



# SHARE CARE RAYJON

## Br. Gilles - 50 Years of Service

*by Ross & Frances Morin - Br. Gilles' brother & sister-in-law*

Fifty years ... 1953 - 2003. You wonder where they go and what you have accomplished. Well, if you are Br. Gilles Morin you have accomplished more than many of us will ever hope to achieve in our lifetime, and at that, nothing of what he has done has been for his own glory.

Br. Gilles left for Haiti at the age of 19. At that time he had agreed to try it for 5 years, teaching at the secondary level at one of the 26 State schools run by his order, the Brothers of Christian Instruction. Over the years he probably taught in most of the schools at one time or another. From Cap Haitien, St. Marc, Port au Prince, Jacmel, Lavelee, Jeremie, Les Cayes, etc., he was there. He moved around throughout the Island and left his mark in each place as he touched the lives of the many people whom he served.

Every 5 years he was expected to come to Canada for a visit and to decide whether he would like to return to Haiti. He had fallen in love with the island of Haiti and its people, therefore it was only fitting for him to return. Haiti became his home and his life.

While visiting here in Canada, many friends and relatives would give him gifts of money, but in his early years as a Brother, the money had to be turned over to the order. Finally, one year they had a change in directives, and the Brothers were allowed to use the money they received as they saw fit. It was then, that Br. Gilles went out and bought typewriters and sewing machines and started teaching classes in the evenings, on Saturdays and holidays. He taught typing and he hired a woman to teach sewing. He also started up youth groups to get the youth involved with helping in their community.

He once came across an empty building that had been built by OXFAM, that was not being used. He got permission to turn it into a home for the aged and handicapped. He obtained several cots and provided them with a decent meal and a comfortable place to sleep in their dying days.

All of Br. Gilles extra missionary work was done after his day of teaching, on weekends and holidays. It left him very little time for himself, but anyone who knows him is aware that he doesn't take time to relax as he is always thinking of what must be done next.

In 1988, Br. Gilles heard of a school in Musac that was partially built by the World Bank. The school was never completed because they could not find anyone to be the director as there was no hydro or water in the area. He asked for permission from his supervisors to go and operate the school. Upon receiving their approval, he quickly gathered people together from that area to prepare for opening that October. A short distance away, in Lauture, there was another school that was unfinished. Once again he gathered people to help him complete it, only this school also required roads to be cleared to make it possible.

Over the years we have been raising money for Br. Gilles' missionary projects and with the generous help of people in the Sarnia, Windsor, Chatham, London and St. Mary's area, he has been able to expand on his many projects. In 1989, a group of 12 members of RAYJON, ourselves included, traveled to Musac to volunteer our time to work in the area. During that visit we were able to build 5 cisterns and eaves troughs to catch the rainwater in order to provide a water supply. The rabbit population, which was growing rapidly, was in need of housing, so we built rabbit hutches for them. Our group also built shelves in the cook's storage room and kitchen. As well, we were able to provide a cement floor for a family in their small hut. Each of the 12 people in our group brought 2 large suitcases full of tools, medical, first aid, hygiene and school supplies.

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## RAYJON SHARE CARE

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An ecumenical Canadian Charity  
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



### Membership Meeting & Christmas Party

Friday, November 28th at 7:30 p.m.

At Sacred Heart Church meeting room, Lecaron Ave., Sarnia  
Elizabeth Soltis will speak about her experiences  
this summer in Africa.

Reports on Eyeglass Clinic in Ecuador,  
Habitat work group to Nicaragua,  
small group to Cap Haitien & monitoring trip to Community  
Development Project in St. Marc, Haiti.

Christmas fun & food!

Bring family & friends to enjoy festive hospitality!

**Everyone welcome!**



### Trips

#### Awareness trip to Haiti

January 24th - 31st, 2004

Leaders: Dianne McKillican (519) 862-1963

& Gary Beauchesne

#### Awareness trip to Haiti

March 6th - 13th, 2004

Leaders: John & Maggy Barnfield (519) 337-0338

#### Awareness trip to the Dominican Republic

March 6th - 13th, 2004

Leaders: Amy Miles (810) 987-5819

& Theresa VanKoeverden (519) 339-9094

#### Nurses' & Student Nurses' trips to the Dominican Republic

From Lambton College, Sarnia February 28th - March 6th, 2004

Leader: Marilyn Couture (519) 344-3809

From Georgian College, Barrie, Ontario (date to be finalized).

Leader: Sylvia VanderWeg

#### Eyeglass Clinic in Haiti

April

Leader: Joanne Atkinson (519) 845-3634



*Continued from, page 1*

Since that time, there have been quite a number of RAYJON groups that have gone to Lauture to assist Br. Gilles. It is a very exciting time for him because they accomplish so much in such a short time. Without the help of these generous donors, the people in Br. Gilles' area would not have as much as they do today.

2003 marked Br. Gilles' 50th year in Haiti. Although he doesn't like attention on himself, we felt he deserved to be celebrated for his love, dedication and service to the people of Haiti. He was very happy to have had the opportunity to meet so many people this summer at the 50th Anniversary open house in his honour. He is always grateful to have so many friends and supporters from this area. Br. Gilles would like to extend his heartfelt thanks, for your many donations, prayers and best wishes. He sincerely appreciates all your kindness and support, whether it be financial, physical or spiritual. Br. Gilles always says, "you are all truly missionaries", because without you, he would be unable to provide so much for so many

## **Reflections on Br. Gilles**

I first met Br. Gilles in 1987 when he was teaching at the Brothers' School in St. Marc and zipping around the town on his moped! He was eager to meet and welcome "friends" from Canada to his Haiti. He took great pride in taking us to see his latest "spare time" project - a home for the elderly and handicapped in a disused OXFAM building on the waterfront in St. Marc. Walking through the gates was like walking into an oasis in the chaotic busyness of the town. Some lay on pallets in the shade of the trees, others tended them gently, but all had a smile and an extended hand for Br. Gilles who had rescued them from living and dying on the streets. Thank you Br. Gilles for your example of how life should be lived - caring for others!

*Maggy Barnfield*

While visiting Br. Gilles' school in January 1997, I had the privilege of getting to know many of his students. The most memorable occasions were when Br. Gilles broke all the rules and allowed the students to return to the school-yard to play some seriously intense soccer. Amazingly, they allowed me, a girl, to play! Barefoot and on a gravel surface they played, displaying unparalleled levels of skill and pain tolerance. Thank you Br. Gilles for making soccer one of the many vehicles that reminded me that we have much more to learn than we have to give.

*Colleen Rapaich*

I met Br. Gilles on my first trip to Haiti with RAYJON in 1998 and a few times on his visits to Canada. I have met few people in my life that have dedicated themselves so completely to their chosen profession as Br. Gilles. Some 50 years ago Br. Gilles followed God's call and went to Haiti. Even at his age of well over retirement he has chosen to stay there with his people and wants to be buried there. Life has not been easy for him. He is living a very simple and sacrificial life with few of the luxuries we enjoy. He reminds me of Jesus who walked on this earth for a short time and showed us how to live and how to die. This world needs more people like Br. Gilles.

*Urias Weber, St. Jacob's, Ontario*

Br. Gilles is a true example of a person in service, always looking for the next opportunity to help in some small way. Whether ensuring that all his guests have everything they desire, assisting the students of the Lauture school or helping someone in the greater community. Finding a way of providing and sharing resources is what Br. Gilles is all about.

*Jim Leliveld, RAYJON Director of work groups.*

In my two visits to Lauture in Haiti I have had the privilege of acting as French/English translator for many of the work situations that our groups have tackled. Hence, I have spent much time one-on-one with Br. Gilles. He truly is an amazing man. To have devoted the past 50 years of his life to the Haitian people is such a tribute to his love of the poor. He identifies totally with their situation and is a continual source of encouragement to the people despite the obstacles in their path. He maintains always a sense of humour despite the most frustrating and discouraging situations that occur. Br. Gilles is a true servant of the Lord totally given in service to the people he long ago was called to serve. May he be richly blessed for his efforts on hearing the cry of the poor for so many years. May the faith, hope and love that reside in his heart be infectious to us in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

*Joanne Chandler-Hughes*

**NOVEMBER 2003**

## Highlights of Chairperson's Report - July 2002 - June 2003

by John Barnfield, Chairperson

Approximately 140 people participated in the 9 various *Trips* conducted during the year: 3 *Awareness Trips*, 2 *Work Groups*, 2 *Nursing Trips* and 2 *Eyeglass Clinics*. Countries visited included Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Peru and Honduras. All were conducted safely and successfully. Well over 1600 people have now experienced first hand the richness of the Developing World and, through their stories, have educated many thousands of people about life in countries like Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

In June, 2003, the *Integrated Community Development Project* in Haiti completed its first three-year plan in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). We continued to educate about 400 children per year in two primary schools. The new St. Patrick's secondary school (for grades 7,8,9) has a capacity of 100 children and should be up to full capacity within the next year. The adult literacy program has graduated over 700 women and about 100 women per year are pursuing further training in such areas as masonry, health agents, literacy trainers, mechanics and seamstresses.

With the help of a new micro-credit program, women are being encouraged to open businesses, e.g. small restaurants, a women's masonry cooperative and a project for milling grain.

The two health clinics continue to see about 10,000 patients per year and each has a licensed physician visiting the clinics twice per week. The vaccination programs have been very successful. No cases of measles or other diseases vaccinated against have been reported. A proposal to CIDA for a new three-year plan (2003-2006) was recently approved.

The *Urban Development Program* continued to support the feeding of undernourished young children in Cap-Haitien, Haiti and assisted their mothers to earn additional money for the family. Sister Rosemary continued to oversee the program. Here in Sarnia, a large volunteer group was involved in the collection, sorting, cleaning and shipping of goods to Cap-Haitien.

*Support Functions:* None of the above activities could be carried out without strong support from the following:

### *Fund Raising:*

Major activities this year included: Fall Fair (September 2002), Starvathon (November 2002), Empty Bowls Project and Talent Auction (April 2003).

*PR/Education:* Our newsletter circulation continues to grow and currently stands at over 700. Rayjon has also continued to enjoy excellent coverage in the local press throughout the year and this has contributed significantly to promoting RAYJON's image in the community. Membership meetings were held throughout the year with some excellent guest speakers and presentations by trip participants. RAYJON's web site has been revamped and updated. The "Educational Activities Resource on the Developing World" manual, sponsored by RAYJON, was completed, with copies sent to every secondary school in Lambton and Kent county. The Eyeglass Trip documentary called "I Can See Clearly Now" was shown on CKCO-TV in December.

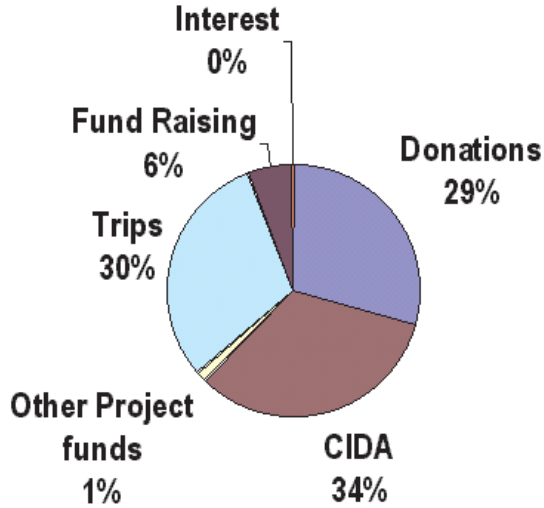
On a personal note, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the many dedicated RAYJON volunteers who have worked unselfishly throughout the year in numerous capacities. In particular, I would like to recognize Ben McKillican who is retiring as Awareness Trips Director after many years of extreme dedication.

### **Congratulations to RAYJON ... again!!**

In October, John Barnfield received, on behalf of RAYJON, yet another award; a Living Faith Award of Distinction, presented by the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. RAYJON was a recipient of the first annual Living Faith awards presented to 26 outstanding individuals (RAYJON was the only organization honoured) for 1) witnessing our faith, 2) empowering individuals through celebrating their achievements, 3) creating innovative learning environments, and 4) fostering stewardship and justice. The presentation took place in Wallaceburg on October 9th.

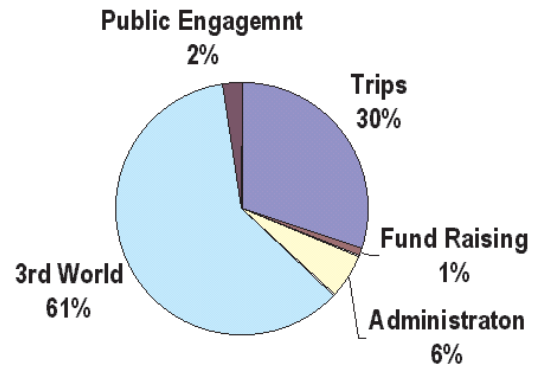
## RAYJON INCOME 2002/03

total = \$551,053



## RAYJON EXPENDITURES 2002/03

total = \$575,220



### Legacy Options for Donating to RAYJON

Check the RAYJON website [www.sarnia.com/groups/rayjon](http://www.sarnia.com/groups/rayjon) for legacy options.

### Creed of Peace

by *Ralph M. Lewis*

I am guilty of war when I proudly exercise my intelligence to the disadvantage of fellow human beings.

I am guilty of war when I distort others' opinions which differ from my own.

I am guilty of war when I show disregard for the rights and properties of others.

I am guilty of war when I covert what another has honestly acquired.

I am guilty of war when I seek to maintain my superiority of position by depriving others of their opportunity for advancement.

I am guilty of war if I imagine my kin and myself to be privileged people.

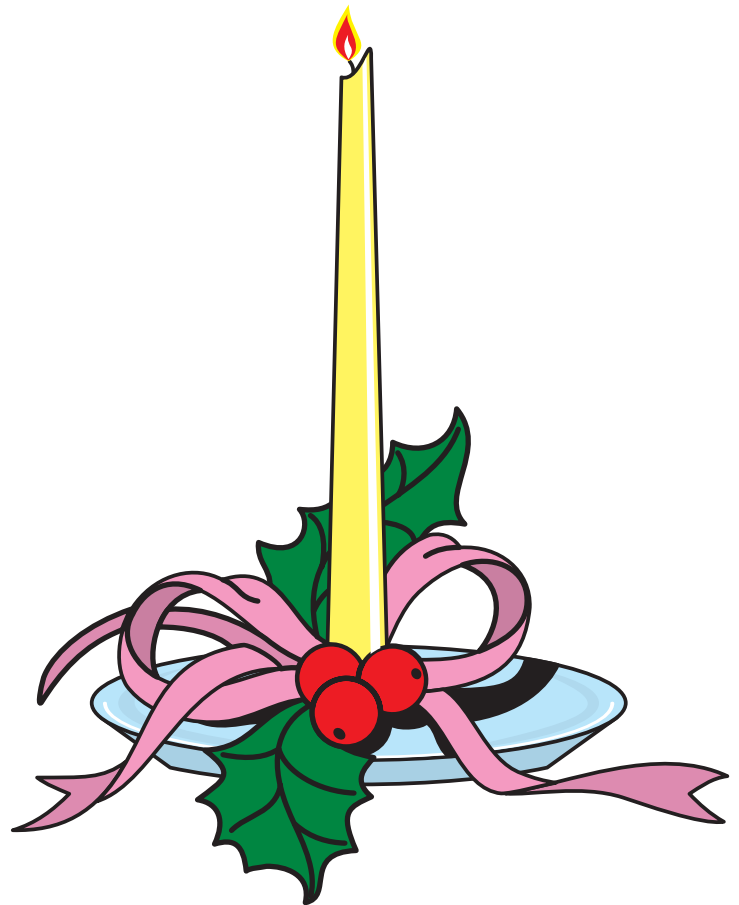
I am guilty of war if I believe a heritage entitles me to monopolize resources of nature.

I am guilty of war when I believe other people must think and live as I do.

I am guilty of war when I make success in my life solely dependent on power, fame and riches.

I am guilty of war when I think the minds of people should be regulated by force rather than by reason.

I am guilty of war when I believe the God I conceive is the one others must accept.



**Wishing each one of you  
the peace of the Christmas season**

## Fall Fair 2003 Report

by Dianne McKillican & Nancy Berry, Convenors.

As Convenors of the RAYJON Fall Fair, Nancy and I are delighted to say that this year's Fair was another wonderful, successful and fun-filled day for all involved. We raised even more money than last year, the total being almost \$9000. But more important to all of us involved with RAYJON was the number of new volunteers who helped make the day the success it was. Friends of friends, high school students with heavy school work loads, all took their places to help and by doing so, either deepened a previous connection with Rayjon, or initiated a new one. This is who we are - this is part of what we do here at home to support our Haiti projects. Thank you, everyone, who contributed you time, your talents, your efforts - we are part of one, dynamic family!

### Congratulations to the Raffle winners:

- 1st - microwave donated by NORTHEND APPLIANCE, Sarnia, - *Ruth Daamen*
- 2nd - porcelain doll - donated by Marlyn Palmer, - *Marion Gibson*
- 3rd - afgan - made & donated by Phyllis Meade - *Faye Voisey*
- 4th - Serenity Pond Frog - donated by Tara McDonough - *Louise Ryan*
- 5th - bottle of Haitian Rum - *Brian Murphy*



*Nelly Hyde (left) and Helen Tavares (centre) working at the Timeless Treasures table.*



*Madeline Connor (3rd from right), Armando and Hélène Notte (1st & 2nd on the right) working at the jewellery table.*

## Where Are They Now?

*An e-mail from Niamh Higgins.*

*Niamh is in her 6th & final year of the Doctor of Pharmacy program at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences.*

Although it has been over 5 years since I took part in a RAYJON Awareness Trip to Haiti, I still have vivid memories of my adventures in the third world. I can remember our last night in Port-au-Prince like it was yesterday. John Barnfield told us that night that the single most important thing that our group could do upon returning to Canada was to tell our story. And so I did!

I have been granted several opportunities to write about my experiences with RAYJON including university entrance essays and scholarship applications. Last year, I entered an essay competition at my school. The first place winner was afforded an all-expenses paid trip to Belize to study rainforest medicine with traditional Mayan healers for one week. I knew that I needed to have a unique paper just to be considered. I described my journey to Haiti and how this experience ignited my desire to travel to foreign countries and to plunge into other cultures. Much to my excitement, I was chosen to participate in the rainforest medicine expedition.

The following is taken from an article that I co-wrote for our school's alumni magazine after returning from Belize: "It was the seventh annual Pharmacy-from-the-Rainforest Expedition led by Dr. Dan Wagner and Dr. Norbert Pilewski. Our adventure began as we arrived at the Belize City Airport (temperature 92 degrees). We made our way to San Ignacio in the Cayo District of Belize. But it was surely not a smooth ride - many of the roads in Belize are unpaved! Our destination was the Ix Chel Tropical Research Centre, named in honor of the Maya goddess of medicine. Dr. Rosita Arvigo, world renowned herbalist and healer, welcomed us. She was the apprentice of Don Elijio Panti (1893-1996), a great Maya shaman of Belize. Primarily a *chiclero*, Don Elijio studied with Don Jeronimo Requena and for decades treated 3,000 to 5,000 patients a year. According to Don Elijio: "our tools are the plants, prayers and faith in god," or "Most people think too much. Get them to laugh and half their troubles and sickness will go away and the blessed herb will do the rest."

The next morning, after a swim in the river, we attended our first lecture with Dr. Arvigo. At this point we had to integrate our knowledge of conventional medicine and to open our minds to a form of medicine that has been practiced in Central America for thousands of years. Many bush doctors and traditional Maya healers are illiterate, and so they rely on hints from nature to cure a specific ailment. This fascinating concept is known as the "doctrine of signature." As an illustration, the gumbo tree exhibits a blotchy red and scaly bark. Maya healers use this tree to treat psoriasis and other skin conditions. Moreover, the snake is known by man to be a limber creature with numerous flexible joints. Snake oil can be used to treat arthritis and is highly prized by some healers. Every herb has to be harvested with prayer and permission from the plant to be used for healing otherwise it is said that the spirit of the plant won't follow the healer home.

At the end of our week, we traveled to Punta Gorda in the south of Belize. We explored two ancient Maya ruins, Xunantunich and Lubaatun. We also visited beautiful Maya villages, snorkeled on Snake Island and explored two jungle streams with waterfalls and pools for swimming. One of our most challenging activities was an exciting hike in the rainforest complete with a guide that chopped a path for us with his machete through the thick jungle terrain." My experience in Belize was a life changing event. I now have a greater appreciation for plants in terms of their ability to heal and nurture human beings.

The truly wonderful part of an Awareness Trip is that one can never walk away from the experience without somehow feeling committed to societal development. Three years ago when I first moved to Boston for pharmacy I had the opportunity to attend a Habitat for Humanity work trip in Arizona over spring break. I knew that I would probably not return to Haiti until after graduation and the Habitat trip was a great way to get involved. This year I established an official student organization for Habitat for Humanity on campus and our group continues to attend alternative spring break trips. We also participate in local builds in Boston throughout the year.

For anyone who may be considering participating in a RAYJON Awareness Trip, I strongly recommend taking advantage of a life-time opportunity! Besides opening new and exciting doors in the future, one will always have invaluable memories as well as a strong commitment to international development.

Since Niamh wrote this article, her school's Habitat for Humanity organization has been chartered as an official

## Social

**Congratulations** to Becky Daly on her marriage in July.

**Congratulations** to Jaime McGill (D.R. 1999) on her marriage in September.

**Prayers and best wishes** for Joan Simone, wife of Dr. Andrew Simone, who is suffering from breast cancer.

**Condolences** to Hap Gottfried on the death of his step-mother in October.

**Condolences** to Lee Michaels on the death of her father.

### Haiti Fundraiser

A "Family Fun Day" was held August 31st in Windsor Ont. to support both the Windsor-based "Hearts Together for Haiti" organization and "RAYJON Share Care" of Sarnia. Over 200 people came out to enjoy the fun, family-oriented activities and raised over \$4000 to be shared by both organizations. Many Windsor-based businesses contributed generously in both donations and prizes. Angela Stevenson of Windsor was one of the main organizers of the day. She has been on several RAYJON trips to Haiti and feels a deep commitment to help the people of Haiti however she can. Congratulations Angela and the rest of the Windsor committee on a job well done.



*Don Damphouse & Angela Stevenson at the Family Fun Day*

### Congratulations and Thanks!

*by Dianne McKillican*

For the second year in a row, Larry and Denise Regan of London (Haiti, Jan. 2002) raised over \$2000 for RAYJON - literally in their own back yard! In July, they held an auction of donated goods in a fun filled day with family, friends and RAYJON members. How 50 or so people could raise such a large amount of \$'s is a tribute to Larry's exceptional auctioneering skills - and to the two of them as a gracious, welcoming and giving couple. Congratulations and many thanks, Larry and Denise!

### Urban Development Program, Cap Haitien, Haiti

Did You Know that:

150 children in Sr. Rosemary's Nutrition Program need **4000 chewable vitamin tablets** every month.

In spite of an illiteracy rate of 95%, children in Haiti cannot go to school without paying school fees, buying uniforms and wearing **black shoes**.

If you can help with the highlighted items, please call Marjorie Paisley at 344-9190

### Third World Crafts

Our thanks to all travellers who brought back interesting goods from their travels. Also, thanks to those who donated 3rd world goods for our Fall Fair table. We did very well on sales this year. A special thank you to Jim Leliveld for taking care of Haitian vanilla supplies.

*Lynne Shannon*