



Share Care RAYJON

Dieudonne always speaks to the Awareness Trip participants either before they visit the Project area or sometime within that time frame, explaining who she is & her job with Rayjon in Haiti. This time she read something that she had prepared for the group. We sat in a circle on hard, metal chairs in the dark one evening as she read the following by flashlight. Wow!

"I have spent 12 years experiencing Haiti in crisis. Seeing Haitians dying - crying inside and out of the country. I have seen fear in the eyes of the extremely rich and tears & threats in the eyes of the dirt poor Haitians.

I have seen sick people carried to the hospital on a chair, or on a door, as ambulances are not available and health services were not affordable.

I have seen the body of a good friend of RAYJON from Lascierie carried to the morgue in a wheelbarrow.....I could not use my car to take her there due to roads blocked.....

She was carried and buried in a hole dug only by women, because all men went into hiding, avoiding being killed in the Lascierie carnage in 2004.

What I have not seen, what I have not heard in 12 years. These were my worst memories.

My consolation - RAYJON has made a real difference in the people's lives.

Haiti, Cherie, Haiti Thomas - I admire your faith, strength and resiliency, someday you will be fine, We hope.....I hope.....

I like Haiti for this little one year old who died in a pail of water - she was drowned, trying to find some water to quench her thirst.

She was buried last week, Friday, March 11.

I like Haiti - for the strength of those single families, these mothers who provide care all alone for their children. Dads are slaving in the bateys in the DR

I like Haiti for the millions of illiterate adults who were called to vote in a democratic, colonial style election.

I like Haiti for all those thousands, counted, unmarked ballots in the 2006 elections.

I like Haiti for the millions of young people who are trying to forge a future smeared with doubts and violence.



Dieudonne in Haiti, April 2006

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Coming Events

RAYJON SHARE CARE

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*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

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RAYJON's 20th Anniversary Gala Dinner

Saturday, June 10th 6.00pm

at the Sarnia Golf & Curling Club, Christina St., Sarnia

Tickets are \$50 each

available from **Maggy Barnfield 519-337-0337 until May 12th & from Kathy Smith 519-243-2071 from May 13th until June 1st**

Meal choices are: dill salmon, maple pecan chicken, sliced sirloin or roasted vegetable penne. Must be selected at the time of ticket purchase.

Come and help us celebrate 20 amazing years!

Grand raffle with over \$1000 worth of prizes!

RAYJON's new Gift Cards will be available for purchase.

Ceremonial tree planting

Sunday June 11th at 1pm

Canatara Park, next to the Children's Animal Farm

Everyone welcome!

Cancer Association Relay for Life

RAYJON's team of 10 will be walking from

7pm on June 23rd until 7am on June 24th

at Canatara Park in Sarnia.

Come join them, cheer them on or sponsor them!

Contact: Bob Topliffe 519-845-0648

Hope for Haiti's 9th Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday May 27th

at River Valley Golf Club, St. Marys, Ontario

Registration from 1pm - 1.30pm, shotgun start at 2pm

Call 1-800-795-9405 to reserve your ticket.

\$50 per person for 9 holes, cart & steak dinner

Steak dinner only: \$20

RAYJON Eyeglass Workshop

June 27th - 30th 2006

at Lambton Mall, Sarnia

Contact: Joanne Atkinson 519-845-3634

RAYJON's Annual Fall Fair - the best in town!

Saturday September 23rd, 9am - 2pm

at Sacred Heart School gym, Lecaron Ave., Sarnia.

Come & see for yourself why it's the best in town!

*Books, jewelry, preserves, toys, bake table, attic treasures,
3rd world crafts, frozen soups, Men's Den, raffle and
our famous game of chance - Tombola!*

Sausage dogs, pop, water & coffee available.

If you have any items to donate for the Fair,

please contact Dianne McKillican 862-1963 or

Nancy Berry 542-3577

While making your preserves this summer,

Please bottle a few extra for RAYJON!

All proceeds go to our projects in Haiti.

I love you Haiti -

For the bond of solidarity between girls and girls, boys and boys kissing each other on both cheeks, walking hand in hand laced with pure friendship and agape love.

I love your inner simplicity, naiveté! - would say the colonial minds.

I love you Haiti, for the cadenced roads paved with macadam dust, damaging our eyes, our lungs - your environment, your future, our future.

I like your smell, your bouquets of garbage - what about the black plastic bags! They have become very useful as blindfolds, headgear, rice steamers, helping to carry discarded Calvin Klein, Levis goods and St. Vincent de Paul's rags, carpeting the side roads, the bridges, and the beaches.

I love your elders, keepers of Haitian traditions and cultural wealth, the portion which is not yet traded for unreachable globalization.

I understand you, dear Haiti - it seems you are missing it all, but I admire your resiliency - I believe in your potential! Survivor of all times!

Hope RAYJON has made a difference!

**I know RAYJON has made a difference in your people's lives.
RAYJON believes in building up people, in empowering people.
Appropriate education is the key to development!**

Education: A little remote mud shack school with 30 kids has multiplied itself into 3 elementary schools and a high school with professional options - computer classes and other trades.

Education has made a difference in the lives of 600 rural children, even 4 of them have returned to teach in their home communities.

Thirteen years of education - imagine they did not even think of securing three years!

In 10 years, 56 illiterate young women have learned to read and write, passed Grade 9 - and among them we count 16 certified Health Agents who work with RAYJON, 6 who work for the government, 8 Animatrices who work in the communities and 3 trained as School Managers.



The newly rebuilt Pinson school & students

RAYJON is helping other young people to achieve post secondary education - they are in Law School, Computer Sciences and Nursing. Our young people are good in popular education - play writing and acting to express their views, to educate people in democracy to help adults understand politics, the roles of government, leadership skills and their role and participation in the further development of their community.

RAYJON's Leadership Skills program has yielded 3 elected councils in the last rural government [township style] - two men and one woman.

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Youth from St. Patrick's School in performance, April 2006

RAYJON's Income Generating Project has picked up several women from the ground of poverty and raised them to the height of competitive business kites. Three are actually importing goods from Panama and the DR to retail in Haiti - even the kidnapping rampages have left them unthawed. Three women masons are still looking for better days to restart their brick-making business.

The Project counts 5 Village Banks, all managed by RAYJON-trained women. These banks are managed with the strategy of profit-sharing - the profit returns to the community unlike the traditional banking strategy whereby the bank's profits are scattered among the rich.

Grain transformation and community store initiatives - both services are used to enhance the Gilbert Clinic and its Education Project.

Health: RAYJON's Health Care programs have come a long way in reducing childhood deaths. We can safely say that measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, polio and dysentery are diseases of the past in our area. We are still implementing our curative care and the Ministry of Health, at the district level, has just honored us with a certificate of merit for our work in the area. RAYJON was the first organization to introduce health care in the 4th communal section of St. Marc. This is a great achievement in enhancing the quality of life in the general population: with even minimal participation, no one would ever die for want of medical care. Preventative health care is the most important chapter in RAYJON's health program.

Staffing: 70% of RAYJON's personnel are from our area. 100% of RAYJON's local personnel are Haitians. Our staff is continually upgrading their skills in order to implement RAYJON's mission: **Empower the people so that they can be skilled to implement their development proposals and to reduce poverty in their own communities according to their identified needs.**

Twelve years of crisis. Twelve years of hard, constructive community labour. Our team has surely made a difference in facts and in spirit."

Dieudonne Batraville March 15th 2006



RAYJON's corn & millet mill in Lagarenne



Students gather for the official blessing & opening of the first RAYJON tree nursery at St. Patrick's School, April 2006



A proud owner of a tree sapling to be planted at home

Awareness Trip - Haiti March 12 - 21/2006

What an amazing week! What an amazing group! I always say each trip was the best one ever; this is never a reflection on last year's trip participants - it's just that the magic always catches me by surprise. What made this Awareness trip so special? Well to start, Maggy & I were the trip leaders - a never-happened-before but hope-to-repeat venture! The format was different too, as we arrived on a Monday rather than Saturday. American Airlines cancelled our flights with very little notice, so we flew to Miami Sunday March 12th, stayed overnight, and then flew to Port au Prince Monday morning rather than flying direct as usual. Despite a heightened travel alert re: security, we found Haiti to be just Haiti, but did hear from several reliable sources that kidnappings are again on the rise dramatically. Time spent in Port au Prince gave us no cause for alarm - we went everywhere with no trouble. We really noticed the huge numbers of UN people & every 2nd vehicle is a UN one. The presence in Haiti is 9000 strong - & they come from all over the world - Canada & the US of course, but many Chilean, Brazilian & Nepalese troops as well. There is, needless to say, much talk & speculation about their effectiveness.

Since there were only 13 of us, we were able to travel in the two RAYJON vehicles - the new Toyota "van" which seats 10 & the RAYJON Toyota truck. Those of you reading this who have been to Haiti will see this as the blatant advertisement for Toyota products that it's meant to be - what incredible vehicles!

We stayed at the Oloffson Hotel the first night - they have suffered badly from lack of business in the last six months or so when kidnappings in Port au Prince were on the rise, but Richard Morse, the manager, told us business was picking up now that the elections are over.

The time spent in the Project area was an eye opener in so many ways for the new trip participants - and every visit shows Maggy & I what new initiatives have been accomplished since our last visits. We visited the school & Dispensary in Bertrand - this community has pulled together very well after several years of discord there. Attendance at school was high & the teachers & students were very welcoming. We walked to Pinson & back in one day - that walk is long, steep, arduous & incredibly beautiful, but it doesn't get any easier over time. Could be my age talking here... We saw the two new cement block school buildings here & were warmly welcomed, as always, by the teachers & students. Dieudonne said building this new school was her biggest & most difficult endeavour yet - Pinson is SO remote that even getting all the cement up there was an incredible challenge.

This trip was special also because Ray Wyrzykowski's daughter, Marg Irwin & granddaughter, Angela, were on the trip. Dieudonne went out of her way to make them feel special many times during the week. A celebration & special Mass was held at St. Patrick's High school on St. Patrick's Day. All the students were there and many parents & other adults from the community joined us for the event. This school holds a special place in Dieudonne's heart - & our hearts too. Most of the students started out in the first Rayjon school in Pinson way back in 1993. They are so eager, so motivated & pretty pleased with themselves - as they should be! The 2 priests from St. Marc said Mass, Marg & Angela Irwin were given a place of honour - oh, it was a grand affair. Everyone was served a meal of rice & beans, chicken, vegetables & three huge, special cakes that were made especially for the occasion. Afterwards, Marg & Angela planted the very first tree on the school grounds, honouring their father's/grandfather's initiative so many years ago. This was the FIRST tree to be planted from the new nursery Dieudonne started in this area - there were hundreds of tree seedlings on the school grounds waiting for the April group to help with initial planting

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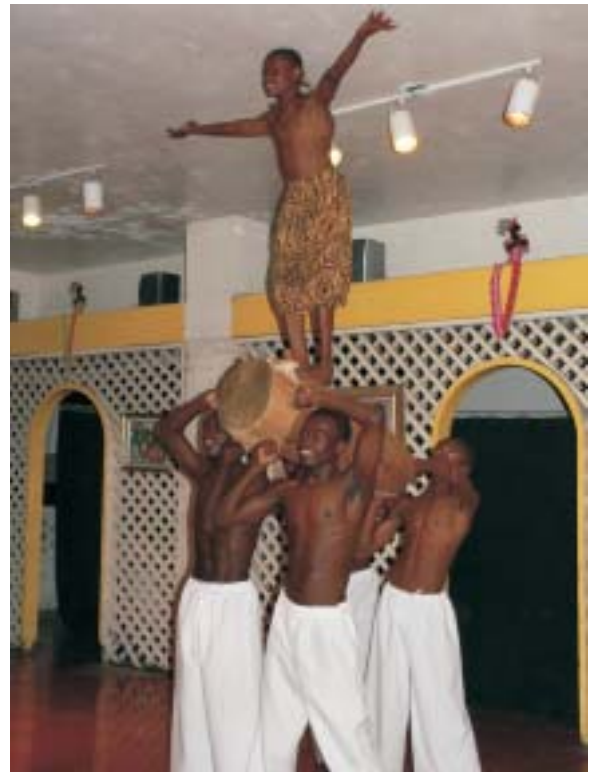
*Marg Irwin planting the first RAYJON tree
in memory of her father, Ray*

. At this point, we changed out of our finery to take the first ride on the new RAYJON road to Gilbert. The initial plan was for us to walk this route - most of us are still grateful that we didn't. You could make an all-terrain vehicle commercial there & some people would still think that you'd used computer tricks to exaggerate the steepness & general toughness of the area. At the start of this road, there is a small bridge - this Dieudonne plans to call the "Charles Verna" bridge, after the man who was so supportive of the RAYJON Project in the early days - she said she may even call the new road by the same name. We hated to leave the area & go back to Port au Prince, but there was more to come still.

The last 2 nights in Port au Prince we stayed at St Joseph's Home for Boys, which was a big hit with the whole group. We saw a dance presentation put on by the boys - their "Resurrection Dance Troupe" - that was amazing. World class. Goose bumps & applause all 'round!!

I've told you a bit of what we did & a bit of what we felt - what I can't do is recreate the magic - that takes Haiti & the Haitian people. If you haven't been with us on a trip - think about it as a possibility, maybe worry, everyone seems to anyway - then come & experience it all for your own selves. Then you'll understand why we say "magic."

Dianne McKillican



St. Joseph's Resurrection Dance Troupe in action

Angela Irwin's Impressions of Haiti

Grand-daughter of co-founder, Ray Wyrzykowski

Our trip to Haiti was the most enlightening experience I've ever had. I first heard of RAYJON when I was very young, and I was told about how my Grandpa was the co-founder. I was immediately interested. I have been doing projects on RAYJON for various classes for as long as I can remember. When my english teacher told our class in October about the trip to Haiti that was approaching, I knew it was finally time for me to go. As soon as we arrived I felt as though I was there to find a part of myself that had been difficult to understand. I went there to see the work that is being done thanks, in part, to a wonderful man that I had never had a chance to get to know. Now I feel as though I can understand him more, and in turn I have learned so much more about myself. I was able to see what he saw in the people of Haiti; in their persistence and their hope in what seems like a completely hopeless situation. Seeing what RAYJON has done and continues to do gives me hope for the people of Haiti and the country they love.

Condolences to the family of Carol Ann Joleun. Carol Ann died in February 2006. She was an avid sewer for the Urban Development Project in Cap Haitien.

Condolences to Trudy Kennedy & Lee Michaels on the death of Trudy's mother, Dorothy Hotsin.

Congratulations to Tamara Eyre on being named in the Mayors Honour list 2006. Tamara attends SCITS school in Sarnia and was a participant in the RAYJON Awareness trip to the Dominican Republic this year.

Congratulations to Allan Barnfield & Yvette Scrivener on the birth on February 21st of their daughter, Jae Briar, a sister for Lainey and a second grandchild for John & Maggy Barnfield.



Baby Jae & big sister, Lainey

RAYJON Saved My Sanity!

20th Anniversary Trip to Haiti – April 2006

I was recently widowed and to start the healing process I needed a positive, productive outlet for my time. I also needed to be mentally stimulated..

I had heard of RAYJON from a friend and wanted to know more about it. I spoke to Dr. Glen Maddison, not only because he had lovingly looked after my husband, but I discovered that he was the medical advisor for RAYJON. I wanted to know if there was a place for me. Could I be of any value? The answer of course was 'yes'. I went to several meetings and was soon caught up in many worthwhile activities.

My recent 20th anniversary trip to Haiti was to help celebrate all the wonderful work done by RAYJON and also to plant trees. Our first place to visit and stay was St. Joseph's Home for boys. Michael Geilenfield takes in street boys and provides them with a home, food, clothing, schooling and most importantly, a family. That first evening we were honoured by being entertained by the boys own Resurrection Dance Theatre. What enthusiasm, energy and skill, all accompanied by drums.

Our main focus this trip was tree planting in the Project area. We began with a very moving ceremony; blessing the tree nursery and trees, honouring Dieudonne, John & Maggy Barnfield and Kathy Smith who had co-ordinated all prior to our arrival. We then loaded our truck with seedlings and proceeded to plant trees in the Bertrand school yard as well as hand out trees to pre-selected residents who had been instructed on how to plant and care for their trees.

We visited many schools, clinics, pharmacies, hospitals and an orphanage. It was very humbling. Wherever we went, the people were friendly, spotlessly clean and although very poor, appeared to be happy and shared what they had. Nothing can ever prepare you for the poverty, the smell of the outdoor market or the beauty of the people and their land.

Would I go back? In a flash, as long as I could take the extra 50lb. bag of precious cargo.

I want to thank Dr. Glen Maddison, Maggy & John Barnfield, Kathy, Sue, Joanna, Debbie, David and Peter for the experience of a lifetime.

With humility.

Clara Blake – a first time trip participant.



A sign for guests at St. Joseph's Boys Home



Clara planting a tree in Gilbert

Student Nurse's Trip to the Dominican Republic

It was a trip like no other for six Lambton College practical nursing students, one BScN student from the University of Windsor and a diploma student from St. Clair College in Port Huron. They were accompanied by health care professionals and people from our community.

We set up our mobile clinics in the Batey's (sugar plantations). In addition to the usual complaints of colds/flu, sore stomachs, eye discomfort and musculoskeletal aches, we were amazed to see the communities infested with rabies, due to the lack of clean water. Although we attempted to teach the people to wash with soap and water, we knew this was a no win situation since the whole community needed to be treated, and without clean water they would be re-infected again. Burns in young children was also a huge concern. Although we were prepared with the appropriate creams and bandages, our hearts went out to these children. It was difficult to accept the fact that these children had not received medical care until we saw them. Some of the accidents could have been prevented with proper safety education.

But there were highlights to the week. Music was our gift to everyone we met. Cathy and Jacquie had brought their guitars with them, and our limited Spanish songs brought smiles to everyone. Treasured moments include seeing malnourished children start to smile and play, doing a craft with the girls at the orphanage and hugging the people at the old age home and Leprosarium.

Comments from the students include:

“The beginning of a lifelong journey.”

“I had the feelings of helpfulness and hopelessness in the same day.”

“The experience was eye opening. I can now say that I have seen poverty first hand. The people welcomed us into their lives with such warmth and caring.”

“I have become a different person because of this trip. I have grown in many ways I never knew possible.”

Marilyn Couture – Nursing Professor & Leader of the Nurses' Trips.

Visit to Cap Haitien, Haiti - April 2006

Recently, I had the pleasure of travelling to Cap Haitien to help at Sr. Rosemary's Urban Development nutrition centre. Having no idea of what to expect, I was pleasantly surprised both in the country itself and in the centre. Once you get past the poverty of the country, you see the beauty - green vegetation, mountains and the pride that Haitians have in their country. I learned that the purpose of Sr. Rosemary's centre was to help educate the women of Cap Haitien in handling what little money they have and to provide nourishment to mothers and their children. Mary Rose, one of the centre's staff members, helps the women purchase small personal hygiene products from the centre to re-sell at the market. If the women have a little extra money they can 'bank' it towards their children's education.

The nutrition education that the women receive is also very important. The children are weighed either weekly or monthly according to their degree of malnourishment which is determined by the nurse, Quenia. Accurate records are kept of any illness they have or have had, and some are sent by Quenia to the hospital for lab work. The children are given vitamins and/or antibiotics if needed. For most, this is the only medical service they receive. Sr. Rosemary usually covers any charges incurred at the hospital. No matter what the cost, Sr. Rosemary is there for 'her women and children'.

The centre also has a nutrition department. Every morning approximately 50 women & children arrive. Each child receives a hard boiled egg, a vitamin & a glass of milk. At noon, these same children receive either a bowl of noodles or rice & beans. For most, this will be the only food they eat all day.

A new division of the centre is the 'sewing circle'. Sr. Rosemary has 3 women who come to the centre each day to teach the women some basic sewing. The women are then able to make small items to sell at the market.

During the 9 days I spent at the centre, I saw the passion Sr. Rosemary has for these women & children and also the love they have for her. I believe that this centre is much needed in Cap Haitien, the only one of its kind that helps women with financial & nutritional needs and children with food. I hope to be able to return sometime in 2007.

Sandra Cormier - first time participant in a RAYJON trip.