

# haiti

## SPIRES OF FAITH 2018 LENTEN PROJECT Milk Cartons for Haiti

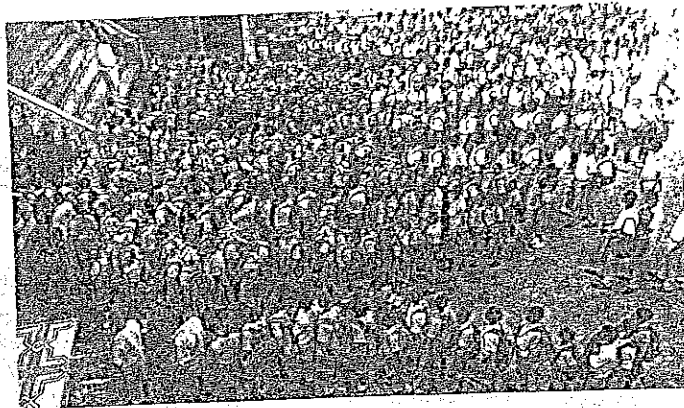
It is easy to see all the great things happening in our sister parish in Fond Verrettes because of the continued generosity of parishioners in the Spires of Faith Cluster. It is because of this generosity that the parish school has over 800 students enrolled, and the St. Claire Medical Clinic continues to serve the needs of many people on a daily basis.

The current needs of the St. Claire Clinic are medications, and a generator to support the solar power. Using both solar power and a generator will enable them to sterilize equipment and power the exam lamps and the EKG machine. There is also a need for IV poles, and testing kits for pregnancy, malaria and other types of diseases.

We ask that you please take a milk carton home for Lent and fill it with your spare change. Envelopes are also available by the milk cartons if a cash or check donation is preferred. The needs of the clinic are many. May the needs of our sister parish in Haiti touch our hearts as we draw closer to Christ on our Lenten journey. As always please to continue to keep the people of Fond Verrettes in your prayers.

*"In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ".*

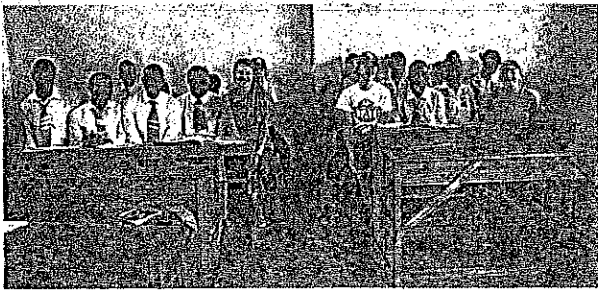
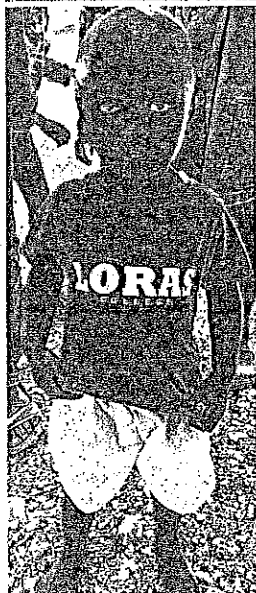
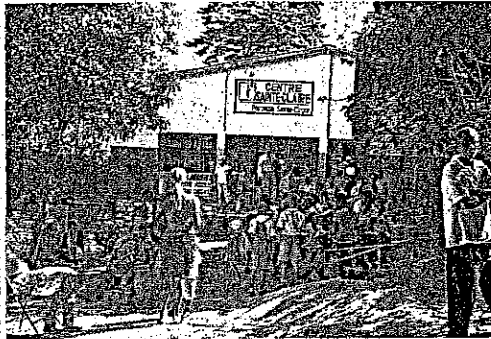
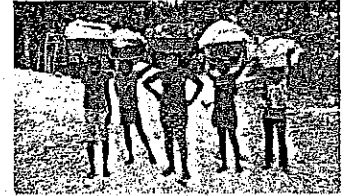
- Pope Francis



Please return your milk carton the weekend of March 24-25, 2018.

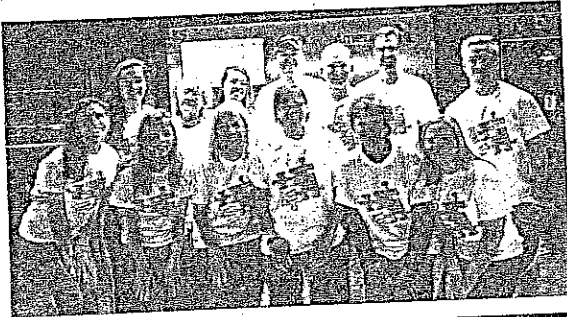
## WHERE YOUR DONATIONS GO

- Water purifying tablets
- Teacher salaries
- Student tuition
- St. Claire Clinic generator
- Medications
- Lab testing kits
- Powdered milk
- Baby bottles
- School supplies and more!



THE HAITI MISSION TRIP was probably the most incredible experience of my life. Being only eighteen years old, that may not seem like a big deal, but I know as the years go on I will never forget the time we spent there. There's just something about the place that makes God's presence almost tangible. We know He is present in suffering, and there's plenty of that down there, but He is also greatly visible in their joy. I definitely witnessed more joy than suffering. Kids cheered and jumped around when we did something as simple as blow bubbles or paint their nails. They laughed as they schooled us while playing soccer, and eagerly grabbed our hands to be near us while we walked around. Men and women waved when we passed them in the street, and smiled as we played with their children in the clinic. The whole community sang freely during Mass, and displayed their gratitude through prayer. Actions that seemed little to us were huge to them, and I'm glad we were able to make some of their lives better during the short week we spent there. No doubt, this was the experience of a lifetime.

— Jackie Olberding



HOW MANY TIMES A DAY do I look in the mirror? Interestingly, that was one of the first questions that came to my mind after we arrived in Fond Verrettes and settled into our home for the next five days. Why? Because there were no mirrors anywhere in our bedroom or bathroom.

So, with that in mind, I decided not to worry about if my hair wasn't in place or I had paint on my face. Instead, I would look at the faces of our Haitian friends and try to see the beauty and peace in their eyes.

They indeed have much beauty, peace and hope in their eyes. But there is also sadness, despair and frustration.

The children in and around Fond Verrettes are full of joy as they sing and play at school. They don't know that they live in one of the poorest countries in the world. They make do with what they have and think nothing of walking 2 hours one way to school each day.

In the eyes of the children in the orphanage in Port-au-Prince, I saw more sadness than joy. Especially one young boy, who has decided not to eat anymore. He is 16, but could pass for nine or ten. His mother left him at the orphanage when he was seven. If he doesn't eat, he will certainly die. The director of the orphanage has tried everything to get him to eat, but he can't force him to eat. I pray the young boy will change his mind.

Six days of not looking into a mirror allowed me to look more deeply at our friends in Haiti. I saw smiling faces and sad faces. Lots of strong faith and great hope for better times ahead. We can't change the culture of Haiti with our visits and financial support, but as Cookie reminds us, we are doing our small part.

— Mark Singsank

MY SECOND TRIP TO FOND VERRETTES, Haiti has once again instilled in my heart how blessed I am to live in a home where my floor isn't dirt and I have clean, safe water to drink and use. This year, I especially realized how blessed we are to live in a place where most people have access to a hospital or some form of medical care within 10 minutes of their home. In our hospitals we have sanitation, labs, x-rays, surgeries, an abundance of medications, the list goes on. We have access to all of these things yet most if not all of these things are unavailable to the people seeking medical care at the St. Claire Clinic in Fond Verrettes. However, while these treatments and procedures are not available at this time, the clinic still has the most hardworking and wonderful doctors, nurse, and pharmacist who work tirelessly and have a great outlook for the future of the clinic. The staff ensures all of their patients get the best care possible. They are also extremely blessed to have the best priest, Fr. Luberman, that anyone could ask for.

"So how does Fr. Luberman tie to the clinic?" you may be asking yourself. While we were there, a woman from the village went into labor. She got a motorcycle ride up to the clinic, which is difficult enough when you're not in labor, only to find out that the baby was breech. In this situation, in a country where medical care is scarce, the inevitable would happen. The mother and baby most likely would have died. But, thanks to Fr. Luberman, that didn't happen to the woman and doesn't happen to other patients like her that come into the clinic with serious medical issues. Instead, Father drove the woman 60 miles (a 3 hour car ride that is anything but smooth) to a Port-au-Prince hospital leaving at 8:00 pm and not returning until around 2:00 am. This man gives everything of himself to anyone that walks in his direction and I can not express enough how blessed we are to have him to run the Holy Cross parish.

There were many improvements throughout the parish within just a year of my two trips which shows you how hard our Haitian families work day in and day out. That being said, please continue to keep Fr. Luberman, the clinic staff, the teachers, and all the people of the Holy Cross parish in your thoughts and prayers so they can keep moving forward in their fight called life.

Mèsi! — Emily Heiderscheid

THIS YEAR I WAS LUCKY enough to join the Haiti team for another amazing trip! We were blessed with safe travels and good health. Thank you for all of your thoughts and prayers! My journey to Haiti was once again, life changing.

I was just as touched by the beautiful people of Haiti as I was last year. They never fail to impact me and open my eyes. The joy that they possess in such hard times is a great example for us to follow. They truly are some of the most joyful people I have ever met. Their faith in God is an amazing thing and I think that we can learn a lot from these people. They give everything they have, even if it's not much, to God.

We spent a lot of our time at the clinic. Our parish has helped to make this clinic possible and it has made a huge difference in the Fond Verrettes community. People are getting treated for many different illnesses, receiving medications and babies are being born! Thank you for your support in making this a possibility for these people. It was very rewarding to get to be a part of the clinic day and to see the impact the clinic has made on the community.

A huge highlight for me was the children. They are filled with love and are as sweet as can be! We got to play lots of games and spend lots of time with them. They are always there to hold your hand, to laugh and to play with you. These kids have taught me so much about how simple it is to love and to be kind. The moments I was able to spend with the children are some that I will cherish forever.

No stories or reflections will ever truly explain how incredible Haiti and its people are. I am beyond grateful I was able to experience this trip for the second time this year. The people of Fond Verrettes are grateful for your continued support. Thank you for all of the prayers and donations. The simplest things can make a world of a difference to them.

God bless! — Madison Stelken

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EVERYTHING THAT I HAD BEEN TOLD about Haiti seems insignificant to what I really experienced when I got there. Never before had I seen so many people living with so little. I am still in wonderment of how these people living without what we call necessities, can be so happy. Joy and happiness was very evident when we attended Sunday Mass at Holy Cross Parish in Fond Verrettes. Their singing and harmonizing was beyond comparison.

I got to see firsthand what a difference we are making in their lives. 218 people were seen on "Clinic Day". This is something that would not have happened without the generous support of the community back here.

I ask that you continue to support the people of Haiti in your thoughts and prayers. More importantly I ask that you continue to support Spires of Faith Haiti Fund as we continue to improve the lives of our brothers and sisters.

— Steve Leibold

I AM BLESSED TO BE A PART of the 2018 Haiti team and to have had my third opportunity to travel to Haiti. Each time I go there my love for the people and the country continues to grow, both are so beautiful! They become like family with a jubilant "welcome home" when we arrive. A piece of my heart stays with them each time I leave.

We are all called to serve. Though physically making the trip to Haiti isn't for everyone, those that travel from the Spires of Faith are the eyes and ears for people of Haiti. We see and hear firsthand the many needs of the poor and through these written reflections their voices are being heard, in turn, many of you serve by your faithful generosity in giving. Together we are able to make a genuine impact on their lives!

It was an honor again to represent the Spires of Faith Cluster in this mission, seeing for myself the progress that is being made is truly a sign that our continued support is making a difference. They convey their thanks and deep appreciation by keeping all of us in their prayers.

I ask that you please keep them in your prayers as we continue to be advocates for the people of Haiti.

Thank you and God bless! — Sue Salow

FIRST I'D LIKE TO SHOUT OUT A BIG THANK YOU to Cookie and the team for organizing this unforgettable trip. I feel so fortunate to have had this opportunity to experience another culture, country, and fall in love with the Haitian people. It's something that cannot be learned from books, newspapers or the internet.

I knew of the lack of food, water, electricity, and other resources before going on the trip. But these are a few little things that surprised me: how far the people in Fond Verrettes have to walk to their water source and how heavy the full water container is to carry back to their homes; the rocky terrain of the paths and roads; the number of students in the school we help support (almost 1000); the classroom size for one teacher (55-80 in some grades); the lack of textbooks; the primitive buildings used for churches and schools in the neighboring communities; the number of people who came to the clinic and how far they walked to get there while sick or injured.

Despite these hardships, the people especially the children, were so happy and loved being around us. It was fun seeing various people run to give Cookie a hug, and many who called out by name to those on our team who have been there before. We (our Spires of Faith Cluster) do so much for them and they are so very appreciative. It's amazing how far the US dollar will go toward the absolute life sustaining needs of these wonderful people. We're not talking frills but medicine, medical care, food, and education. I would encourage everyone to make this trip. It was one I'll never forget.

— Carolyn Olberding

ON JANUARY 30TH the Haiti team landed in Port au Prince and started our long journey up to Fond Verrettes to visit our sister parish. The roads in the city were very crowded and chaotic and the country roads were very rocky, narrow and washed out, making for slow travel. On arrival, it was great to see the school, clinic and church that the Haiti team has helped support. Over my time there, it showed how many people have really been helped. It was also fun to add to this by helping put up hooks in the classrooms for the kids to hang their things on. We also worked with a local carpenter to build a shelving unit for one of the classrooms. While some of us did this, others painted in the rectory and another group helped at the clinic as 218 people came for check-ups and medicines for their ailments.

On another day, we hiked to their water source where they get their water and saw how they do their laundry on the rocks by the stream. It was an eye opener to see people still doing things this way. We also went to their market on another day where we saw how they buy and sell all the things they need. They were butchering animals right there and selling the meat. It was one of the neatest markets I have seen. We also visited an orphanage on yet another day. It was difficult to see so many kids with no parents to take care of them. It also showed that the Haitians still need our help.

I really am glad I went on this trip. It showed me the good that the Haiti team is doing and that there is still a lot of work to be done. It also showed me how lucky we are to be living where we are.

— Patrick Heiderscheit

GOING BACK TO HAITI this year was like going home to old friends. It was wonderful to see the people we had gotten to know last year. Many of the children remembered our names from last year and were very excited to see us. The week in the village was very busy and productive. We spent a lot of time at the medical clinic. A storeroom was cleaned top to bottom and then we brought shelving to help organize the items we brought. Medicines were organized and unpacked in the pharmacy, we trained medical staff on how to use analysis kits and then we had a clinic day which provided service to over 218 people. Besides medical care, patients on clinic day were given food, toothbrushes, clothing, hats and scarves. This year we installed 200 hooks for backpacks in the classrooms. A new cabinet was also constructed for classroom storage. Students in the school learn 4 languages on top of other rigorous subjects including physics and math. Many classrooms have 70-80 students in them. I loved watching the younger students sing for us. We walked into the village to visit the Fonkoze Bank which has opened new doors for many people there. It is always nice to see where and how these people live and to hand out some clothes to the kids that need it. The village seemed much greener than it had last year. Many of the gardens are green and producing. The last day of our trip we visited an orphanage in Port au Prince. There were 120 kids ranging in age from 4-17. Many of the kids who we estimated were age 10-12 were actually 15 and 16 years old. It was very obvious that many had not eaten well for an extended period of time. Yet, their smiles were big and their hearts were open to us and we had an enjoyable afternoon playing soccer, jump rope and coloring. It is always hard to leave these sweet kids because no one is coming to try and adopt them. Not sure when I will get to return to Haiti but I do know I will be back.

— Janet Stelken

THIS YEAR I HAD no intention of going back down to Haiti for my third trip due to being in college. When the opportunity presented itself when a fellow member was not able to go, I could not turn this chance down. Every time I go down to Haiti, I can't help but fall more in love with the people. This, being my third reflection, I'd like to write it little different than the other two. Instead of my experiences, which were incredible and life changing as usual, I'd like to tell you about the impact you've made on our family down in Haiti.

THE CLINIC. Without your help, the nearest clinic for the people of Fond Verrettes and surrounding communities would be Port-Au-Prince, which is a solid 3-hour ride down the rugged mountain. While we were there, we were able to run a clinic for the local community. Hundreds of people traveled hours just to be seen for a check-up and receive medication that is usually not accessible to them. With the new test kits that were brought down, tests for diseases such as Malaria can give a diagnosis in minutes. This is because of you. Because of you, new babies are able to be brought into this world because of the Clinic that you built. For this, I thank you. Our family in Haiti thanks you.

THE SCHOOL. Without your help in running the school, these children would not be able to attend school. Education is at the core of the circle of life. Without education, kids will not be able to get out of the spiral that the country in. These kids, that you are helping to educate will someday turn Haiti around in a positive direction. You, the parishioner, sitting in your pew reading this, are having a direct impact on the country of Haiti. Just know that I thank you and our family in Haiti thanks you.

I can't stress enough how much your generosity means to our family. While listening to Rodrick, a community member who has taken Fond-Verrettes under his arms and devoted his life to better the community, said something that hit me. He said, "why is it that you are so willing to leave your paradise and come here and help us when we have nothing to offer you?" When you look at this more deeply, it has a bigger meaning. It's easy for me to drop everything and go to Haiti. I've been there and met the people. I've had a personal encounter with these people and they've changed my life. What about you, who have never been able to make the trip. You don't hesitate to help in whatever way you can. That says more than any word could express. Even though you have not met our family, you are willing to leave your "paradise" and make sacrifices to better the lives of people you've never met. You. Are. Amazing. Many would say that you have to meet someone to love them. This is not true. These kids, these adults, this country, loves you. On behalf of myself, and our group, I thank you. You are the reason this is possible. You are the reason that this community will soon thrive. Please keep our Haitian family in your prayers, because I can assure you, you are in theirs. — Justin Wolfe

GOING TO HAITI was an eye-opening experience. I think if there was one thing I took away from this experience it would be how grateful I am to live where I do! This trip gave me a new perspective on the struggles in my life. It made me realize how much I take for granted. Something as simple as turning the faucet on and water coming out, or even having clean water to drink! The Haitians might not have as many things we do, but they are the most resourceful, thankful, joyful people I have ever met! I really enjoyed the different projects we worked on while in Haiti, and spending time with all the kids! Haiti has left a lasting mark on my life and I would recommend this trip to anyone considering it!

— Natasha Otto

GOING TO HAITI was such an eye opening experience. I had an idea what the conditions would be like in Haiti but going there made it more real and made me realize that people in our country take so much for granted. Even things like going to school, running water, and paved roads. The people there are so happy and full of life even though they don't have much. I'm so glad I got to have this amazing experience.

— Emily Gaul

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### WORDS OF CONGRATULATIONS

Sometimes, finding words to express oneself after being rescued is the most difficult thing in life, regarding myself, it's exactly what is happening to me today. Ladies and Gentlemen, let me try to enumerate some of the good things you have done in Fonds Verrettes. Since I have met you until now, things deserve to be appreciated and even touch the understanding of everybody that lives here.

Before starting, let me thank Jesus for teaching you such a manner and turning your sight towards Haiti. I very often wonder if it is true that a human being is able to suffer that way or accept to die by rescuing others, I also wonder, how someone could leave USA, a paradise that offers every good kind of opportunity to visit Fonds Verrettes and be ready to furnish all these services for free if he is not an ambassador of Christ.

You know, brothers and sisters, I mean Cookie, Pat, Steve, Madison, 2 Emilys, Sue, Janet, Carolyn, Jackie, Mark, Natasha, Justin, plus others, you have accepted to provide health care to the people of Fonds Verrettes by constructing St. Claire Health Center and by organizing mobile clinics everywhere in our community in each of your visits.

You have supported our education by furnishing everything you can as; knowledge, strengths, and so forth to the Holy Cross Church and School. Our economy is growing thanks to the Fonkoze Bank, now more that 4000 little vendors are moving in a positive path economically.

The water project "Gaolyen Dlo" is another strong and useful help that my fellow citizens are enjoying everyday. Because of it babies stop dying from different kinds of diseases. Friends; young and old have a last chance to live their lives a little longer on this earth, to finish; we're all saved from germs that we consider like little devils infecting our water.

So, I better stop right now because I have too many things to say about your hard tasks here in Fonds Verrettes. But permit me to say that; we enjoy very much your smiles, your hugs, your kisses, your prayers, your love, your understanding and your manner of appreciating people. For you, poor, dirty people do not exist, everybody is appreciated.

For all these reasons you deserve to be congratulated! Thanks.

From - Rodrigue Manigot

SINCE THE VERY FIRST DAY I came to Haiti, Rodrigue and I have been friends. He is one of the most caring men you will ever meet. He loves Haiti and Fonds-Verrettes and all the people living there. He teaches English and encourages education for the youth, supplies 1000's of seedlings every year to help reforestation on the barren hills, coordinates the water project in the area, teaches benefits of composting greens and manure, and with help from Fonkoze loans, he instructs farmers as they begin their gardens, and much more. His dream is for a green Haiti with water gently going downstream. God planted Rodrigue in Fond Verrettes and he is blossoming! Every word he said to our team he also said to all of you. You are a lifeline to these beautiful, gentle, loving people. I do not have words to say it any better than Rodrigue.

Merci! Merci! — Cookie