

Newsletter



St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
Haiti Outreach Ministry

September 2011

Upcoming Events

**SMM Visit to
Haiti**

October, 2011

5K Run/Walk



10/29/2011

Haiti Craft Sale

11/6/2011

Thanks to all
who
participated in
the SMM
Rummage Sale.
The Sale
brought in over
\$15,000 for the
people of Haiti
while giving us a
chance to find
some new
treasures.

Special thanks
to Gerry & Anne
and all who
worked with
them.

Meet the Bankers

When the women at St. Michael Parish elected to establish a village bank, Celeste Wojtalewicz, chair of SMM Economic Development Working Group, knew just where to go for help. Five years ago when starting village banks at St. Isidore, we turned to Catholic Relief Services for the expertise. "This time," said Celeste, "I thought of Mrs. Charles and Mrs. Poteau from St. Isidore. Both women have leadership roles in their village banks and both of their banks have a 100% repayment rate. I have been so impressed with their professionalism and conscientiousness."



*Mrs. Charles, Celeste
and Mrs. Poteau*

This July, 24 women from all over the parish gathered at St. Michael Church to learn how to establish their own village bank. The women at St. Michael were both interested and motivated at hearing the

stories, challenges and successes at St. Isidore.

These bankers traveled long and uncomfortably to conduct the 3-day training session. They organized the training Haitian-style, starting each day with prayers and singing. They were very firm in telling their students of the need to hold people accountable so that their bank can be successful. There will be two more training sessions when they will talk about how to choose a business, how to price products and the initial setup

requirements.

They are Doing It!

(We are so proud to have helped.)



News from St. Michael Parish



As of mid-July the structure at Notre Dame Chapel was about 80% complete. Even though there is nothing inside, it is already being used for Mass. St. Joseph Chapel is only about 30% complete due to the difficulty in getting materials to this remote site. It should be completed by

the end of November.

Music lessons with the new guitars have been going on this summer. Art classes for the Peace Program kids have taken place. The new computers have been delivered; Pere Belange plans to have the computer classroom (and potential internet café) ready



for the start of school.

There is an NGO based in Jacmel that will survey the area to determine if there is water to drill for. No date has been set for the survey. The Peace Festival was held in July. Each day started with Mass and was filled with discussions and activities. A great time was had by all!

P.S. Look again at the picture of the bankers. Don't they just look like successful business people!

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Catholic Church

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HAITI 5K FUN RUN

SATURDAY, 10/2/2011
8AM

MEAD GARDENS

WINTER PARK

REGISTRATION:

WWW.STMARGARETMARY.ORG
/HAITIFUNRUN.HTML



**DON'T FORGET THE
ALTERNATE GIFT MARKET
AVAILABLE AT THE SMM
OFFICE.**

Partners in Hope

In our work in Haiti, we have been fortunate to be able to partner with Catholic Relief Services, Pure Water for Haiti, Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology and MAP International (medical missions). And to our great delight, when we got to St. Michael we learned about two other partners, St. George Parish of West Falls, NY, and Nativity of our Lord Parish of Orchard Fork, NY., which have teamed together to support St. Michael for more than ten years. Their focus is primarily on health though they have also provided tuition assistance, some livestock, and have just finished providing funds to re-construct 2 roads in the parish. Their teaming with St. Michael Parish began 17 years ago with a medical mission trip by parishioners from St. George.

Thanks to our partners there is now a clinic in the parish; a doctor is available there one week of the month and a nurse the other three weeks. The clinic sees 800 to 1,000 patients each month. Patients pay for services according to their ability. "We have been trying to teach good hygiene and nutrition," comments Frank Lewandowski, "but there is so much

malnutrition that it is difficult to be really successful." Frank, by the way, went on the very first medical mission trip 17 years ago and still leads the team at St. George. Frank's dreams for St. Michael: better diagnostics for the clinic, a cistern at every home, and a latrine for every home.

Other partnerships under consideration are with Pax Christi as well as Trees for the Future. Pax Christi along with Catholic Relief Services is looking at our Peace Program for use in other places in Haiti. They actually sent some kids from the slums of Port-au-Prince to participate in the Peace Festival. (It worked out well; the St. Michael young people proved very welcoming to the city kids. And the city kids jumped right in.) Trees for the Future has been planting trees in developing communities around the world for more than 20 years, and they have had a presence in Haiti for almost 10 years. The country of Haiti has been more than 90% deforested over the years. Look for news on the Moringa or Benzolive tree now being used to combat malnutrition.



Cholera has been found at St. Michael parish and at least 4 people have already died from it. We are investigating ways that we can help.



After the October visit to St. Michael, Ken Firlinging will be staying on in Haiti to visit National Park Pic Macaya in the Les Cayes area. This park, established with funds from the United Nations, has birds that are found nowhere else in the world. Though difficult to get to, this park could have potential as a site of eco-tourism for Haiti.

Sustainability Even with so much going on at St. Michael's, we are still absolutely committed to sustainability. The livestock program is well underway, the copiers are generating a little revenue, textbook rental will begin when school starts. We are thinking hard to find ways to support the schools. One reason for offering computer classes is to increase the number of students in the high



Art Class

school, thereby generating more tuition. Of course, we are also interested in improving the scope of education for the students.

They also plan to earn money with the Cyber Café to support the Peace Program. Art lessons going on this summer are intended to help some of the Peace kids earn a little money as well. Let's hope we see some of their creations at the Craft Sale in November.

