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David Fonda, Editor

First  
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# NOUVEL FONDWA

ASOSYASYON  
PEYIZAN  
FONDWA

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**D**ear Friends,

*Peace and Happy Easter from Fondwa, Haiti!*

We are very sorry for the delay in updating you on Fondwa. We hope that you and your loved ones are well and safe. All is well in Fondwa, thanks to the grace of our Risen Lord, and we keep moving ahead with our many projects. You will hear about our progress and failures in this special issue. We are very grateful to Anna Dioguardi who has helped us to collect this information during a very short volunteer stay in Fondwa between February 22nd and March 10th, 2003.

APF is 15 years old on April 24th! We take this opportunity to thank in a special way each one of you who have helped us to realize our dreams. This includes our many volunteers, our financial supporters and international visitors.

Our birthday is also a good time to expand our efforts to the other 564 rural communities of Haiti via the University of Fondwa 2004. Many thanks to Wesley who has accepted the position of Development Director of the UNIF USA office (which will be under the direction of PIP). The solid work of Partners In Progress on the university project has also been tremendous. Finally, we offer many thanks to those who have accepted to support the University of Fondwa 2004.

We want you to notice that our website has changed. The new one is: [www.haitiforever.com/fondwa](http://www.haitiforever.com/fondwa)

In this issue, you will hear the latest news on: Radyo Zetwal; a University of Chicago sleep study in Fondwa; the current situation of our bakery; our new literacy campaign; the APF Office in Fondwa; the Orphanage; our vegetable project; the Sisters of Fondwa; our newest project - the University of Fondwa 2004; our school; reflections on Fondwa from some US College students; and a reflection from Anna Dioguardi - the editor of this issue of Nouvel Fondwa.

*May the peace of the Lord shine upon you all!*

Fr. Joseph Philippe, CSSP  
[apf222@aol.com](mailto:apf222@aol.com)

**H**elping People Help Themselves

*I think the thing I struggle with most being a foreigner in a land that I am committed to, but still can not call my own, is balancing my fast paced, quick changing American ideals with the deep-rooted problems and more modest paced lives of the Haitian people.*

*The time I have spent in Haiti has definitely been humbling as my revolutionary mind struggles to understand how people can submit to the oppression of an unsympathetic system which sends them miles each day gathering water and food on unpaved roads littered with garbage. As my tangled western mind slowly unravels, I come to see these 'problems' through the eyes of the Haitian people, they are realities of a simpler life.*

*Balance is something that is a constant battle. It is why the simple philosophy of helping people help themselves is so prophetic when dealing with the clashing of different worlds. As an educated American I may see 'logical' answers to 'easy' questions, but the key to the success of development work is in the implementation process. While at times the quick and easy solution may be found in bombarding the needy with material donations and ideas, the success lies in the slow nurturing love and support one can give through education and example.*

*I see these techniques slowly at work here in Fondwa. From young Haitians who have come back, education in hand, dedicated to improving their country, to committed, invested foreign volunteers, the idea is not to provide temporary, band-aid relief to desperate peasants, but instead create long-lasting development projects which will generate economy and life in the community. The old adage of 'give a person a fish, they can eat for a day; teach a person to fish, they can eat for a lifetime', is hard at work here in Fondwa and is essential to all Haitian people. Sustainable development, helping people help themselves and better their lives, may be the slow-moving, intensive task that is the bright light in Haiti's future.*

-- Anna Dioguardi

## APF Office Thriving in Fondwa

The internet is alive and well in Fondwa! With the employment of a full-time secretary the APF Fondwa office is running with few problems, and visitors and staff have unlimited access to the internet as well as a satellite phone every day of the week.

The increase in technological capacity not only offers a great bonus to visitors far from home and loved ones, but also has decreased the distance between the APF Fondwa and Port-au-Prince offices. Communication is an essential tool which can be difficult if not nearly impossible at times in Haiti. Through the use of satellite communication, APF has proved successful in surmounting yet another of Haiti's tough barriers.



## Radyo Zetwal

After a short absence due to generator and electrical problems, *Radyo Zetwal Fondwa* (Star Radio of Fondwa), Fondwa's own radio station is back in operation. In a rural setting where houses are scattered miles apart, the radio is a crucial resource for information and community building. The station is an essential part of the work of APF and an amazing tool for all the inhabitants of Fondwa.

Since its beginning, the station has continued to grow and offer a variety of programs directed at health and education. The station's programs deal primarily with health and civic education, agriculture, news from the local area, interviews with supporters and local peasants as well as announcements pertaining to upcoming APF meetings and events. Programs can be heard each day, normally from 4:00pm to 8:00 pm.

A new 250 Watt amplifier has broadened the broadcast area, expanding the *Radyo Zetwal* community and bringing more people together by its programs. With the recent increase in gas prices as well as continued difficulty with inverter charge, the station has been forced to cut down its broadcast hours in past weeks. If you would like to help support the station and become a part of the *Radyo Zetwal* family please contact the APF central office at [apf222@aol.com](mailto:apf222@aol.com).

## Pwogram Alfa Returns

Planning for an upcoming literacy campaign in the Fondwa area is currently underway with the recruitment of monitors (teachers) and organization of classes. In a country where the majority of adults still remain without basic literacy skills, *Pwogram Alpha* is an essential part of APF's development projects.

The program, set to begin in mid-April, follows a similar program used in the past but with an emphasis on better training for teachers and supervisors of the project. Participants,

including both teachers and students, will come from the far-reaching regions of Fondwa. Classes, lasting about two to three months each, will be organized in approximately 20 different sites, primarily those where APF is already working with peasant groups, bringing this gift of basic education to all the people of Fondwa.



## Bakery

Haiti's recent economic problems, including severe devaluation of the currency and tremendous inflation, have unfortunately not escaped Fondwa: the APF bakery, operating for the past four years in nearby Tombe Gateau, has been forced to close its doors. The doubling in price of essential materials such as flour and gas made operation unprofitable.

The closure is temporary however, and plans are already in the works for a more efficient, more economical business including updating the current generator and construction of a brick oven to replace the costly electric one. It is essential to get the bakery up and running again as quickly and efficiently as possible to restore key jobs and resources to the people of the area. Right now, we are looking for a volunteer baker (probably from France or Italy) who can train people in the area and run the bakery as a real income producing activity for APF.

The estimated cost to re-open the bakery is about US\$25,000. If you would like to help re-open the bakery doors as soon as possible through monetary support or with technical help, please contact the APF central office at [apf222@aol.com](mailto:apf222@aol.com).

## University of Fondwa, 2004

The University project is under way! The newest project of APF, *The University of Fondwa, 2004* (UNIF) already has construction underway for its grand opening in January of 2004. The University will provide secondary education (college degrees) in Veterinary Science, Agronomy and Management.

A major source of interest in the project arises from the 'contract' students will take to return to their communities post-graduation for a six-year period. During this period the graduates will develop a leadership role in the community and develop a practice for their skill.

Your support is needed. Since this is the largest project yet undertaken by APF, great resources are needed for its completion. Students need monetary sponsors, expensive equipment is needed for the laboratories, and other material-aid is necessary as well. To learn more about how you can help make the University project a reality, contact Wesley Aten, Director of Development, University of Fondwa, 2004 through e-mail at: [wesleyaten@aol.com](mailto:wesleyaten@aol.com) or by telephone at: 718-384-3603.

## University Research Comes to Fondwa

A team of two researchers, Kristen Knutson and Renate Schneider, from the University of Chicago came to Fondwa to conduct a study on sleep. This is one of the first studies of sleep done in a non-industrialized area, and the goal was to see how the residents of Fondwa, who have no electricity, sleep compared to those who live in the U.S. This study could not have been accomplished without the assistance of a team of six Fondwa residents: Ketty Alexandre, Hervalut Beauvais, Sister Carmelle Voltaire, Emmanuel Beauvais, Smith Norcent and Ludson Lafontant. Sixty wonderful people participated in the study, and the analysis is underway!

## St. Antoine School

The children of Fondwa have successfully started another school year thanks to the *St. Antoine School* run under the direction of Sr. Simone.

While the school is open and students and teachers are doing their best, education does not exist in Fondwa without adversity. One of the main problems the school struggles with is the long distance that many students must travel on foot in order to attend school each day. The distance to and from school, sometimes as many as four hours each way, poses obvious problems to students who must start their days much earlier and expend much-needed energy before they even arrive at the school gate.

In order to help the school children in the far reaching areas of Fondwa, APF hopes to start a host family program where families living closer to the school would be able to receive a stipend to provide food and housing for a child or children during the school week. The need for such foster families, as well as the rising cost of food in the country, have created a need for the school to look outward for support. APF hopes to create a type of 'sponsor a child' program through which foreigners hoping to support to the school would be able to do so by sponsoring a specific student and helping them through their education.

Despite unavoidable adversity, education still remains a top priority for APF and all the people of Fondwa. The school is currently functioning smoothly thanks to the incredible motivation of students, teachers and all those hoping for a brighter future for Haiti. If you would like to learn more or help support Fondwa's primary school, please contact the APF central office at [apf222@aol.com](mailto:apf222@aol.com).

## Fatima House

Fondwa's long existing orphanage, the orphanage of *Notre Dame de Fatima*, run by the *Sisters of St. Antoine* here in Fondwa, is undergoing some long-awaited construction. The existing house, which is home to 48 children ranging from ages one to 25, will be reconstructed to provide a bigger, cleaner, new living space for the children. A new building has also been added right next to the existing one, filling the first and greatest need for adequate space.

The construction work is divided in three phases. Phase one was recently done with the financial help of *Family Help Ministries (FHM)*, *Partners in Progress (PIP)* and some other friends in the U.S. The new

### Sisters Of Charity Of Leavenworth Send Thanks

Dear Sister Carmelle,

Greetings from Leavenworth, Kansas in the USA. We made it back safely. All the planes were on time.

Sister Carmelle, thank you so much for making our stay at Fondwa so nice. We shall never forget it. All the time and attention that you and Sister Simone gave to us was greatly appreciated. I am impressed with your formation program and the professionalism of the school, too. You have good things going. Keep up the great work.

We are talking to Sister Sue Miller, our Community Director about your requests. Hopefully, we will get a positive response.

God bless you and keep you.  
With love,

Sister Marianna Bauder

building now has smoothly sanded walls and a fresh coat of paint, making it not only appealing to the eye, but more importantly, transforming it into a home. Thanks to Fr. Fred Byrn and to his recent visit with a group of enthusiastic college students from *Sr. Vincent's College* in Pittsburgh, PA. Thanks to you all for your hard work and support!

## St. Antoine Women's Religious Community

The *St. Antoine Women* religious community has continued to grow and now includes five postulants along with the two Sisters. The postulants are living in community at the APF Center in Fondwa and are helping decrease the work load of Sister Simone and Sister Carmelle by taking on a variety of tasks. Currently four of the postulants are working at the *St. Antoine School*, three serving as primary school teachers and one as an administrative assistant. The fifth postulant is working with Sister Carmelle to increase the activities that the center provides to the people, in particular the women, of Fondwa.

At the moment, there is a sewing program underway that has been named the *Nancy Staples Project* in memory of a deceased friend and long time supporter of APF and Sister Carmelle's projects. The sewing project, as well as a waitress / server training program for interested women from the area is meant to provide more practical skills and training to help the women better help themselves.

While increasing all the activities at the APF center, accepting a steady stream of visitors, and supervising both the school and orphanage, the Sisters have set their hopes on construction of a residential house which would be home to their growing spiritual community

and serve as a well needed retreat from their daily activities. If you have questions about the spiritual community of *St. Antoine* in Fondwa or would like to help in its continued expansion, Sr. Carmelle would love to hear from you. You can contact her at [sr.carmelle@carmail.com](mailto:sr.carmelle@carmail.com).

## Vegetable Project Aims to Improve Both Health and Economy

As part of the continuing effort to improve the health and economy of all the peasants of Fondwa, a large vegetable project is now underway. The project has been presented to all of APF's 17 different peasant groups and has received widespread support. The program, which began in December, provides people with technical and financial support to produce vegetable gardens with the aim of increasing the amount and variety of nutrients and vitamins consumed by local peasants.

An initial survey into current vegetable production reveals the need for more green leafy vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage and spinach as well as carrots, potatoes and leeks. Once the vegetable

gardens are underway, they will receive continued guidance on how best to economically increase production. After the vegetables are grown, the second step of the program will be to help the peasants sell a portion of their harvest in the surrounding areas. Their sales will hopefully cover the cost of the initial loan and allow them to continue the gardens long term.

The goal of the project is to not only bring more agricultural skills to the peasants of the area, but also increase awareness about health and nutrition. In the long run, increased vegetable production by individual farmers will not only bring a sustainable economy but better health and a decrease in malnutrition to Fondwa.

# Reflections on Fondwa

After visiting Fondwa for six days in late February I realized what a special place it is. In a country riddled with poverty and despair, Fondwa stands as a beacon of hope and happiness.

The *Association of Peasants of Fondwa* impressed me the most; it is doing so much to make Fondwa a better place to live and to learn. Every program that APF runs impressed me immensely. The school is run well and shows the potential that the young people possess. The tree nursery was a beautiful sign of new life and rebirth. The orphanage, while intrinsically sad, is raising the youth to care and give back to the village and the people that nurtured them. The *University of Fondwa* project is so exciting and clearly energizes people with the gift of higher education it will bring. So many wonderful things are happening, and the people are at the heart of it all.

While all the programs are impressive, nothing gave me greater joy than to interact with the people; they are deeply spiritual and extremely hard working and determined. As I lay in bed each morning, often before the sun rose, I listened as villagers trekked along the road to buy goods or get water. I was blown away by how early the people start their day and how much walking they do. They are truly survivors. While most Americans would give up or wallow in self-pity if they lived in Fondwa, the people of the village are strong and hopeful. They do not pity themselves, but are thankful for all they do have. All of the people I passed on the road smiled at me and happily greeted me, 'Bonswa!'

I will never forget my visit to Fondwa or the people I met. I look forward to returning soon and learning more about the people and the programs of hope in the beautiful village. -- Ruthann Smith

My biggest impression of Fondwa, and what I loved most about it, was the sense of peace that I had from the moment I arrived. I could just sit outside and look at the mountains forever. Sometimes it was a bittersweet peace though, because while the mountains were beautiful, you cannot miss how barren they are from the deforesting. I hope that the reforestation project is able to bring back the natural beauty of Fondwa and the rest of Haiti. -- John Walker

I decided to travel to Haiti to experience a new culture, and I thought that it would just be another place in my travel book. I envisioned Haiti as a very poor country; geographically dry, with children from the PBS channel looking for food in piles of trash.

Haiti is a very poor island. There are two types of people; the extremely poor, and the filthy rich. The week I spent in Haiti was nothing like I had ever experienced before. When I first stepped off the airplane, I took a breath and knew that Haiti would affect the way I see things forever.

As I was fighting the wind to get into the airport terminal, I could not help thinking about the adventure I was about to embark on, and if I had made the right decision in coming to Haiti; my adventurous side was fighting off the other side who was reminding it of the comfort of home.

As I came out of the airport, there were tons of people touching me and shaking my hand; I felt like I was in one of those National Geographic documentaries. As we were walking to the van, I saw from a distance, a very colorful truck - and that was when I was introduced to tap-taps. So after jumping into this extremely colorful truck, we were finally on our way.

For the first day, we stayed in Port-au-Prince. We went for a walk, and got to see city life; we saw the two-room houses, and how crowded Port-au-Prince is. We also got to experience sugar cane. The next day, we set out for Fondwa on our colorful tap-tap. As we were driving, we saw the beach to our right, and palm trees to our left. This was the Haiti that I had dreamed of; an oasis in the Caribbean.

We got to Fondwa after traveling for about two hours (one curiosity about the drive was that in Haiti, cars have no rules; something that nobody had told us). Fondwa was

really beautiful; the mountains, and its very friendly people.

Throughout the week, we did many things: we painted an orphanage, traveled to different villages, went to marketplace, visited the local school, and played soccer to name just a few. Everyday was a surprise in Fondwa; we would wake up not knowing what we were going to do, but we would always finish the day with a smile on our faces.

But as all things, our time was over. Before we knew it, we were once again on top of a tap-tap waving bye to all the friends we had made, and to the place we had come to call home sweet home. We were off to Port-au-Prince to finish our last trajectory before going back to the States.

We were received at *St. Joseph's Home for Boys*, a "hotel" where we stayed for two nights. As I looked at the sun setting upon Port-au-Prince, I felt strange being there, Fondwa was calling me. In Port-au-Prince, we discovered a new side of Haiti: the Caribbean supermarket. We entered the supermarket while being looked upon by two Haitian policemen with shotguns in their hands. Inside it was like we were back in the States, and the type of people that were shopping there were not the same type of people walking through the streets of Port-au-Prince. Apart from Port-au-Prince, we also traveled north to visit schools, and took some time to lay in the sun.

So after eight days in Haiti, we packed all our treasures and memories that we had obtained from Haiti and headed back to the United States. As I look back on the whole week, I cannot believe its already over; it seems like only yesterday I was hiking up the mountains of Fondwa to the marketplace, but here I am sitting in front of my computer writing about it. I can definitely say that Haiti is in my top 10 list of places to be. -- Francisco Herma

My experiences in Haiti are hard to describe. I feel that I laughed and cried more in Haiti than I have in years. It seems so easy for God to be present in Haiti; the people are so friendly, kind and willing to accept us in their lives.

When I came home I continued to compare everything to Haiti. I had some guy flip me off because he couldn't get through a red light and then I went to a Shop-n-Save and two guys were fighting. I know these things may happen in Haiti too, but God was allowing me to see these things here to better appreciate the love I found in Haiti.

The beauty surpasses any and all things I have ever seen. The poverty and beauty are one! Even though the poverty was everywhere, so were the mountains; they reminded me of God because they surrounded all of Fondwa like God does.

I went to church on Sunday, about four hours after I got home. I couldn't stop the tears from falling, the lack of praise for God was evident and I felt bad for those people who didn't get to experience just one mass in Fondwa. God was so much easier to hear in Haiti and I pray that I hear him when he tells me it is time to go back!!

-- Rebecca DePalma

I guess, if anything, I learned that America is quite a greedy country. Port-Au-Prince made even New York City look sparsely populated. But, P-au-P is not even the size of Pittsburgh, which is only half the size of Cleveland, where I'm from! The fact it seemed so crowded, yet was so small, shocked me.

The people were sooo poor. But yet, they were so happy, too! It seems a contradiction, because Americans are unhappy if they don't have for two seconds what they THINK they need - cars, trains, airplanes, etc.

I thought it interesting that their view of America was that we never work. While our work is certainly of much more of a cerebral nature, we probably work as hard as they do. I think that they would be surprised if they ever came to America and saw Americans working as hard as they do.

It is interesting to think that they are so religious that they don't want to leave mass.

-- Jim Carfagna

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.