



MERCY FOCUS ON HAITI

ANNUAL SUMMARY



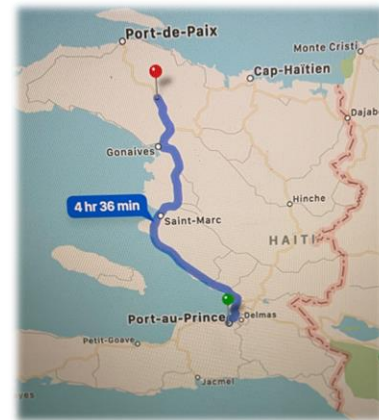
June 2022



Annual Summary July 2021 – June 2022

It seems that Haiti is forever tortured. Violence, earthquakes, hurricanes, mudslides, poverty, and assassinations continue to plague this little piece of heaven, called the ‘Pearl of the Caribbean’ by the French.

The arrondissement (district) of Gros Morne lies north in Haiti about 120 miles from Port au Prince. It could be four hours by auto, but in reality closer to six hours or eight. The road is rough, under construction, or washed out, just a difficult journey, especially on a school bus. Yet, Mercy Focus on Haiti (MFOH) has made this journey often in the past 10 years, demonstrating love and care and with the beginning of a true understanding of the resiliency of the Haitian people.



This Annual Summary is a review of the past year and a report on the 10 years of Mercy Focus on Haiti in Gros Morne. With the beginning of the second decade of our involvement there, it is also a roadmap for the future.



In solidarity with the Laudato Si’ Action Plan and embracing its response to “both the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor,” we also humbly stand in support of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy: Earth, Immigration, Nonviolence, Anti-racism, and Care for Women.

Agronomy

Response to the Cry of the Earth

Response to the Cry of the Poor

Partners: Religious of Jesus and Mary, Quixote Center, Caritas

Through the Grepen Center, just north of Gros Morne, MFOH supports farmers and their families in sweet potato weevil eradication, container and family vegetable gardens, reforestation, soil enhancement, seed development, and animal husbandry. MFOH also supports the hen house and egg production program, which supplies the local community and the Lekòl Jezi-Mari school with fresh eggs – an affordable and vital source of protein.



In addition, MFOH provides training and funding for a ferrocement rainwater harvesting program in the Gros Morne region. These 500 to 1,500-gallon cisterns support farmers and their families with rainwater for fields, home vegetable gardens, clean drinking water, and help control soil erosion during torrential storms.

During this time, MFOH:

- ✓ Provided salary support for the Grepen Center's team of agronomists and agronomy technicians, facilitating their efforts to train and support farmers through a seed bank, weevil eradication, soil conservation, reforestation, and animal husbandry.
- ✓ Provided formal training for 19 ferrocement masons in the techniques of cistern construction and maintenance.
- ✓ Supported the construction of 69 ferrocement cisterns (500 to 1,500 gallons each) in the Gros Morne region, using locally available materials.
- ✓ Continued a "Good Egg" program to increase the amount of protein in the diet of school children at the Lekòl Jezi-Mari school in Gros Morne. Each of the 500+ children was provided a hard-boiled egg three times a week.
- ✓ Expanded hen house operations to a production high of 26,000 eggs in one month!

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Pathway to a Better Life (CLM)

Partner: Fonkoze

CLM is an 18-month accompaniment program that helps ultra-poor women in Gros Morne attain a level of self-sufficiency. They develop the skills and confidence to run their chosen microenterprises, making it possible for them to feed their families daily, send their children to school, build a metal roof over their home, install a working latrine, and have access to clean water.



Since 2017, MFOH has sponsored three groups of 200 women. Each cohort impacts more than 1,000 individuals as well as the local community. CLM's success has been dramatic, with a graduation rate of over 96%!



During this time:

- ✓ 200 women in our third cohort completed the first year of the 18-month ultra-poverty-eradication program. Graduation is slated for September 2022.
- ✓ Children of the women in the CLM program were able to enroll in the Lekòl Jezi-Mari (Jesus and Mary School) thanks to tuition support by MFOH.



Response to the Cry of the Poor

Maison Bon Samaritain

Partner: Religious of Jesus and Mary



Maison Bon Samaritain (MBS), *House of the Good Samaritan*, is a residence for elderly, frail, mentally afflicted, and otherwise homeless people in Gros Morne. MFOH provides staff and program support for the 20-25 residents and capital improvements for the facility. The residents are served by a

full-time nurse administrator, assistant administrator, and others.

During this time, MFOH:

- ✓ Created an environment of dignity, respect, and love for the residents of MBS.
- ✓ Provided salary increases to the staff as the value of their currency plummeted.
- ✓ Created a “Forever Friends” program involving twice-monthly partnership and sharing with schoolchildren from Lekòl Jezi-Mari (Jesus and Mary School).



Lekòl Jezi-Mari (Jesus and Mary School)



Partners: Religious of Jesus and Mary

Lekol Jezi-Mari School in Fon Ibo, operated by the Religious of Jesus and Mary, currently teaches 500+ ultra-poor children, Pre-K – 7th grade. MFOH supports their hot school lunches (often a child’s only daily meal), contributes to tuition assistance, and helps purchase desks and needed textbooks as upper grades are added. Students also benefit from the “Good Egg” program, which adds a protein-rich egg to the school lunch three times a week.

Humanitarian Aid

Partners: Religious of Jesus and Mary, and local MFOH partners.



MFOH provides emergency funds to respond to food insecurity in the Gros Morne region. A group of 150 families first received emergency food, then funds, and training in microenterprises that helped them become more self-sufficient. This training is now the model for the “Travail pour Manger” (Work to Eat) initiative for a new group of 150 families.



During this time, MFOH:

- ✓ Provided emergency food for five months, then funded support and occupational training to 150 families in the Gros Morne region.
- ✓ Distributed materials and/or funds to a local hospital in Gros Morne (Hospital Alma Mater) and St. Luke's Hospital in Port-au-Prince. These included respirators, oxygen, masks, and a wide array of medical items for COVID-19 relief from a substantial donation from the Sisters of Mercy.
- ✓ Due to the COVID pandemic, MFOH responded to a request to cover costs to combat the impacts of the coronavirus on CLM members, including food insecurity, communication needs, and to support economic recovery in the post-COVID period. This support enabled families to procure food and provisions even if their CLM-supported livelihoods became unviable. MFOH also procured communications supplies to ensure continued contact if in-person home visits became inadvisable, and created a post-crisis capitalization fund to jumpstart business failures attributable to pandemic restrictions.



Immersion Programs

Partners: Mercy Education and the Conference for Mercy Higher Education (CMHE)

Immersion programs allow students from Mercy high schools and colleges, along with friends and Mercy Associates, to travel to Gros Morne. Students learn about the Haitian people's virtues, skills, and culture while participating in community-based learning projects; they describe their experiences as "life-changing!" With travel restricted for the past several years because of increased instability in Haiti and the ongoing global pandemic, the focus has shifted to "bringing Haiti to the U.S." through educational activities at U.S. high schools and colleges.



During this time, MFOH:

Saint Joseph's Month

Reflecting on Our Core Value of Justice

with a focus on the Sisters' and Saint Joseph's work in Haiti



This Week!

March 16
Chemin Lavi
Miyò:
Eliminating
Acute Poverty
in Haiti

Coming Soon

March 23
Medical Care in
Haiti

Coming Soon

March 23
Prayer Service for
Haiti



Mariolin Grimes



✓ Held informational talks at the following Mercy educational institutions: Trocaire College, Mercyhurst University, Gwynedd Mercy University, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, Mount St. Mary Academy, Mercy Career and Technical High School, Georgian Court University, St. Joseph's College, Salve Regina University, Misericordia University and the "Young Mercy Leaders Conference" in Dublin, Ireland.

- ✓ Published articles about MFOH, its projects, and the virtues and needs of our Haitian family in the *Global Sisters Report*, the Sisters of Mercy blog, the newsletter of Mercy Education and Viva! Mercy!



- ✓ Worked closely with the faculty, staff, and students at Gwynedd Mercy University who have participated in extensive research on Haiti.
- ✓ Held a successful campaign to acquire and deliver hundreds of reusable pillowcases for bagging the repeated distributions of humanitarian aid (food, soap, etc.) to our families in Haiti.

With few exceptions, these programs have been in place for most of our first 10 years. They have been honed over time, altered, and augmented, to better respond to the needs of the Haitian participants. We listen to them and follow where they lead us. We have found the Haitians are very resourceful and willing to work with each other and with us. They are resilient, and with our help, they now have the hope of a daily sunrise.



Sunrise Over Gros Morne

It was a privilege to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Mercy Focus on Haiti in September 2021! Over 160 participants joined us live on Zoom as we chronicled our history, described our mission, shared our inspiration, and celebrated our partners. See it here:

<https://youtu.be/kuEt73y7ewY>

We are blessed to build on this legacy with our Haitian sisters and brothers into the future.



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