radio Zetwal*. And old friend Dr. Donald McKnight returned again in February and saw 30 patients, rounding out the record setting new years start.

FATIMA House

During a February visit, a group of women from South Carolina noticed a problem that has long plagued us at the orphanage: a lack of storage space in the dormitories for the children's personal items. Returning home with notes and memories, 'Project Bags for Belongings' was born. "It's been very exciting," said Dr. Nancy Staples of *Clemson University*. "The prototype was made Saturday and displayed at church on Sunday."

Each bag will be sponsored by a child from the church and will contain a supply of personal hygiene and school items. The bags will be used to store clothing and other personal items and each will be embroidered with the name of a child from *Fatima House*. "It's wonderful to get the involvement of so many people in this project," said Dr. Staples.

The group will deliver the bags when they return to Fondwa in June. They are also planning to begin a sewing and sewing training project at *Fatima House* on that trip.

The general improvements project continues with the addition of a backup water source, a 'd'lo Chateau', assuring a dependable water supply. And landscaping and a new paint on the buildings have made it a much more pleasant home for the children.

And the orphanage population has increased with the addition of an eight month old girl. The current count: 37 children, 6 adults, 5 dogs, 3 cats, and a growing number of piglets and chickens.

ST. ANTOINE'S School

On January 9th Dr. David Walmer of *Duke University*, an old Fondwa hand, returned to Fondwa accompanied by 19 students of *Duke's* Divinity and Medical schools. The purpose of the visit was to study the state of nutrition at *St. Antoine* and to institute a program to improve it. Over three days the team weighed, measured, examined, and took blood samples from over 300 students. Detailed questionnaires were also completed on a select group of parents and students on daily health matters. The results of these studies will be accumulated and studied over the next six months when a follow-up visit is planned. A multi-vitamin and iron supplement program, as well as medication for intestinal parasites, has been instituted and the results monitored.

In April, a group of 20 high school students from Durham, NC conducted a one day follow-up to the Walmer Study and retested at-risk children and 60 new students.

A church group from *Clemson, SC* reports that their fund drive to provide a supplemental lunch program for the school is going very well, and they hope to implement the program very soon.

In other school news: some of the shelters at the rear of the church which were used for preschool classes were blown over by heavy winds. These classes are now being held in the church.

FONDWA Comings and Goings

In February, *Association Ressins Solidarité* and *Association Jean Garreau* of France, sent a delegation including Gabriel Gardet and Pierre Roux to Fondwa to follow-up on the assessment they made last year regarding the need for a new school and other infrastructure improvements. Gabriel was returning for his second visit, having come last year for *Ressins Solidarité's* initial assessment visit. Gabriel and Pierre have also both opened their homes in France to APF members who have been sent over to study.

Recently, the sound of Dutch was added to the cacophony of languages spoken in and around the APF Center. In March April Gerdien and Frans Goossens of the Netherlands spent four weeks in Haiti as a part of an assessment process for a possible overseas assignment sponsored by the *Central Mission Commissariat* in Holland. Frans, an architect, artist and teacher, and Gerdien, who has worked in the tourism business, spent most of their time in Fondwa observing the work of the

APF. Towards the end of their stay in Fondwa they announced that, with the approval of the CMC, they were committing to coming to Fondwa for a 2-3 year assignment working with us. We are looking forward to seeing Frans and Gerdien again in August.

And, after two years in Haiti, Corey Hasting is returning to the U.S. to pursue a Masters degree in Business at *William and Mary College*. Corey was a pioneer in the business development plan for APF and was instrumental in starting the bakery, the educational tourism program, and the pig raising project.

Sue Conlin will also be leaving us soon after three years in Fondwa. Sue has been the nurse in the APF clinic, has lived and worked at the orphanage, and has also been on the team managing the tourism program.

Both Sue and Corey will be sorely missed, and long remembered, here in Fondwa.