



Not So Far Afield

A NEWSLETTER OF THE MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES

January/February 2010

Volume 19 Number 1

Special Edition

MARYKNOLL AFFILIATES AND HAITI

While Maryknoll has never had an official presence in Haiti, many Maryknoll Affiliates have had connections there. Since the first issue of 2010 was already delayed in going out, I have decided to include some thoughts and reflections from some of our Maryknoll Affiliates who have worked in and with Haiti. This is a relatively "unedited" version of Not So Far Afield, but we wanted to be able to share these reflections with you as soon after the tragedy in Haiti as possible.

Fred Goddard
Executive Coordinator

A PRAYER FOR HAITI

January 2010

Most Holy Creator God, Lord of heaven and earth,
we bring before you today your people of Haiti.
It is You who set in motion the stars and seas,
You who raised up the mountains of the Massif de la Hotte
and Pic La Selle. It is You who made her people in your very image:

Their gregarious hearts and generous spirits,
their hunger and thirst for righteousness and liberty.
It is you, O Lord, who planted the rhythms of konpa, Twoubadou,
and zouk in the streets of Cite-Soleil; You who walk the paths
outside of Jacmel and Hinche. Your people, O Lord, cry out to you.

Haiti, O Haiti: The world's oldest black republic,
the second-oldest republic in the Western world.



Photo by Matt Rouusso - Links Haiti Trip

God, You are the One who answers the cries of the suffering.
You are a God who sees, frees, and redeems your people.
"I too have heard the moaning of my people," you spoke to Moses.
Now, Lord, speak again to Chanté, Agwe, Nadege, and Jean Joseph.
Speak now, O Lord, and comfort Antoine, Jean-Baptiste,
Toto, and Djakout. Raise up your people from the ash heap
of destruction and give them strong hearts and hands,
shore up their minds and spirits. Help them to bear this new burden.

As for us, Lord, we who are far away from the rubble and the dust,
from the sobbing and moans, but who hold them close in our hearts,
imbue us with the strength of Simon the Cyrene.
Help us to carry the Haitian cross. Show us how to lighten
their yoke with our prayers, our aid, our resources. Teach
us to work harder for justice in our own country and dignity in Haiti,
so that we may stand with integrity when we hold our Haitian families
in our arms once again. We ask this in the name of Jezikri,
Jesus Christ. Amen.



Photo by Matt Rouusso - Links Haiti Trip

© [Rose Marie Berger](#) (reprint freely)

Rose Marie Berger, an associate editor at [Sojourners magazine](#), is a Catholic peace activist and poet.

MORE ON OUR WEBSITE

We invite you to share your own stories, connections, thoughts or concerns about what is happening in Haiti. You can send them to be published in *Not So Far Afield* or share them on our [website](#) in the comment section of this edition of *Not So Far Afield*, under previous articles or on our [Facebook page](#).

As the article *Starfish and Seawalls* discusses, there will be much work to do in the long-run as well as short-term recovery. We plan to continue to have articles from Maryknoll Affiliates who will be going to or are connected with Haiti. If you plan to go, please let us know.

SAVE THE DATES

Here are some important upcoming events you may want to attend.

MARYKNOLL AFFILIATE EVENTS

2011 Maryknoll Affiliate Conference - June 23 - 26, 2011, Passionist Spirituality Center, Riverdale, New York

The Maryknoll Affiliate Board has set the dates and place of our 2011 Maryknoll Affiliate Conference. While much has yet to be developed, a central focus will be celebrating our 20 years as a movement. Watch here and on our website for more information and plan to come!

Northeast Regional Conference - April 17, 2010, Maryknoll Society Center, Maryknoll, New York

More information on this will be forthcoming.

Not So Far Afield is a bimonthly publication of the Maryknoll Affiliates. The name is a play on the title of the original Maryknoll Magazine: The Field Afar.

Maryknoll Affiliates are a faith-filled people responding in community to God's call to participate in Jesus' mission. We express the Maryknoll Spirit in the context of Chapters which gather for prayer, reflection and action. We challenge one another to go beyond borders, locally and globally, to walk with the poor and excluded, and to strive for peace and justice for all of God's creation. We recognize that the Spirit who guides us on our journey moves without boundaries and that God's unconditional love is present in all cultures and peoples.

Affiliates share in the mission and family spirit of Maryknoll Sisters, Fathers and Brothers and Lay Missioners living lives of service in more than 30 countries.

If you would like further information or an opportunity to attend a local Chapter meeting in your area, please contact the Executive Coordinator of the Maryknoll Affiliates at P.O. Box 311, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0311 or call toll free 877-897-2386 or e-mail inquiry@maryknollaffiliates.org.

Western Regional Conference - July 16-18, 2010, University of San Diego

The theme for the Western Regional is "Peacebuilding In Our Communities: Listening, Responding." The keynote Speakers will be **Rev. John Dear, SJ** and **Sister Janice McLaughlin, MM**. [See our website for details.](#)

2010 Search For Peace Film Festival and Art Exhibit

Members of the Portland Maryknoll Affiliates help with the Search For Peace Art events which are held in the Portland area. Entries from anywhere in the world are invited. The Search For Peace Art Exhibit has expanded to include a Film Festival, and will be held March 5 to 7, 2010. Entry Forms and more information are available at the web site www.SearchForPeaceArt.org or can be obtained by calling 503 646-5449 or by emailing info@SearchForPeaceArt.org.

OTHER EVENTS

Ecumenical Advocacy Days - March 19 - 22, 2010, Washington DC

This years theme is "A Place to Call Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Peoples." For more information visit: <http://advocacydays.org/>

NACAR Conference - June 4 - 10, 2010, St. Louis

The North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR) biennial Conference theme is "Leaven for the World: Associates & Religious Together." For the latest information and to register visit the NACAR website at <http://www.nacar96.org/>.

2010 Annual Mission Congress - October 28-31, 2010, Albuquerque, New Mexico

God's Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of U.S. Catholics in Mission. See uscatholicmission.org for details.

Editorial Committee:

Jeanette Birondo-Goddard	Kris Neufeld
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Please send any letters to the editor, articles, photos or inquiries to Fred Goddard. You may also contact Fred if you no longer wish to receive Affiliate mailings; prefer to receive them by e-mail or read them on the web; or if you have changed your address.

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HAITI MARYCARE

Tom Larkin – Connecticut

We have people who are part of the Haiti Marycare team on the ground in Port-au-Prince, in the Northeast near Cap Haitian, and Jacquesyl, and in the Dominican Republic. Communication is still so poor, we have not heard from many, and only enough to advise who is OK or not, but even those comments are limited mostly to the people around Port-au-Prince.

People in outlying areas do not even get the media coverage afforded to the Port-au-Prince area, so one of our team, currently living in the Dominican Republic is setting out tomorrow to go through the north of Haiti first, then circle down to go to Port-au-Prince. He has family he has not heard from, and he is hoping to be our eyes and ears for now.

Our organization has supported a primary health clinic in Jacquesyl for the last 12 years. In the last 6 years it has become quite proficient and operates 5 days a week, 52 weeks a year, and the two doctors and two nurses on our staff are available for emergencies. We also support two schools, one in the same village of Jacquesyl, but a second is in La Plein, and area of Port-au-Prince which serves the children of Cite Soleil, a poor slum of Port-au-Prince.

We continue to support our team on the ground. We will continue to provide support when we hear from them. In the past we have provided containers with medical supplies, food and other resources. Our experience and reliable partners in Haiti will continue to allow our efforts to be successful. At this moment I cannot tell you what our response will be. When we hear from our team members they will communicate their needs and we will do what we can at that time.

Our team in the States all have other jobs and lives, so we will do as much as possible as we are able. We already had a medical trip planned for next month. This will not stop us from going.

For many of us it is the uncertainty that is so difficult. Prayers are what we can do as well as contribute now and in the future. This disaster will require aid now and in the future. Our history has shown our ability to respond when others did not in the past. We will continue to do so now and as long as God allows us to do what we can.

For those interested, more can be learned at our website:

<http://www.haitimarycare.org/>

People can also send a donation through PayPal, available as a link on our site, or by sending donations to:

Haiti Marycare, Inc.
55 King St.
Danbury, CT 06811
203-470-2722



Photo from Haiti Marycare website

JO ALBRIGHT

New York City Subway

My connection with Haiti began in 2007, when I volunteered to teach English at **Renate Schneider's** institute in the small city of Jeremie on the northwest coast. I began a friendship with **Alex** who started an orphanage with 30 street kids who were being schooled by the Methodist Church. Alex was also helping out at the language school and I began helping him when he was short of money. Last winter I had the opportunity to go back to Haiti for an orientation trip with the microfinance organization Fonkoze, visiting many of their sites and making contacts for a future visit to Port-au-Prince. I also spent two weeks in Jeremie, helping the English teacher in a small Catholic school. We became friends and I supported his taking computer classes, which had been added to the English classes. Alex and the kids did a good job with the vegetable garden I also supported and encouraged them to start. Then he told me about five teenage girls who had to move out of the orphanage because they had turned 18 and wanted to finish high school.

After I got back to New York City, I started thinking about those girls and how I could help, since Alex really didn't have the money to pay for their tuition, uniforms, books and housing. So I've adopted the girls education as my project and have slowly started raising money. I was very pleased when my niece's high school age daughter arranged an assembly so the students could learn what some girls their age had to go through to get an education. She will hold another event to raise money. Lastly, I met a young Haitian grad student volunteering at the United Nations who has agreed to help me start a cyber cafe in the institute which would be run by the community for profit.

All of this has now been dealt a terrific blow with the earthquake. But Jeremie did not receive any damage and we plan to go ahead with our plans, with the added incentive of not forgetting the rest of the country. We feel optimistic that we can do this and would welcome any ideas, suggestions and of course money if any of you are so inclined to donate.



Pictures by Patricia Oetting from her time in Haiti

**PATRICIA
OETTING**
Florida
Spacecoast

I am distraught, I "had" to go to my Hospice House today, my usual Wednesday to try to keep sane... to be with the dying while I worried about the dead and possibly more dead... possibly my friends. It is so awful. I kept

saying a litany like comment to the Lord

"I know you hear the cry of the poor... are you going deaf... they are now screaming and NEED you so badly?"

I worry about GUY, a most special friend that always picks me up, takes me all around into the slum to his school. He is in a Christian seminary on Tuesdays—he would have been on the road.

The volunteers at Mother Teresa's would have been feeding the babies on the second floor. I have no way of knowing about any of the sisters.

The epicenter at Carfew has another of their convent. I know some of the sisters. I see the Cathedral destroyed and remember the recent mass for the Year of the Priest—100 priests—what a glorious, holy hours long event, and now it is gone!

I hear CNN tv as I write this and see the hospital that collapsed... it was Fr. Rick's. I can barely continue.

I have been reading HEARTS ON FIRE as a preparation for our meeting on CHARISM. I remember EDITH REITZ saying that GOD IS IN THIS SOMEWHERE—as she was in confinement and seeing terrible things happen around her. I am SO MUCH, SO MUCH TRYING TO HANG ON TO THAT THOUGHT—it is a bit difficult at the moment.

I have an American Airline ticket, paid for in front of me I return on Feb 12th (Oh how I have a place to return to with the people I know and love—alive and waiting for me—and most especially that GUY, my dear friend, will be there at the airport for me!

I cannot go on... pray, pray

Patricia

Patricia has worked in Haiti with [Haiti Clinic](#). Here is an email regarding Haiti Clinic:

Dear Friends and Family;

I'm sure everyone has heard about the devastation in Haiti due to the 7.0 earthquake, 5.9 aftershock and literally dozens of lesser aftershocks. This is devastating in a country like Haiti because construction is poor and materials are not strong. Buildings just crumble and collapse with the people in them. My fellow board members and volunteers with Haiti Clinic Inc have been trying to make contact with our friends and associates with little luck due to the damage to the electrical grid and other infrastructure. We have received good news about an associate who was in Port-au-Prince with his wife and two small children when the quake hit and they are all ok. But even some well built buildings like the Montana Hotel in the city have collapsed according to CNN reports so I can only imagine the devastation in the shanty towns like Cite Soliel where Haiti Clinic Inc works.

So I am putting out this appeal for contributions if you are so moved. Our organization is well connected on the streets of Port-au-Prince and Cite Soliel and we can use 100% of every donation to directly help the most needy people to get clean water, food, treatment for injuries and shelter. We work closely with the operators of Mission Ranch where our medical clinic is located. Mission Ranch is a complex inside the slum of Cite Soliel (the poorest slum in the Western Hemisphere) which includes an orphanage, feeding program, school, church and our Haiti Clinic medical facility. We serve the surrounding community as well and we will make sure all donations will be used to help the neediest people.

You may go to our newly re-designed website www.haiticlinic.org and click on the "DONATE" button to contribute immediately online. The online donation link is safe and secure because it goes through our merchant account using Authorize.net. Anything you can spare will be gratefully received and carefully used to achieve the best result in Haiti. Thanks in advance and please feel free to forward this message to all your friends, family and other associates if you don't see them listed in the address bar of this message.

Sincerely,

Kevin



ORGANIZATIONS ACCEPTING DONATION FOR HAITI

There are many sites out there requesting donations. We are listing a few here that we know are reputable:

[Catholic Relief Services](#) has established a Haitian earthquake relief fund.

228 W. Lexington St
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3413
888-277-7575



[Doctors Without Borders](#)
333 7th Avenue, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10001-5004
888-392-0392



[Fonkoze](#): Fonkoze is a Haitian-based development group. Fonkoze is a well-respected organization that serves the poor of Haiti by offering economic development grants. This work will be critical as Haiti rebuilds.

50 F Street NW, Suite 810
Washington, DC 20001
202-628-9033
202-628-9035



[Fonkoze, for Klinik Sen Michel](#): (The following was sent out by the [Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns](#)) **Bishop Tom Gumbleton** and the House of Grace Catholic Worker community in Philadelphia have sponsored a health care clinic in Port-au-Prince, Klinik Sen Michel. House of Grace community member **Joanna Berrigan** wrote... "Our concern for our friends, co-workers in Port-au-Prince, and all of the Haitian people is beyond words. At this time we have precious little information.... Sr. Mary said that the wounds of the people are horrific. She has run out of supplies. She has sent an appeal for us to bring supplies along with personnel.

"...The House of Grace community and Bishop Gumbleton are trying to plan a trip to Haiti. We hope to go at the end of January. We are asking for you to please contribute financial assistance. We will use it for medical care that is so desperately needed. We will purchase supplies: i.e., bandages, analgesics, antibiotics, ointments, antiseptics etc. to take with us." Checks can be made out to Fonkoze USA, memo line: Klinik Sen Michel. Send to Johanna Berrigan, House of Grace Catholic Worker, 1826 E. Lehigh Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19125.

[Haitian Connection](#): **Renate Schneider** wrote, "My website is up. It has a great video about Fr. Rick's work, which I think will encourage people to donate."

For donations of goods, send them in sturdy boxes to:

Renate Schneider
5300 South Shore Drive #27
Chicago, IL 60615
Phone: 509-284-5748 or 509-463-7532

[Haitian Health Foundation](#)

97 Sherman Street
Norwich, CT 06360
860-886-4357



[Haiti Marycare](#) (see the article by Tom Larkin)
55 King St.
Danbury, CT 06811
203-675-4770 phone

[The Lambi Fund](#)

Lambi Fund of Haiti
PO Box 18955
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-3713



[Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers](#) – To support Maryknoll's emergency mission for the people of Haiti, donations may be made in the following ways:

Online at www.maryknollsociety.org

By phone toll-free at 1-888-627-9566

By check to Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, PO Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545
(Specify: Haitian Relief)

[Oxfam](#)

226 Causeway Street
5th Floor
Boston MA 02114-2206
1-800-77-OXFAM

[Partners in Health](#)

888 Commonwealth Avenue, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02215
617-432-5256

[The Pontifical Mission Societies](#) (PMS) in the United States have established a special fund for long-term assistance for the Church in Haiti.

Pontifical Mission Societies
Haitian Solidarity Fund
70 West 36th Street, New York, NY 10018.

[The Red Cross](#)

2025 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767)

[World Vision](#)

P.O. Box 9716, Dept. W
Federal Way, WA 98063-9716
888-511-6593

HAITI'S NEWEST TRAGEDY

Renate Schneider – Chicago Central

Renate posted the following on her own website, [Haitian Connection](#):

We were only going to post positive news from Haiti on this page. We were going to talk about how the infrastructure is going to improve, how roads are being built and repaired all over Haiti, how the security is so much better, how more kids are going to school, how there is so much more electricity available, and we were going to brag on the new airport.

Then 45 minutes after we left Port-au-Prince on January 12, 2010 the worst earthquake in 200 years hit Haiti causing a devastation that defies imagination. Our first impulse was to turn around and see what we can do. Which of course is impossible, because the airport is not operating. Communication is practically non-existing, so we have to wait. What we do know is that there are most likely thousands dead, somebody mentioned 100,000 and the earthquake has impacted over 3 million people. The earthquake crushed thousands of structures, from schools and shacks to the National Palace and the UN peacekeeping headquarters. Untold numbers of people are still trapped. The Roman Catholic archbishop is among the dead as is the head of the UN peacekeeping mission. The airport in Port-au-Prince is operational and open to relief flights. The problem is still getting to and from the airport.

Life is already so fragile in Haiti, and to have this happen on such a massive scale, it's unimaginable how the country will recover from this.

Many of our friends have asked how they can help. The Red Cross, Oxfam, the Lambi Fund, CRS and World Vision are all good organization to give to.

Here is a very simple way to give to Wycliff's Haiti Yele organization which is doing great work in Haiti: You can use your cell phone to text "Yele" to 501501, which will automatically donate \$5 to the Yele Haiti Earthquake Fund (it will be charged to your cell phone bill),

The other way is a more personal way. My good friend, Fr. Rick Frechette, Passionist priest and physician, one of the most incredible people has worked in Haiti for many years. The new children's hospital he is talking about has been severely damaged. I would like to get money to him, and so if you are so inclined you may make a donation on our website: www.HaitianConnection.org via pay pal (which you will find on the site), and all donations are tax deductible and will go directly to him, no administrative costs involved.

Kenbe fem as they say in Creole (stay strong)

Renate Schneider
Coordinator



Renate in Haiti

Renate shared the following emails:

I am copying 2 emails which I received. Fondwa is about a 2 hour ride from Port-au-Prince. You get a little idea of the extent of the damage and what a wide area it covers. First Hospice:

Hi all,

We are OK but the building collapsed. We had two visitors we were lucky everyone get out ok. We are sleeping in the yard and trying the best out of the situation. Most of our employees are ok. I have not been able to receive news from three of them. Soeurette lost several members of her family including a daughter. Others also lost family members.

Right now every program will be put on hold for a long long time. We have to go from a program mode to a humanitarian mode for some time. We start helping people on a small scale but the need is overwhelming. Haiti is no longer what you knew. Everything is lost. We need everything: Meds, food, water, clothes tents and everything else we can put your hands on. I am going to try to communicate with you all if we can. Remember we do not have a place to operate but I am waiting to find people to put the rest of the building down to start providing meds and water. I need your words on issues. Dennis I wrote a check on Monday thinking I was going to leave Haiti this week but I am negotiating with Anne Hasting to see if Fonkoze can cash a check because UNIBANK may not be open for a while.....I am at someone's house I can stay longer. Please call my wife for me and let her know I am ok.....Peace...Max

Now Fondwa:

Friends,

I spoke with Riche Zamour, the UNIF rector who is in Boston and who sent me a text message early this morning saying that "the entire village of Fondwa has collapsed". Riche said he received a call from Vital who escaped from the UNIF building along with the UNIF students. None of the UNIF people died, but a few were injured although not too seri-

ously. Vital walked to Leogane and from there was able to take a motorcycle to Les Cayes where he has family. Apparently he was able to make a phone call from Les Cayes. We have no confirmed information about the visitors' center or school in Fondwa at this time, but indications are that they are both collapsed. We have had no direct contact with anyone from the Fondwa valley – only from Vital who was up in Tom Gato.

Rich

It is now confirmed that all of Fondwa is levelled, and among many Haitians there is also an American victim. Fondwa is no more.

Update from Fr. Rick (who is featured on Renate's website, and for whom she is collecting money):

Hello Friends,

After driving by night to Kennedy Airport January 12th, and flying to the Dominican Republic January 13th, Conan and I arrived to Haiti this morning in the helicopter of the President of the Dominican Republic . This ride was due to the reputation of NPH in the Dominican Republic , NPH Italy, a reputation enhanced in the DR by Andrea Bocelli not long ago.

Our first tasks were the medical evacuation of one of our American volunteers, the medical evacuation of one of our Cuban doctors and the evacuation of the body if one of our American visitors. The search still continues in the rubble for another missing American volunteer, Molly.

We also had 18 funerals today. One for John who works at our St Luke program. We miss John very much. He often stopped to at my door to tell me the milestone of his developing baby, which delighted him no end. John ran our computerized language lab. Another was for Johanne's mother. Joanne is one of the Directors of the St Luke program. All the others were of unknown people who were sadly rotting by the wayside.

Other sadnesses... the death of Immacula, our only physician assistant, who worked at our huge outpatient side of our hospital. The death of ALL but one of Joseph Ferdinand's brothers and sisters, the death of the husband of Jacqueline Gautier as he was visiting a school which fell and all the students (all died), the death of our ex-pequeno Wilfrid Altisme who was in his 5th year of seminary for priesthood. Other stories of deaths of people who are dear to us keep coming in.

We spent the rest of the time managing the countless people with serious and severe wounds, coming to our hospital. We are doing our best for them, under trees and in the parking lot with ever diminishing supplies. We will work throughout the night and beyond. No stores are open, no banks are open. Diesel is running out. Will be out in two days if we don't find a solution, which will mean no power at all. The hospital is without water since there is some broken line between the

well and the water tower.

Structural damages to the hospital seem superficial at first glance, but about half the outer perimeter walls have fallen. The old hospital in Petionville is in ruins, and teams of workers, led by Ferel, and been digging for Molly non-stop around the clock.

Please continue to pray for us. We pray for you too.
Fr. Rick Frechette

~~~~~  
**LAMENT FROM THE HIGH MOUNTAINS**

*Dedicated to my brothers and sisters in Haiti*

An echo resounds from  
the high mountains...  
an echo that is a lament,  
a lament that is like  
the song of a woman.

A song that is born from the  
depths of an old wound,  
an injury that was buried  
so it would be forgotten...

Today, in louder voices  
it cries out to the four winds,  
it cries for the pain of its  
people that for centuries now  
history has forgotten.

Taino-latino people that were  
the first to claim their freedom,  
in this mother Latin America  
by the sons and daughters of liberty.

From the mountains the voice of  
Anacaona can be heard again,  
so much louder today no one can quiet her ...

Her voice is the voice of the people of  
the high mountains...  
Who today calls for more than  
Compassion ...  
She calls for the dignity of  
the children of God.

Because her cry is the demand  
of the children of oblivion...  
In a land that cries so hard  
that it called for eternity to the thousands  
of her children to awaken  
the consciousness of those who  
prefer to forget...

L'Oxwell bu

*A friend from Guatemala sent Renate Schneider this  
poem in solidarity with the Haitian people.*

**VIGINIA (GINGER) YORIO**  
New York City Subway

I had travelled to Jeremy, Haiti with the Haitian Health Foundation a number of years ago and have stayed in touch with them. I contribute to the support of a family there. We do not yet know how any of the families are.

The morning of the day that the earthquake hit, I was on the phone with the [Haitian Health Foundation](#) (headquartered in Norwich, Conn.) making inquiries about my Haitian family and how I can help them; now I am anxious to find out if all 7 of them are safe (5 children plus parents). You can tell from the memo below that surviving the quake is just a small part of "survival".

Dear Ms. Yorio,

Thank you again for the hundreds of e-mails and phone calls of support and love for the people of Haiti. A team traveled out to some villages today, but we haven't yet heard back from them. Therefore, we are able to provide only a few updates on the situation in the Grand'Anse.

#### **Impact on Operations**

Our main facility, Klinik Pep Bondye-a, has been closed for general routine visits since the earthquake, although it remains available for emergency situations. Nearly every member of HHF's staff has been affected by this catastrophe in one way or another, whether by the loss of a home or the frantic search for word of a son, daughter, sister, or brother.

However, our residential Center of Hope, Sant Lespwa, remains open for at-risk pregnant mothers, and the Kwashiorkor-malnourished children's ward continues its vital operations. One of our volunteers in Haiti, Marissa Goodnight, wrote that they have implemented conservation measures—such as conserving diesel for vehicles and generators—which impacts other systems, such as our computer network. Communication is still crippled at the local level and she reports that HHF's access to the Internet is "spotty at best."

Like some others with resources in Jérémie, Marissa spent part of the day buying food and supplies because of the uncertainty of the future. But for the poor, struggling to survive each day, it is impossible to make such preparations.

Sister Maryann describes the staff as being dazed. "They are not sleeping... [t]hey are becoming more frantic each day as they still have no news of family members." She also reports, "The boats with supplies are not allowed to come yet and the shopkeepers said they have no assurance of just when the boats might be able to come out again." With the destruction of the wharf and piers in Port-au-Prince, the reality is that there aren't supplies to send to Jérémie.

#### **Preparing for Influx of Refugees**

Please know that we have relayed your intense concern, love, support, and prayers for our neighbors' safety and

health. For those of you who have also offered to go to our clinics, due to the uncertain conditions at this point we cannot accept volunteers in Haiti. If you are interested in going to help in Port-au-Prince, however, we recommend that you contact an agency that operates closer to that city.

I know you've seen the horrific images from Port-au-Prince—the deaths, the injuries, the lack of water and food, and the desperation. Reports of refugees "fleeing to the hills" means that thousands will be coming to find relief with their families, friends, and others in our region of Jérémie. This has happened in the past with other, smaller, emergencies, and we must prepare for a major influx from this catastrophe.

Be assured that any donations you send will be WELL used. And please don't be offended if we can't answer your e-mail messages right away.

Continue to keep everyone in Haiti in your thoughts and prayers—including our staff and volunteers and the people they will continue to serve. Many were already suffering from hunger, disease, and a lack of water and adequate sanitation. This horrific earthquake may make their troubles seem insurmountable, but your continued support will eventually help lighten their burden and give them much needed hope.

E. Marilyn Lowney

Executive Director,  
Haitian Health Foundation

P.S.

Hopefully tomorrow we will re-establish contact with Bette Gebrian and her team for a report from conditions in the field. We will keep you updated.

*The Haitian Health Foundation posts frequent updates on their website: <http://www.haitianhealthfoundation.org/>.*



Returnees to Jeremy from HHF website

## STARFISH AND SEAWALLS: RESPONDING TO HAITI'S EARTHQUAKE, NOW AND LONG-TERM

Mark Schuller  
January 15, 2009

*Renate Schneider recommended this article.*

For a list of earthquake relief efforts please visit: <http://potomitan.net/haitian-earthquake.html>

I was not in Haiti for the earthquake. Like everyone I know who has family, friends, or colleagues in Haiti, I was glued to the internet and Skype, desperate for word from our loved ones. Word began to trickle in last night. Far too many people do not have access to a cell phone (which would require electricity, both for the network and for their individual phone), to say the least about the internet. Words cannot describe the destruction that the 7.0 earthquake just outside of Port-au-Prince. The loss is frankly incalculable.

As Haitian American anthropologist Gina Ulysse has voiced, we all have a duty to respond. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122567412>

Like many people I know my urge was to rush to Haiti and offer aid. Hearing from my colleagues stuck in Haiti reminded me of the bitter truth. Unless it's part of an organized, coordinated effort, I would just be another mouth to feed, draining very very scarce resources. True, the need to offer what modest help we could, to be in contact, is understandably human. It's also a little misplaced. It is humbling to think that fluency in Kreyòl, a Ph.D, and almost a decade of direct involvement in Haiti is not as useful now as concrete skills such as medicine or civil engineering. But to go without a specific plan would be just a tad voyeuristic, if not selfish. Several students have written, worried about their families that they can't contact. What special right do I have to bear witness right now?

It may come down to feeling powerless. What, indeed, can we do? Rather than be a target, drinking the last drops of clean water, and being an extra burden on the authorities who are evacuating non-essential foreigners (yes, it's messed up that Haitian people can't even get Temporary Protected Status – the foreign passport literally means life and death), what we can do is contribute money. As someone who has studied NGOs, I have been asked several times: where should I contribute?

I wish the answer were simple. It isn't. Unfortunately many NGOs in Haiti grew up under a system of contracts and foreign patronage, and have become for good or ill the most stable and growing sector for Haiti's small middle class. Most NGOs – who have their central offices in Port-au-Prince, to facilitate coordination – have all but given up actually serving the 2.5 million people living in Haiti's capital. A notable handful do offer services, most of them microcredit or health. As anthropologist Jennie Smith and a host of Haitian scholars (e.g., Ernst Mathurin, Jean-Anile Louis-Juste, Rachel Beauvoir-Dominique and Pierre Gabaud, among others) have



Photo by Matt Rousso - Links Haiti Trip

documented, Haiti has a thriving tradition of youn-ede-lòt (one helping the other) and konbit (collective work groups). Certainly true of Haiti's rural majority, I have also encountered this thriving collectivist spirit in Port-au-Prince, even as donors declare the capital to be "too crowded" (which I hope will not represent a eugenicist thinking) or "anonymous" and violent. Through the last time I was in Haiti this past summer signs of neighborhood associations were hopeful: collecting coins from passersby to fix a pothole, collect trash, organize "after" school youth education, etc.

So how best to tap into this wealth of social capital? Unfortunately the team of State University of Haiti students found that of the list of some sixty neighborhood associations provided by the Haitian government (Minister of Social Affairs), only 2 still existed. Upon closer examination the researchers found that NGOs and donors created the local associations when they wanted to complete a project. The stated priorities in the neighborhood differed from the projects coming from the NGOs, that no fool would turn away if it spells resources for the neighborhood. Since the re-instatement of the constitutional, democratic order with Préval's election in 2006, NGOs have started to come back to popular neighborhoods. The results are mixed. Good projects can be completed (and maybe maintained) like trash cleanup, water taps, recycling, etc. But the top-down, project logic (*sa ou fè pou mwen?* What are you doing for me?) may be replacing the collectivist konbit. New NGOs may be in conflict with more established youth leaders, popular organizations and churches.

The bigger, more hidden, side-effect of the NGOization of Haiti's society is that it can undermine the elected government's ability to coordinate and plan. NGO salaries are on average three times that of their government counterparts – in a country with about one percent of people with a college degree. Commentators – particularly within the mainstream media and donor agencies – quickly point to the failures of Haiti's state. With the priorities set abroad and funds not even passing through the state, too many NGOs have become fiefdoms, cut off from both the people and the elected government. In his book *Haiti: l'Invasion des ONG* (Haiti: the Invasion of NGOs), Sauveur Pierre Étienne said that NGOs

have become the “iron of the spear of foreign governments,” in effect tools of implementing foreign policy agendas. This is classic neoliberalism (known as Reaganomics in the U.S.) – belief that the state should step aside and let the free market take care of everything.

I am a believer in collective action. I was a community organizer for four years in nonprofits before becoming a graduate student. Yes, absolutely there are many NGOs doing good. We should support those offering very urgently needed concrete services in every way we can. To repeat Ulysse, we have a duty. No effort – as long as it is connected to the grassroots and building the destroyed infrastructure and Haitians’ capacity for self-help – is too small. I hope very much to be part of such an effort within my neighborhood. Collectively we (Haitians and friends) can’t throw enough starfishes back into the ocean. There are NGOs that simply have greater capacity than grassroots efforts, that are worthy of our efforts. The first urgent priority is medical aid. Partners in Health <http://www.pih.org> co-founded by anthropologist Paul Farmer has a working infrastructure that notably is not headquartered in Port-au-Prince that is still largely functioning. And their long-term effort involves training Haitian medical professionals and working with the community. Other noteworthy NGOs include Fonkoze <http://www.fonkoze.org>, a microcredit agency that is very good at getting desperately needed cash to Haiti’s remotest and poorest. Fonkoze is a model of efficiency and accountability, and they have over 40 branches across Haiti. Lambi Fund <http://www.lambifund.org> stands out among the NGO community (their director and founders would chafe at the title of NGO) as having a well-thought out, grassroots structure. Their very small staff and bottom-up approach allows them to build capacity and get more of their funds to the ground, a model for others to follow.

The issue is going to be activation of local communities to ensure aid delivery. Once the rubble clears and the thousands (if not tens of thousands) of wounded are stabilized, the city of 2.5 million people (only built for 200,000) will have the very daunting problem of rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure. Most middle class people in Haiti I know probably still have food and drinking water. The lucky few have gas stoves that will last for a while. Haiti’s poor majority in the popular neighborhoods, however, are likely already starving, since most have only enough food for the daily meal. The port collapsed, so importing food is hampered. The roads are destroyed, so getting food from the provinces is going to be a feat. If Haiti wasn’t almost entirely dependent on foreign food aid – that U.S. and others created through their food aid and development policies and that Haitian peasants denounce as the “death plan” (see <http://www.worldpress.org/Americas/3131.cfm> or <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080602/lindsay>) – the situation would be far less grave. Haiti’s capital is bloated because of neoliberal policies – including the genocide of Haiti’s pig population – that destroyed Haiti’s peasant economy. Where else are people to go, especially with the glimmer of hope for the low-wage factory sector offering jobs in the city?

In addition to the three NGOs offering masterful technical assistance with years of experience in Haiti noted above, getting aid to the grassroots is critical. Since most NGOs don’t work in Port-au-Prince, this local connection will literally make the difference between life and death.

Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees (google them, or see an action alert posted on [www.potomitan.net](http://www.potomitan.net) – with a list) has an excellent, demonstrated, organized, ability to get aid to the grassroots. Other efforts across the political spectrum do appear (I am sorry I can’t personally vouch for them but other people I trust have) to have this grassroots connection: Wyclef Jean’s Yele Haiti (<http://www.yele.org>) is also innovating the aid collection through Twitter. Haiti Action Committee (<http://www.haitiaction.net/About/HERF/HERF.html>) also has strong connections with grassroots groups in low-income areas affected. Brazilian NGO Vivario has built a school in Bel-Air and had ties with local groups. Apparently a group called Avaaz [https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand\\_with\\_haiti/](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stand_with_haiti/) is sending funds to Vivario.

There will be a flowering of groups offering aid. Rather than list them all (please e-mail me at [mschuller@york.cuny.edu](mailto:mschuller@york.cuny.edu) if you know of an effort and would like it listed on our website, or if you know of a directory), I offer the following guide to selecting a group that speaks to you:

1. Who, exactly, is on the ground delivering aid in Port-au-Prince? How do they select partners and leaders within these groups?
2. What is the group’s capacity to get aid to Haiti and directly to the impacted groups?
3. What relationships do they have with the community and community groups? Who sets the priorities? Do they have long-term partnerships or are they grasping at straws in the – understandable – need to do something?
4. What percent of funds will actually get to Haiti? What percent is overhead?
5. What is the plan? Does it address the current needs (medical first, food, water and shelter)?
6. If there is a group donating to local partners, and you can donate directly to the local partners, do so (though you may need to through a 501(c)(3) group like Lambi Fund, Fonkoze, or Vanguard Public Foundation).

There are of course the bigger groups – the Red Cross <http://www.icrc.org/> and the U.N. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/in->



Photo by Matt Rousso - Links Haiti Trip

[focusRel.asp?infocusID=91&Body=Haiti&Body1=](http://focusRel.asp?infocusID=91&Body=Haiti&Body1=) that can do much more.

In addition to our starfish efforts we need to build seawalls. 2.5 million people will need to be able to attain the means for food, clean water, and a safe home. Not only for today but for a long time coming. Only a strong, centralized, effective, democratic, and accountable government can coordinate this. Given Haiti's social exclusion (witness the barring of Haiti's political party with the largest political base from Haiti's poor majority from the upcoming elections) I fear that the temptation will be to impose a top-down, militaristic, "efficient" model that favors the elite and middle class and will be personalized (patronage or corrupt). If you're not Haitian, trust that Haitian people are demanding such a response from their government.

If you're foreign, there are some solidarity efforts that people in Haiti are asking (for one example see <http://isla.igc.org/Features/Haiti/ChalmersEsp.html> - you can translate into English) and some very good policy suggestions from long-time Haiti solidarity, civil rights attorney Bill Quigley <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2010/01/14-11>. One particular urgency is to offer life-saving Temporary Protected Status to some 30,000 Haitian refugees - visit <http://www.transafricaforum.org/action-center/urgent-action/tps-haitians-jan13-10> for more information.

From the neoliberal pull-and-push policies that saw a five-fold increase in Port-au-Princes population in two decades, to the centralization of all powers in Port-au-Prince, foreign governments have had some role in creating the problem. We as citizens of whatever country have a role in the solution. A true decentralization, and restoring governing powers to the elected governments of Haiti are now urgent priorities. Perhaps we will learn the lessons of the past and ensure infrastructure to Haiti's poor majority, Haiti's shantytowns, and other low-income neighborhoods. Perhaps also we will learn the need to develop Haiti's national production so it can feed itself, and have electricity and clean water, on its own.

I do have hope. My friends and colleagues in Haiti are community-oriented, strong-willed, and very resourceful. This tragedy forcibly reminds us of the necessity to humbly rethink how we relate to one another, having a development aid based on solidarity and rights, not short-term national interest. There are a host of Haiti solidarity organizations to become involved in, and action alerts to sign up for. A short list is available at <http://www.potomitan.net/resources.html>.

And in the mean time, if you are a medical professional, please consider lending your talents, and if not, generously contribute.

*Mark Schuller is Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology at York College, the City University of New York. He co-edited Capitalizing on Catastrophe: Neoliberal Strategies in Disaster Reconstruction and is currently finishing a book manuscript on foreign aid and NGOs.*

**MARYKNOLL RESPONDS TO HAITI**

Compassionate One,  
our hearts cry out for the people of Haiti:  
for the millions affected,  
for lost loved ones,  
lost homes, and  
lost livelihoods.

Draw us together as your people  
to help in whatever ways we can....

From the [Maryknoll Sisters Website](#)

Within hours of the quake, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers asked Haitian-born **Father Romane St. Vil, M.M.** to be their lead to the Haitian people, delivering help to those who survived.

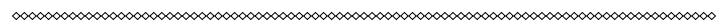


"Romane has heard from only a few relatives so far, with mixed news. His half brother and two children have died; his late mother's house and his sister living in it are OK. Many others remain to be accounted for" (Joe Veneroso MM).

Donations can be made through Maryknoll by going to their website <http://www.maryknollsociety.org/> or by calling 888-627-9526.

An article, *As Haiti tragedy unfolds, faithful question God's will*, appeared in the *The Westchester (N.Y.) Journal News* on Friday, January 15. The author, Gary Stern, interviews Romane St. Vil MM in the article. You can view the article at <http://www.lohud.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=20101170374>. This can be viewed for free for a limited time, only.

Romane was born in Jeremie, Haiti. He joined Maryknoll in 1996.



**DEATHS**

- |                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Rev. Edward F. Malone MM    | November 4, 2009  |
| Sr. Patricia Nolan MM       | November 4, 2009  |
| Rev. J. Daniel Schneider MM | December 5, 2009  |
| Sr. Concepta Brennas MM     | December 25, 2009 |
| Rev. Douglas F. Venne MM    | December 28, 2009 |

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