

Hilton Foundation Announces Grant to Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative

It is with gratitude and thanksgiving that Mercy Focus on Haiti, a ministry initiative of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas announces the reception of a grant from the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** as part of their participation in the Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative.

The Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative for Community Empowerment received a \$1.99 million grant from the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** to support economic and human development services to women, children, and families in rural and marginalized areas of Haiti. The Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative was established in May 2021 with the vision to strengthen interrelated programming conducted by member congregations and their partner organizations, and to build a network for shared learning, coalition building, and joint advocacy.

This two-year grant will be awarded to the religious congregations that make up the Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative: **Sisters of Mercy of the Americas**, School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic Midwest Province, The Religious of Jesus and Mary, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice, Sisters of Holy Cross/Congregation Sainte Croix, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth of New Jersey, The Little Sisters of St. Therese, and The Companions of Jesus. Together these congregations have more than forty years' experience working in Haiti with partner organizations such as Beyond Borders and the Fonkoze Foundation.

From the total grant, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas/**Mercy Focus on Haiti** will receive \$380,000 to expand the Chemin Lavi Miyò (CLM) program, known in English as Pathway to a Better Life, and partnership with the Fonkoze Foundation to empower Haiti's poorest women (primarily in rural areas) to lift themselves and their families out of ultra-poverty, with hope and vision for their future. Female heads of households will be trained and coached to develop income-generating skills. Up to now, MFOH has supported three cohorts of 200 women each and plans are in place for more cohorts. At the completion of these programs, 1,000 households will be impacted and approximately 5,000 persons will have been served. This 18-month accompaniment program helps women living in ultra-poverty 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.

In addition to the "Pathway to a Better Life," MFOH's presence in Haiti extends beyond 10 years and supports other impactful programs. An agronomy program supports farmers and their families in sweet potato weevil eradication, container and family gardens, reforestation, soil

enhancement, seed development, and animal husbandry. MFOH also supports the hen house and egg production program, which supplies the community and the local school, Lekòl Jezi-Mari, with fresh eggs—an affordable and vital source of protein. In addition, MFOH provides training and funding for a rainwater harvesting program. These 1,000 – 1,500-gallon ferrocement cisterns provide farmers and their families with rainwater for fields, home gardens, clean drinking water, and help control soil erosion during torrential storms.

Mercy Focus on Haiti also supports the Maison Bon Samaritain (MBS) [English: House of the Good Samaritan], which is a residence for elderly, frail, mentally afflicted, and otherwise unsheltered people. MFOH provides staff and program support for the 20 residents and capital improvements for the facility. Maison Bon Samaritain residents are served by a full-time nurse administrator, assistant administrator, and others. An inter-generational initiative, Forever Friends, unites the residents of Maison Bon Samaritain with children from Lekòl Jezi-Mari.

About the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

International hotelier Conrad N. Hilton established the grantmaking foundation that bears his name in 1944 to help people living in poverty and experiencing disadvantage worldwide. Today, the work continues, concentrating on efforts to ensure healthy early childhood development and sustainable livelihoods for youth, support young people transitioning out of foster care, improve access to housing and support services for people experiencing homelessness, identify solutions to safe water access, and lift the work of Catholic sisters.

About the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

The Sisters of Mercy—an international community of Roman Catholic women—dedicate their lives to God through vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service. For more than 190 years, motivated by the Gospel of Jesus and inspired by the spirit of their founder, Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy have responded to the changing needs of the times.

Through prayer and service, the sisters address the causes and effects of violence, racism, degradation of Earth and injustice to women and immigrants. The sisters serve in more than 200 organizations that work with those in need in the U.S., Central and South America, Jamaica, Guam and the Philippines. www.sistersofmercy.org.