



Share Care RAYJON

Congratulations to the first grade 12 students of St. Patrick’s School in Barbe, Haiti.

St. Patrick’s secondary school evolved from RAYJON’s Elementary School in Pinson. Those first students from Pinson who passed the grade 6 National examination, were eligible for high school. As there was no such school in the mountains, the students enrolled in high schools in St. Marc. But the move to a city school from a rural school in the mountains was too traumatic for the students and many dropped out. The people of the community saw the need, and under Dieudonne’s guidance, RAYJON’s women masons completed the building of St. Patrick’s high school in 2002. The school is providing an exceptional level of education and is now used as a model for schools in the city.



St. Patrick’s High School in Barbe

The following students have overcome many obstacles and have achieved what seemed, 7 years ago, the impossible; they will write the Grade 13 examination in July. Please pray for their success so that they can fulfill their dreams of a better world for themselves, for their communities and for rural Haiti.



Erline Alexis

“Being a nurse is my dream, I feel the profession emerging in me as a vocation to help ease the sufferings of the people of my community.”

“Rosa sat so that Martin could walk. Martin walked so that Barack could run. Barack ran so that all our children can fly”
Kiara Day



Weldo Laurent

“The heaviness of the responsibilities at home does not get the better of me, us. I love school, this is the best place I have been all my life.”

Weldo Laurent



Ezechiel Pierre

“I am the man of the house. My responsibilities are many; I have to take care of the garden, the animals. Early mornings all have to be done so I will have time for school.”

Ezechiel Pierre

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RAYJON SHARE CARE

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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

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Coming Events

Hope for Haiti Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday May 30th
At the River Valley Golf Course, St. Mary's, Ont.
See page 8 for more details.

“Arts & Crafts 2000”

Annual craft fair at Corunna's Athletic Park
Sunday, May 31st from 9am – 5pm
Admission \$2
Over 140 vendors from across Ontario.
Well worth a visit!!
Look out for the RAYJON booth!!!

Annual RAYJON Barbecue

Friday, June 19th at 6pm
at Dave Woods & Linda McDonald's house,
932 Lakeshore Road.
Park on Westwood (opposite Lake Road School)
and go through the gate at the end of the cul-de-sac.
Bring a salad or dessert to share, lawn chairs & your own drinks.
(Sausages & buns provided)
EVERYONE WELCOME
New trip participants especially welcome!

RAYJON mini Retreat

Saturday, June 2nd 9 - 12 noon
at Sacred Heart Church meeting room.
Theme: *Funding & Fundraising*
Any member wishing to attend,
please call Peter Westfall at 519-344-1155

RAYJON Eyeglass Workshop

June 22nd – 25th
at Bayside Mall, Sarnia
For more information or to volunteer call
Joanne Atkinson 519-845-3634 or
Den Shannon 519-542-7270

Mark your calendars!

RAYJON Annual Fall Fair

Saturday, September 19th 9am – 2pm
at Sacred Heart School gym, Lecaron Avenue, Sarnia.
If you're preserving fruits or vegetables over the summer,
please consider making a few extra to donate to the Fair.
Dianne McKillican 519-862-1963 or Nancy Berry 518-542-3577

Valery Duverger

"My father died. My mother died too. My 3 brothers are gone to the D.R.. I have not heard from them. I prefer to believe that they are alive slaving in the bateys. My sister has become my mother. She said my only chance is education."



Valery Duverger

Audé Saintoine

Mother: dead. Father: dead. Grandmother: dead. I still have to bury my little sister who passed away during the Hurricane Hanna. Should I die too? Not yet! I have to stay alive as I have to go to University to become an Agronomist and save lives through better farming skills."



Audé Saintoine

Winsor Joseph

"Thank you to all who have helped me come so far in education. I am proud to be counted among the academically educated in my family. I am the first in my community. I am the 5th in 3 generations. I am the only one to achieve grade 13."



Winsor Joseph

Innocent Louis

"I am thinking of going to University. How would I reach this mountain of knowledge? I have this voice convincing me, telling me what a great medical doctor I will be."



Innocent Louis

Mario Silencieux

My father is a subsistence farmer. My mother is simply earning enough to feed us meat on Sundays. How can they push me further? But I believe I believe that dreams can become reality."



Mario Silencieux

Esnol Michel

"I would like to be a Civil Engineer, specializing in rural engineering. I can come back to my community to implant electricity, good water systems, constructing good school buildings, helping in implementing good irrigation projects to revive our ecology. Solar energy will be my field."



Esnol Michel

Impressions of Haiti

from participants in the 2009 Awareness Trip in March

"I have wanted to go on this trip since I was a young girl sitting on the carpeted floor of the Sacred Heart School library. Needless to say, as a lifelong goal, this trip had a lot to live up to. I think it was a good thing that it took so many years before I was able to make it. The experience of this week was more than I could have hoped for. It has confirmed my desire to get involved and volunteer abroad; to look beyond my comfortable existence here in Canada and leave a mark on the world." *Julie Burr, teacher*

"I have been incredibly fortunate to have travelled all over Europe and North America. I have seen the high life of the French Coast, and now I can say I have seen the other end of the spectrum. I can honestly say that I preferred the poverty of Haiti to the wealth of Monte Carlo. It was amazing! I went expecting to have a depressing week, watching the desperately poor struggle to live. It wasn't like that at all. After a few days, I didn't even see the poverty, I saw the people; the people whose energy was an inspiration, the people whose struggle to survive was more of a passion for living. I've realized that poverty can be based on perspective. We see these people as desperately poor – and they are – but it's almost as if no one has told them. Even through hard times, I rarely saw anyone without a smile." *Brendan Wiley*

"Haiti and the people of Haiti really touched my life in a great way." *Denise Aldrich*

"The experience exceeded my highest expectations. I initially had a great deal of anxiety. I was nervous that I would find the streets to be emotional, and I had feelings of insecurity concerning my safety. This was not the case at all. I developed an appreciation for the people, their way of life, their faith and all of the development projects that we visited, observed or heard about." *Unsigned*

"The experience was life changing. My third eye is opened." *Unsigned*

Building a Better Haitian Society

The Urban Community Program (UCP), the RAYJON project in Cap Haitien, has recently been taking many positive steps and making continuous improvement. We believe that it's very important to report, to our donors, about the progress that is being made, as a result of their support. Therefore, we asked some of the Haitian clients to tell us, in a sentence or two, about their experiences with the project. We were impressed with their responses and would like to share some of them with you.

Sister Marie Josette: “My name is Sister Marie-Josette-Etienne. I am a Sister with the Haitian congregation of The Daughters of Mary, in charge for the last four years, at the request of the Sisters’ of St. Joseph in Toronto and RAYJON Share Care Canada, of the Sacred Heart Center. It is located at 12th and 13th Street, G83, in Cap Haitien. I am pleased to speak briefly of my work experience in the context of my mission and in particular of the following objectives:

- Reveal the love of God to all his creation and especially for the needy, the destitute and the most vulnerable.
- Help Haitian women to wage a valiant life-struggle, teach them to search out a little everywhere that which they need support their family and meeting their needs.
- Make the families stronger, more stable, and healthier in order to build a better Haitian society.

I am always proud to be with the poor of the country to help them become more self-reliant and freer. It is essential for me to do all I can to fulfill my mission for it is at the heart of my Vocation. The Constitution of my Congregation states “to the one He calls, God says, “go”, and He sends the person”. I have been sent to my brothers and sisters in great need to the Sacred Heart Center where I work from 8am to 4pm and sometimes to 5pm depending on the requirement. The work is diverse and occupies me fully; there is the Production Work Center, the women in the Micro-Credit Program and the Women's Commerce Program. The young people, under the responsibility of the Center, who are attending College at various locations in the city, must come to eat and study at the Center after their classes. Equally, I must also follow closely the malnourished children; that is the children from 8 months to 59 months who come to the center each day. I visit the poor from the Center who are interned at Justinien Hospital to whom I must take medications. I go to the Garden Cooperative at Terrier-Rouge. I go for X-rays at Carrefour-Moustique when the doctor requires them. At the same time the personnel must be managed. Also I must keep up good relations with the supporters from abroad and receive them from time to time at the Center as visitors or as workers.

Therefore, the activities are well diversified and require quite a lot of gymnastics. Following the example of Jesus who had a love particularly for the poor, I want to accomplish this task with all my heart and an unconditional love. This wonderful service demands a good organization and much composure. I would benefit from being more patient and having greater control of myself when facing distressing situations. I do not have a lot of time and I thank God with all my heart for the service that I can render while I am still young.”

Jesula Entassement:”My name is Jesula Entassement, 35 years old and mother of 3 children, two boys and a girl, I have been a member and beneficiary of Sacred Heart for one and a half years. I have participated in the nutrition program. My little girl who suffered from second-degree mal-nutrition was very ill. Thanks to the support of this center, today I am proud of my little girl who is now in good health because of this program and the training on cleanliness and on taking responsibility for the family.”



Elina Joseph: “My name is Elina Joseph, 54 years old, mother of 6 children. I have been a member and beneficiary of the Sacred Heart Center since September 1998 (11 years) and since one year and six months been part of the Micro- Credit program. Today I am proud to tell of my progress. It is thanks to this program, and the training on the management of assets, money and goods taught by the instructors and their support personnel, that I continue to pay for the education of my older sons at Port au Prince University. Also I have a small plot of land at Limonade where I have my own garden. I have a small steer and a sum of 12,500 gdes (\$300). I had started with 5000gdes (\$125)”



Elvire: “My name is Elvire, 31 years old mother of 2 children. I have been a member of the Sacred Heart Center for six years and for six years have been active in the commerce program. Today I am proud to speak of my progress as a result of the program and the training on the management of assets, money and goods received from the Center's personnel. I started with 100 gdes (\$2) and now I have a large-scale commerce, which I value for a total of 15000 gdes (\$375). I have a small plot of land where I have built my own little house. I am now able to take care of my two sons; able to feed them better than ever so that they will never again fall back into the condition they were in before”



“May God in His goodness bless you and all the members of RAYJON, especially those who come to visit us. These visits are heart warming and increase our self respect.”

My name is Andrea Weerdenburg. I went on a RAYJON Awareness Trip to Haiti in 2005 and I had such an amazing experience it inspired me to become more involved with international social justice issues. I studied International Development at the University of Guelph for four years, including a semester in India. I am so happy to be with RAYJON this summer to be working on some great initiatives and to be back with the organization that started me on my path with development work!

If anyone would like to contact me, my address is aweerden@uoguelph.ca

Opportunity of a Lifetime

In February 2008, I had an opportunity of a lifetime. As post-graduate students of international development in Toronto, three of us were presented with the possibility of flying to Haiti and collecting up-to-date data (for the Urban Community Project in Cap Haitien) on behalf of RAYJON Sharecare - a charitable organization based in Sarnia, Ontario. The new data would be incorporated into a funding proposal submitted by the organization to further support their local project initiatives. Confident that our time in the country would strengthen the quality of the proposal, which, in turn, would increase the chances of it getting funded by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), three of us students and one RAYJON Sharecare volunteer boarded a plane to head off to a country less traveled and leave a frost-bitten Canada behind.

Before arriving, I envisioned a destitute land – tired, dry, and covered with harsh signs of poverty at every turn, such as homelessness, starvation, disease, and a complete lack of infrastructure or development strategy to combat many of these social ills. In my most private moments, I was mentally preparing to encounter child poverty so severe that it could haunt me for years to come. What I actually saw, however, could not have been further from that.

As I stepped off the plane, intense heat enveloped my body. Piling into the back of a rusty pick-up truck and driving along the main roads of Cap Haitien on the way to our hotel gave us our first impressions of Haiti. The streets were bustling – boys playing soccer, girls giggling side-by-side, and women washing clothes outside their homes. Although people looked poor, they did not look unhappy. Strangely enough, had I not spent more time there, I would have thought that Canadians and Haitians were not all that different from one another.

However, under the surface, grave differences exist – rooted in the cross-cutting themes of historical dictatorship, political instability, and economic decline – severely marginalizing people’s potential. A lack of government initiative to stimulate the local economy has, in fact, created a legacy of dependence on overseas assistance. For instance, the government prefers to import produce from the United States instead of employing local Haitians to farm their own land. This not only denies Haitians much-needed employment, but also, arguably, dampens the morale of the entire country by not having locals be able to take pride in their own country’s products and initiatives.

In other underdeveloped countries that I’ve visited, local people often create their own micro-enterprise as a way to earn money if they cannot find employment, such as selling beaded necklaces or woven scarves in tourist markets. Haitians, however, lack even this as a sustainable option, since so few tourists come to visit.

Haiti is a country of faith, with the majority believing in Catholicism. As welcomed visitors, we were invited to attend mass one Sunday morning by some local people that we had befriended. Never before had I seen faith on such grand a scale – the church walls could contain only a small portion of the people who had shown up; the rest were standing outside the doors under the scorching sun, listening closely to the sermon. Looking around, it seemed as if many youth were standing next to grandparents, and not parents. Finding this slightly odd, I later inquired as to why. I was informed that this phenomenon could be due to HIV/AIDS, a disease that’s been wiping out the income-earning generation and uniting children and grandparents and children and neighbors, at an alarming rate. How inspiring to witness the power of a shared sense of hope in the face of brutal adversity.

Haiti has the potential to be turned into a place more livable for the next generation. Although charitable hand-outs are helpful, they are really only a band-aid solution to more deeply-rooted problems. The country would benefit enormously from financial investment in local projects, not only to improve the social status of the country, but also to create jobs and ultimately greater future opportunity. Although my objective in Haiti was to collect data, the most valuable thing I acquired was the privilege of meeting spirited locals who carry the power of hope for a better life for their children in their hearts.

Taryn Tate

We must build a new world, a far better one one in which the eternal dignity of man is respected.”
Harry S. Truman

Faithful Servant

Sr. Margaret Connolly, sister of Hildy Wyrzykowski and RAYJON member, has received the highest honour from St. Mark's Theological College in Vancouver, the degree of Doctor of Sacred Letters, *honoris causa*. The St. Mark's honorary doctorate is awarded to men and women who exemplify the values the College strives to embrace and promote within its own students and the broader community. The St. Mark's College Senate recognizes the many decades of faithful servant leadership Sr. Margaret and the Religious of the Sacred Heart have provided to the Church and society in B.C. The presentation was made at the College's Convocation on Sunday, April 26th.

Congratulations Sr. Margaret! We're proud to have you in the RAYJON family!

Congratulations to Debra McGill on the birth of her first grandchild on March 9th, Cian James, son of Jamie and her husband Lee.



Sr. Margaret Connolly

Dieudonne's Visit to Sarnia

Dieudonne, RAYJON's Project Director in St. Marc, Haiti, visited Sarnia at the end of January for her usual winter trip to our community. As always, it was a very busy but rewarding time. In addition to receiving progress on the two Rural Community Development Projects, she took the opportunity to speak at two churches to thank them for their generous Hurricane Relief support. She also addressed the Rotary Club of Sarnia and met with Sarnia-Lambton M.P. Pat Davidson and Mayor Mike Bradley.



Dieudonne with Pat Davidson



Dieudonne with Mike Bradley

“Leadership is a verb, not a noun. Leadership is action, not a position. Leadership is defined by what we do, not the role we are in”
Jim Clemmer

Hope for Haiti Golf Tournament

RAYJON's Hope for Haiti group in St. Mary's, is holding their annual golf tournament on May 30th at River Valley Golf Course on HWY # 7. The cost is \$50 per person for 9 holes, a steak dinner and prizes. Registration will take place by team (4 golfers on a team) beginning at 1pm and a 'shot gun start' begins at 2pm. There will be the added fun with a 'putting & chipping' contest and a live auction.

Contact Val or Sarah at 519-225-2329 to register your team.

RAYJON Gift Card

A RAYJON gift card solves the problem of what to buy for that important occasion, or for that person who has everything. They are suitable for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, graduations, 'thank-yous', teacher gifts and 'just because'!

Buying a gift card enables you to select from 9 projects, where you'd like your money to be directed, enabling progress to continue in the RAYJON projects in Haiti, the D.R. and the Eyeglass Program. **You can also help support the post-secondary education of one of the very first grade 13 graduates from RAYJON's St. Patrick's school in Barbe, Haiti.** The hopes and dreams of these 9 young people include helping to create a better life for their own people. Just specify this option when you purchase your card.

Call or e-mail: Sue Ashton at 519-845-3772, leaffansue@slicc.net Joanna Giresi at Sacred Heart Church 519-344-2992

Haitian Vanilla

RAYJON has Haitian vanilla for sale all year round. The cost is \$3 for a 3oz bottle and \$6 for a 6oz bottle. *Compare the prices to those in the grocery stores!* Those who have used it come back for more! If you would like to try it or to restock your supply, call Brenda Hogan at 519-344-3755

The Importance of Receiving

Receiving often is harder than giving. Giving is very important: giving insight, giving hope, giving courage, giving advice, giving support, giving money, and, most of all, giving ourselves. Without giving there is no brotherhood or sisterhood,

But receiving is just as important, because by receiving we reveal to the givers that they have gifts to offer. When we say, 'Thank you, you gave me hope, thank you, you gave me a reason to live, thank you, you allowed me to realize my dream,' we make givers aware of their unique and precious gifts. Sometimes it is only in the eyes of the receivers that givers discover their gifts.

Safe Returns

Participants in all the recent RAYJON trips have returned to Canada safe and well, having experienced trips of a lifetime! If you would like to experience a RAYJON Awareness Trip in 2010, watch for details of the information meeting held at the end of September/ beginning of October.

"That which we witness we are forever changed by, and once witnessed we can never go back to the way we were." Angeles Arrien

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE – By Lynn Johnston

