

Haiti Update – May 25, 2010

Vineyarders **Dr. Bruce Stelle**, **Carolyn Stoeber**, and I were joined by **Deacon Ed Peitler**, the director of Catholic Charities in his diocese of Charlestown, South Carolina, on our mission to Haiti on May 4th. Our suitcases were packed with tents, medical supplies, children clothing, adult T-shirts, and batting for the women working at the “PeaceQuilts” co-operative. All of these items were much needed and greatly appreciated.



Throughout our travels in Haiti the devastation from the earthquake was mind boggling. On one side of a street a three story building would be decimated while on the opposite side a similar sized building would seemingly be untouched making you think a tornado had passed through rather than an earthquake. In Port-au-Prince many of the large churches were destroyed yet the 8 story Mardi Gras tower remained intact!

Our first stop was at our Project in Lilavois. As had been reported the Project is, for the most part, intact. The walls around the compound were damaged and are in the process of being reconstructed. Railings on the second story of the school need to be replaced, and some cracks in the walls need repair. When one of the compound's walls fell it destroyed homes belonging to neighbors. We delivered tents to those families who were living in leaky makeshift dwellings.

Although the fish feed supply had run out there were many small Tilapia in the ponds surviving on bugs and whatever the Sisters could find to feed them. They told me they eat anything!) The vegetable gardens were producing. The chickens had stopped laying, traumatized by the quake. Their numbers were down to six. They had become a source of survival for many as had the gardens when markets and banks were closed in the aftermath of the earthquake.





Sr. Cadet has the school up and running and the children seemed happy to be back in school.

Gifts were delivered to children from their sponsors and new pencils and sharpeners were distributed.



We visited the compound of the Mother House of the **Daughters of Mary Queen Immaculate** in Canapé Vert where their worse destruction had occurred. The Sisters are all living in tents while they are trying to reconstruct living quarters from the remains of the guest house. A daunting task. The two largest buildings loom

overhead in ruins, demolished, as though crushed by a giant. All around them are neighbors living in tents.



Somehow they manage to keep their spirits intact.

Traveling to the Southern peninsula to the clinic in Roche à Bateau we saw crumbled concrete plowed high like snow on either side of the road, devastated buildings, and many, many tent cities.

We stopped and visited an orphanage that had set up camp near Les Cayes. Their orphanage in Port-au-Prince was destroyed killing some of the children. 57 orphans



are now living in a makeshift camp. It had rained the night before we arrived and many of their tents were flooded. We gave them clothing and medical supplies and we are presently seeking better housing for them.



The medical clinic in Roche à Bateau is run by the Daughters of Mary Queen Immaculate trained in nursing and **Dr. Stevenson Joliecoeur**. A second story on the clinic has been recently added but it has no equipment. We delivered medical supplies, and took measurements. Dr. Bruce



discussed the needs of the clinic with the doctor and we are planning to send equipment to the clinic in the near future.



A medical collaboration between Martha's Vineyard and Roche à Bateau is underway!

We visited the three schools of the Daughters of Mary Queen Immaculate in the Southern peninsula. In spite of the distance from the epicenter of the earthquake, one of the schools was deemed unsafe and the children are being taught in a large Unicef tent.

Deacon Ed is setting up a sponsorship program for these schools with the help of school director **Sr. Marie France Syldor**.



We also took time to check in on our artist friends to find out how they were doing. I am happy to report that they all survived the earthquake! We purchased paintings and metal art from them for this summer's **PeaceCraft** Benefit Sale at the Artisans Festival in West Tisbury.

We feel much was accomplished during this trip. Collaborations were solidified and we are confident that our endeavors are already bringing relief and much hope to our Haitian brothers and sisters.

Margaret Mayhew Pénicaud
MV Fish Farm Haiti, founder/director

