



# SHARE CARE RAYJON

## It is Good to Give Thanks!

by *Dieudonne Batrville,*  
*RAYJON's Community Development Project Director in Haiti*

Through your generosity, the Lord has done great things in Haiti. Because of your constant financial and moral support, RAYJON has, over the last 20 years comforted, and demonstrated compassion to the Haitian people. RAYJON is currently assisting families and training women's associations, enabling them to grow as active members in their communities, becoming self-reliant organizationally and administratively. For the last 20 years, you, board members, church and parishioners have stood up in solidarity with the Haitian rural communities. RAYJON, through your generosity and active love, has provided health care annually to more than 13,000 patients. RAYJON has helped to improve the income of 1,100 craftsmen and women's entrepreneurs and urban professionals, in providing them with efficient eye care. Most important, with your support, RAYJON is continuously providing elementary and secondary education to 500 children. This past year, a post-secondary program was implemented, consisting of computer training, clerical and administrative skills and management of small businesses. This new program was introduced to ensure opportunities for social and economic changes in the lives of the youths, in the context to successfully help reduce poverty in the area through funding of sustainable projects.



*Dieudonne in Haiti*

Every time you have helped us, you have been successful participants in defending human rights. Each time you have helped us, you have become voices against the abuses, against child labour. You have become educators and teachers. You have helped us to feed the hungry. You have become economists and finance ministers. You have also become voices against violence and injustice. You have become development workers, peace keepers and missionaries. During the last few months Saint Marc, RAYJON's project area, has been strongly hit by civil war, a massacre of innocent people. Among the dead, 3 women from the project have lost their lives, because they were fetching water and food for their children and were unprotected against the bullets, grenades and burning tires. During the massacre, RAYJON extended its services to the people. Our schools, and clinics were opened as shelters, where food and care were provided.

The open killings have abated, but the war against poverty has just started, because needs of all sorts have increased. Now more than ever your support will help RAYJON continue building lives shattered by poverty, human rights abuses and war.

Now, more than ever, your generosity will help RAYJON continue standing in solidarity with the Haitians, helping them building equitable democratic communities of peace and justice.

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## RAYJON SHARE CARE

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for Development and Aid in Haiti,  
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### Our Vision

*Caring communities building  
partnerships through education,  
development and aid.*

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#### CIDA Support

RAYJON is pleased to acknowledge the role that the *Canadian International Development Agency* (CIDA) has played in support of the St. Marc Community Development Project, HAITI. CIDA has matched funds for the project since 1989.



Canadian International  
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de  
développement international

## Coming Events

### RAYJON Annual Retreat

Friday evening May 14th & Saturday May 15th  
at the United Church Camp, near Forest.

If interested in attending please contact John Barnfield 337-0338

### The annual St. Mary's Golf Tournament

Saturday, May 29th at River Valley Golf Club near St. Marys.

Registration: 1pm - 1.45pm. 'Shotgun' start at 2pm.

Tickets \$45 - includes steak dinner. Non golfers - \$20

*Tickets must be bought in advance.*

Joanne or Luke DeBrabandere 229-6722) or

Valerie Tkaczuk 225-2626 (St. Marys area)

Tom Atkinson 845-3634 (Lambton area)

### RAYJON Booth at the Arts & Craft Fair

Sunday, May 30th 10am - 5pm at the Corunna Athletic Park.

Call Dianne McKillican at 862-1963 for information.

### Annual RAYJON Barbecue

Friday, June 18th, 6pm

at Dave Woods & Linda McDonald's house,

932 Lakeshore Rd., Sarnia (parking on Westwood)

Bring a salad or desert to share, lawn chairs & your own drinks.

Hamburgers & sausages will be provided.

### Annual RAYJON Eyeglass Clinic

Monday 21st June - Saturday 26th June at Lambton Mall, Sarnia

*Volunteers welcome!*

Call Joanne Atkinson 845-3634 or

Den Shannon 542-7270 for information.

### EXCITING! Mark your calendars!

#### RAYJON Fall Fair

Saturday, September 25th 9am - 2pm

at Sacred Heart School gym, Lecaron Ave., Sarnia

*Volunteers needed!*

Dianne McKillican 862-1963 or Nancy Berry 542-3577

### EVENT OF THE YEAR!

**RAYJON & the YMCA Int.Development Committee**  
are hosting a

#### Peace, Unity and Justice Forum

Transforming our world from the inside out!

Saturday, November 13th from 8:45 am to 3:30 pm

At The Village Inn, Christina St., N., Sarnia.

**Keynote speaker: Wade Davis, world-famous explorer,  
speaker, writer & scientist.**

*Author of the book "The Serpent and the Rainbow".*

Ticket details T.B.A

*For more information, see page 3.*

## **Peace, Unity and Justice Forum; Transforming Our World From the Inside Out!**

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;  
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead*

*by Elizabeth Soltis*

RAYJON in partnership with the YMCA International Development Committee, is proud to co-sponsor an exciting, banner educational event on Saturday, November 13, 2004. Mark your calendars now since you don't want to miss this incredible empowering opportunity!

The intention is to provide a one-day peace, unity and justice educational workshop designed to touch, move and inspire people into a commitment of action by a vision of what's possible. After all, we can only create what we imagine and every reality starts with an idea. Participants will surely walk away with a new awareness and understanding of key peace, unity and justice principles and a renewed desire to be the change they want to see in the world.

The workshop premise is that global change is intricately connected with individual change. And, belief change is the pre-requisite to behaviour change. So we need to begin with the only thing we can really control - our mind - in thinking about how we can BE an instrument of positive change. Participants will be challenged with the questions; What is important and meaningful to me? What limiting beliefs are holding me back from who I want to be? How do my words and actions reflect my stated values? The experience will enable people to deepen their own integrity through raised consciousness. This is the key to transforming our world.

Specifically, the themes of this workshop are;

- Shifting from independence to interdependency
- Shifting from scarcity to sufficiency
- Shifting from exploitation to stewardship

To bring home these themes with captivating stories, Wade Davis has enthusiastically agreed to be our keynote speaker! Canadian Wade Davis, who is an internationally renowned speaker, writer and ethno-botanist, is passionate about celebrating diversity. Over the past twenty years, Wade has lived in the Amazon, Haiti, Tibet and other remote lands immersed in unique cultures. This background has given him a keen appreciation of the fact that we all need each other. Indeed, it is impossible for the human species to survive if we do not honour the gift of diversity.

Audiences consistently remark that they sat breathless and spellbound during Wade's presentation. Described by many as a Harvard-grad adventurer and a living Indiana Jones, Wade considers himself to be "an independent scholar." Wade is able to see the wonders of the world that few of us know and which are rapidly disappearing. One of Wade's strengths is his ability to meld his insights with science and the humanities to deliver a message that is fundamentally about social justice. Undoubtedly, this workshop will be enriched with Wade's presence!

*Check out Wade's website: [www.wade-davis.com](http://www.wade-davis.com)*

*As the YMCA motto beautifully states; Peace - think it, say it, live it!*

**"Be the change you want to see in the world". Mahatma Gandhi**

## Haiti and a Reverence for Life - Respe Pou La Vi

by Anne Pollard.

Edited by Dianne McKillican

The topic today is Haiti and A Reverence for Life, or Respe Pou La Vi as they say in Kreyol. I can tell you from personal experience that you cannot avoid the injustice in Haiti. It pulls at your sleeve and steps in front of you to hold out its hand, it calls to you from a jumble of concrete blocks with corrugated metal roofs that so many Haitians call home. It assaults your nose with the stench of open sewers, puts parasites in your water, spray paints slogans on walls, leaves abandoned babies in hospitals and sometimes not in hospitals at all. It gives you T.B. and AIDS and causes your children to die from things that kids in Canada just don't get.



*Anne with friend in Haiti*

At the end of January I returned from a week in Haiti, my first opportunity to go back since 1995. It was a rushed week full of bumpy bus rides to hospitals, dispensaries, markets, schools, a museum, orphanages, a beach, and the most breathtaking mountain views you could ever imagine. Despite what I thought was a fairly good awareness of life in Haiti, there is no doubt that my life has not been the same since.

But this homily today is not just about Haiti. It's about how we live our lives, about who we touch and who touches us. It's about honour and heroes and a process of transformation in which compassion leads to community, pain becomes wisdom, time and effort turn into strength and then blossom into joy. It's not about despair or misery or the seemingly bottomless needs of other people. It's about, to quote the leader of my past expedition to Haiti, "never underestimating the richness of life."

A Reverence for Life. In our prosperous and privileged country, how do we revere life? Is there a difference between a reverence for life and celebration of the things life can bring us? Albert Schweitzer said that a "Reverence for life ..... demands from all that they should sacrifice a portion of their own lives for others."

I need to reflect a bit on the word 'sacrifice.' Does sacrifice mean that I give up something I want for nothing at all or does sacrifice mean I reconsider my priorities, and give up something I thought I once wanted for something I want even more? Is it possible to merely substitute the word 'share' for 'sacrifice?' Are there preconceptions, that we can shake loose of, that will make the act of reverence more obvious to us? Perhaps sacrifice really means clarifying what is sacred to us and doing what we can to ensure the proliferation of that very thing. Perhaps sacrifice means something closer to its Latin origins of 'sacred' and 'to face'. Perhaps it is 'facing the sacred' that can lead us towards a reverence for life.

When I think about people who revere life, about people who choose to face the sacred, most immediately my thoughts turn to those people who have done the kind of work I'd like to do but think I never could. People like Albert Schweitzer, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, people who with their wisdom, foresight and courage have changed the world. I think of Toussaint L'Overture, the liberator of Haiti, of Harriet Tubman, of Mahatma Ghandi and Mother Theresa, of Bono who said, "We're not talking about charity, but about equity." But I don't have the money, power, connections or perhaps even the vision of any of these people, so does this mean that I cannot revere? So then I ask myself to rethink my list of people and their actions, to bring it to a more attainable scale. There's Melshi, a young Haitian man I met this past January who was raised in an orphanage, speaks English, French and Kreyol and now works as the program director at Wings of Hope, a Haitian home for handicapped children. I think of Dieudonne Batrville, a Haitian-Canadian who, with her Master's in International Development has returned to Haiti to work amongst the rural poor for much less money than what she'd earn if she'd chosen a life in Canada. These people face the sacred, they model the world they would like to live in and in doing so pass on a lesson to us all. They model the words Mahatma Ghandi once spoke: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

The question remains that if I am not a Mandela, a Tubman, a Bono, how can I revere life? I know that if the people I mentioned are my heroes than the least I can do is to do more than read their words and keep them to myself. So, I got involved in Haiti, packing birthing kits, writing a homily, meeting with people who didn't have Haitian family the way I have Haitian family but who have dedicated themselves to Haiti nonetheless. And I found that an amazing thing happens. When one acts in a way that reveres life, when one works to ensure that life turns up and outward to life, the energy flows back to you. I have been filled with a sense of community I never knew before. I have met people in Haiti, Haitians and internationals, who have the same dreams for equity and for peace as I. We act not out of desperation or pity, but out of the inexplicable joy that occurs when you see the world as a whole and when you see yourself as large and small within that whole at the same time. Your own needs become less significant, your own abilities greater, you find people to inspire you, and you belong. Do you revere life? How do you revere life? What is sacred to you? Justice? Freedom? Children? Love? It takes time to figure out what is sacred and courage to make the changes that will give us the chance to promote it. How do you go beyond enjoying what life has to offer and revere it? Is it enough to recycle, to speak of human rights abuses, to pat a child kindly on the head? These things are vital and yet are these acts enough to inspire others to do the same? Can any of us at any point say, 'Enough already with reverence'? How can we live our lives in a way to make sure that our reverence for life is passed on to the generations that come after us?

To revere life is not merely to sit in amazement and watch it go by, but to participate in its quality and in its continuance. To revere life is not to be weighed down by the misery, the horror of it. Shaking your head over statistics and watching those t.v. commercials with children with flies in their mouths is not revering life but shortchanging it. A wise person said to me once, "We are not their service providers, their saviours, they are not our clients... Never underestimate the richness of life. They have so much to give. We have so much to learn."

What did I learn while I was in Haiti? I learned that humans are strong and resourceful, and that the state of my dining room chairs maybe isn't important. I learned that at times facing the sacred is not a very comfortable thing to do. That sometimes people ask for things you cannot give and that often enough with poverty and injustice comes anger. I learned that it's not easy to look at someone else's hell straight in the face and ask them what they need to live in dignity and how you can be a part of getting them there. It's not about being perfect but it is about honouring our heroes and a process of transformation in which compassion leads to community, time turns to wisdom and effort folds itself into strength. It is fundamental then that to revere life we not only sustain life as it is today but that we ensure its continuation. We will not be here tomorrow but our children will.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes us to create that village. Revere life while holding the hand of someone's child, your child maybe, maybe a child of someone in the church. My children may consider me tiresome when I talk about loving one another, when I talk about Haiti but just maybe, they will listen to you.

Anne took part in the January 2004 Awareness trip to Haiti. She lives in Hamilton, is married with 3 children, 2 of whom are Haitian born and has a passion for social justice. She is involved with the Hamilton-based "Canadian Friends of Hopital Albert Schweitzer" group that helps to fund-raise for that hospital and was able to visit the facility in January.

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*Laine Margaret Barnfield -  
the latest addition to the RAYJON family.*

## **RAYJON Student Nurse's trip**

to the Dominican Republic Feb.29th - Mar.8th '04.

*by Marilyn Couture, leader.*

We were faced with the worse economic situation in the history of the Dominican Republic. A year ago, \$1 US was equal to 22 pesos; but this year it was 48 pesos! With the price of everything going up, the poor are even struggling to buy rice. Rice, which was 7 pesos a pound is now 25 pesos. Sr. Catherine says she literally sees pounds falling off people. Most of the people in the poor section of Bani are surviving on half a meal a day. In spite of all this, the people in the Dominican have not lost their beautiful smiles or hope. These people are truly rich in spirit.

Our "international" team of 6 health care professionals from Michigan and 6 Lambton College nursing students worked well together and treated close to 800 people in poor areas surrounding Bani. Our health care clinics were set up in 3 different bateys (sugar cane plantations where Haitian cane cutters live and work), a rural community and door to door visits. We were fortunate to have at least one Dominican physician for each clinic which allowed us to use our prescribed medications. Many Dominican physicians live with the poor and are willing to volunteer their time to assess people in their communities. But that is where it stops - they have no medications and the people cannot afford to buy the medicines. So the Dominican doctors were appreciative of our help, especially as we were able to supply the medication.

At the Santa Cruz dispensario, coordinated by Sr. Peggy, the staff were setting up a diabetic clinic. Insulin costs 800 pesos so the average person will do without. Our donation of blood sugar test strips and insulin will enable the clinic to sell the needed medication for just a few pesos, for a few months, anyway.

This trip made us realize the power of the statement by Mother Theresa, "The poor are great! The poor are wonderful! The poor are very generous! They give us much more than we give them."

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## **Social Announcements**

**Congratulations** to Jennifer DeGroot (RAYJON Awareness trip to Haiti, 1990) & Will Brann on their marriage, December 28th 2003.

**Congratulations** to Yvette Scrivener (RAYJON Awareness trip to Haiti, 2003) & Allan Barnfield (numerous trips to Haiti) on the birth of their daughter, Laine Margaret on February 11th 2004. A granddaughter for John & Maggy and Bern & Elaine.

**Congratulations** to Irene Donohue on the birth of her second grandchild, Gabriel, on March 9th 2004.

**Congratulations** to Murray Mitchell, Hope for Haiti coordinator, for receiving the prestigious Peter Harris Service Award in April from the St. Mary's Rotary Club. The award, usually given to a Rotary member, was presented to Murray in recognition of his humanitarian service even though he is not a member of the club.

**Congratulations** to Trish (RAYJON Awareness trip to Haiti 2000) and Bruce Lynn on the birth of their third daughter, Keira Emme, on April 15th. A fifth grandchild for Lynne and Den Shannon.

**Condolences** to Evelyn Johnson on the death of her brother on April 16th.

**Congratulations** to U.B. and Edna Weber on their Golden wedding anniversary on May 15th.

**Congratulations** to Niamh Higgins (RAYJON Awareness trip to Haiti 1998) who is graduating from her Pharmacy Program & receiving a special award, on May 15th in Boston.

**Condolences** to Barbara Hodges & family at the Good Samaritan Hospital, Limbé, Haiti, on the death of her daughter, Barbara after a long illness.

## Lenten Mission Project, Holy Rosary School, Wyoming, Ontario.

by Kathy Foisy - organizer



Holy Rosary School students & staff have been busy raising money for our Lenten Mission Project. Fr. Dan Vere, pastor of Holy Rosary & St. Philip's Churches, traveled to Haiti last year and upon his return invited Holy Rosary School to help the underprivileged schools. Last year we adopted the school in Pinson, Haiti, and eagerly raised \$500 for it. This year, Maggy Barnfield came to our school and showed us pictures of the school facilities in Pinson. She explained to us how the poorest of the poor work hard and how happy they are to be able to go to school.

For the six weeks of Lent, our school had two soup luncheons, the grade 3 / 4 class had a gum chewing day, the grade 4 / 5 class had a pancake lunch, the grade 7 / 8 class had a dance and a bake sale, altogether raising \$520. A cheque payable to RAYJON was presented to Maggy Barnfield on Tuesday, April 13th for the Pinson School.

The children in Haiti wrote letters in French to our students early this year, telling a little bit about themselves and the things they like to do. As part of their French class, our grade 5/6 and 7/8 students replied to their letters and their teacher, Madam Rastin took individual pictures of the students. We will be sending them to the school in Pinson. Hopefully, we can develop a pen pal relationship between the two schools.

### Fall Fair Help Needed! Saturday, September 25th 2004

Do you have a few hours to spare? Why not volunteer to help with the RAYJON Fall Fair! Table convenors and helpers on the day are needed. Come join in the fun, and have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped make a difference for Haiti. Call Dianne McKillican 862-1963 or Nancy Berry 542- 3577

## Challenge Yourself to be an Instrument of Positive Change!

by Elizabeth Soltis

Since RAYJON supports the values of compassion, interdependency and respect for diversity, we were delighted to feature another like-minded program called "Challenge Day" at our last membership meeting. We welcomed Dave Miller from Detroit as Challenge Day spokesperson. His enthusiasm for this powerful program was infectious!

Challenge Day is about challenging teenage and adult participants to be "real" in sharing their hopes, dreams and fears. It is a fun and life-changing experiential workshop designed to support participants in building deeper and more compassionate relationships in their lives. This award-winning, heart-opening program successfully addresses the issues of violence, racism, teasing, stereotypes, tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse within the context of teen life. The vision is to create the possibility of greater acceptance and respect. Although the program originated in California, it has now spread across North America and will soon venture into Europe.

In March 2004, I participated in a Michigan Challenge Day, along with 114 other adults and teens. I saw first-hand the power of inspired leadership, authentic communication and emotional expression, as people were invited to open up and break down the walls of separation. The workshop started with a group of strangers and ended with a group of friends. The loving energy in the room was palpable! If this kind of shift can happen in a school gym, surely it can happen with our peers and families! Judging by the positive feedback, this was truly a miraculous healing experience for all involved.

*If you would like to learn more about bringing this amazing program to the Sarnia community, please contact Elizabeth at (519) 869-8689.*

## Empty Bowls

This year's Empty Bowls event was, again, a huge success - lots of decision making (choosing bowls), bidding on the Silent Auction, hospitality, community spirit, and fabulous soups! Many thanks to all who made it happen and to all who supported the event. Over \$7000 was raised, to be shared equally between the 'Inn of the Good Shepherd' in Sarnia and RAYJON.



*Jo Lyall admiring the display of soup bowls.*



*Ben & Dianne McKillican and Jennifer DeVries selecting bowls.*

## Jam & Jelly

*from Dr. Bibiana's*

*Women's Cooperative in Cap Haitien, Haiti.*

"Jele Kowosol" prickly pear jelly (tastes like a cross between pineapple & pear) & "Konfite Grenadya" - passion fruit jam.

\$5 per jar from Marjorie Paisley 344-9190.

## St. Patrick's Day Celebration.

On March 20th, Art Roth and his crew, hosted their 4th annual "Irish Night" at All Saints Church, Windsor. A very enjoyable night was had by everyone. The food was great and the entertainment by the Celtic Rhythm Irish Dances and a Barber Shop choir was exceptional. At the end of the evening the leprechauns had raised \$1200 for RAYJON projects. Good job Art!

## Fall Fair

The Rayjon Fall Fair will be held Saturday, Sept 25 at Sacred Heart school. This has proven to be a significant fundraising event - partly due to the work of the Fair Committee, partly due to the support of both the Rayjon and the extended community. Over the next few months, if you have any of the following items to donate, please keep us in mind. Call Dianne at 862-1963 or Nancy at 542-3577 for pickup. Items we need: gently used toys, books, attic treasures (NOT Garage sale goods), jams, preserves, jewelry, crafts. Thank you all - together we have raised much needed funds for our Community Development Project in Haiti, and the need is even greater this year after the devastating uprising that took place this past February.

"What do we live for,  
if it is not to make life  
less difficult for each other."  
*by George Elliot*



## RAYJON Library Books

Please check your bookshelves for forgotten RAYJON library books. If you have any, please return them to Marjorie Paisley 344-9190. There will be no 'late' fees!