

## Haiti Trip Report June 1 – June 6, 2011

### Participants:

Elizabeth van der Weide  
Christophe Nicaise

This trip was a joint Singing Rooster coffee trip and Haiti Project trip

**June 1:** Arrived in Miami with ~200 lbs of supplies requested for renovations and other supplies for St. Marc's

**June 2:** We arrived in Port au Prince and met up with Fedner, who was going to be our driver. We met up with a Haitian coffee agronomist and went to several meetings geared toward building relationships between Singing Rooster and local organizations. The four of us then headed towards Fond Jean Noel (FJN) in the Sud-Est. The river on the way to FJN was too high to cross, so we stayed at the Hotel Cyvadier in Jacmel. Following a late lunch, we went into Jacmel to buy art for fundraising in the US.

**June 3:** After an early breakfast, we headed up to FJN. The town is at the same elevation as Jeannette (2300'), but the road up the mountain is a lot more twisting and steep. When we arrived, we looked at the coffee processing facility they have (for the first stage of processing). The farmers must get their coffee to the processing facility within 24 hours of picking, or it's rejected. The facility can process about 500 lbs per day and it can take a week for the coffee beans to be dried and bagged (longer if it rains!). Everything is done by hand, since electricity is not readily available. We then had a meeting with a group of coffee farmers and the local coffee association, since these men would like to form a co-op.

For lunch, we went to the home of Frere Yvan, a Catholic monk. Frere Yvan runs a school for about 200 children who can't go anywhere else. He also cares for about 14 orphans in his home and is the "nurse" at his clinic. He also smiles and laughs all the time...and glows with the grace of God.

After lunch, we went further up the mountain to Makari (elevation 2775') to visit a coffee farm. It was raining very heavily, so there was an impromptu meeting in the car. And, worried about getting back to FJN, because the roads were so bad.

When we returned to Frere Yvan's home, he took us on a walk to meet the local parish priest, while we waited for the coffee farmers to arrive for another meeting. After this meeting was dinner and conversation with Frere Yvan, listen to the children saying Compline in the other room.

**June 4:** After breakfast, we left FJN and headed to Leogane to meet Eloi. We gave him the serger purchased by the Haiti Project for the clergy shirt program. We saw Mireille (who looks okay, despite her health issues) and Max (who will be attending a prestigious school in PAP next year...Eloi is a very proud papa). We bought some vanilla and headed to Jeannette.

When we arrived in Jeannette, we had a snack and walked around a little. We were very impressed with the tiling/bathroom renovations done in the Presbytere. There are also new bed frames and mattresses. Fedner went to Bondeau for the night, while Eloi, Chris, and Elizabeth talked about a variety of school-related items and went over questions Elizabeth had brought from the SC and others. We also learned that there is no longer a Council of Wise Persons. The Haitian government has requested that

parents get more involved with local schools, so a parent-teacher organization was formed instead. This has been a more active group already.

**June 5:** After breakfast, we toured the rest of St. Marc's. It was great to see what happened with the teachers' dorm (see photos), clinic (painted and cleaned), and to see the new 10 KW generator (see photo). They even have street lights now! We then presented a box of altar candles during the church service. After church, we continued talking with Eloi about the sponsorship program and reviewing finances. In the middle of the afternoon, Pere Gracia arrived with Fedner to share the exciting news that St. Marc's was getting a permanent priest. We reviewed the transition process and then all left for Bondeau (where Deacon Anita Thorstad was waiting for us).

When we arrived in Bondeau and introductions were made, we took a walk with Anita around Bondeau to see all the new development there, including the Presbytere, "village" for the island residents, teacher's school, and cafeteria for the road workers. It's amazing how things are changing there.

There was a small "feast" for dinner to celebrate the Haiti Project's relationship with Pere Gracia and an early night, so we could get to the airport in time for the morning flight.

**June 6:** An early departure for our morning flight...a day of travel and home to Madison.

This trip was another wonderful example of relationship building. Singing Rooster, other NGOs, the DioMil Haiti Project, the S. FL Haiti Project all came together with our Haitian brothers and sisters in FJN, Jeannette, Bondeau...working together, planning together, and becoming one body together, as we walk in love...

Submitted by:  
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The renovated teachers' dorm and one of the seven large bedrooms (with a semi-private bath).



A renovated bathroom and bedroom at the Presbytere.