



MERCY FOCUS ON HAITI

ANNUAL REPORT



2022 – 2023

This report provides a summary of the work of Mercy Focus on Haiti (MFOH) during the timeframe July 2022 through June 2023. We are grateful to all of our donors, prayer supporters, and volunteers who make this work possible.

Mercy Focus on Haiti is a ministry of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. The organization was created in the wake of the devastating earthquake in Haiti, prayerful discussions at the Sisters' Chapter meeting in 2011, and a deliberate process to find the mission, location, and partners in country where MFOH could begin its work.

MFOH is made up almost exclusively of volunteers located across the United States. Collaboration with partners in Haiti is either in-person or via remote collaboration tools like Zoom. Travel to Haiti has been virtually impossible in recent years due to political upheaval, extreme economic distress, and escalating gang violence.



Haiti, long besieged by natural disasters and political turmoil, is living through one of its most difficult moments in decades. The assassination of the president in 2021 left a still-unresolved power vacuum that is being filled by vicious gangs and “bandits.” Food insecurity has risen as levels of violence increased, and the economic situation further declined. In this dire situation, MFOH partners in Haiti have responded with resoluteness and courage, and our programs there continue to provide life-changing support and opportunities. MFOH’s work is centered in the Gros Morne region, in the Artibonite department of northwest Haiti, about 4 hours north of Port-au-Prince.

This brief report is intended to highlight the ongoing work in Haiti and some of the new initiatives that will be launched this year. Additional information and points of contact can be found at our website: www.mercyfocusonhaiti.org.



Catherine McAuley
Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

MFOH MISSION

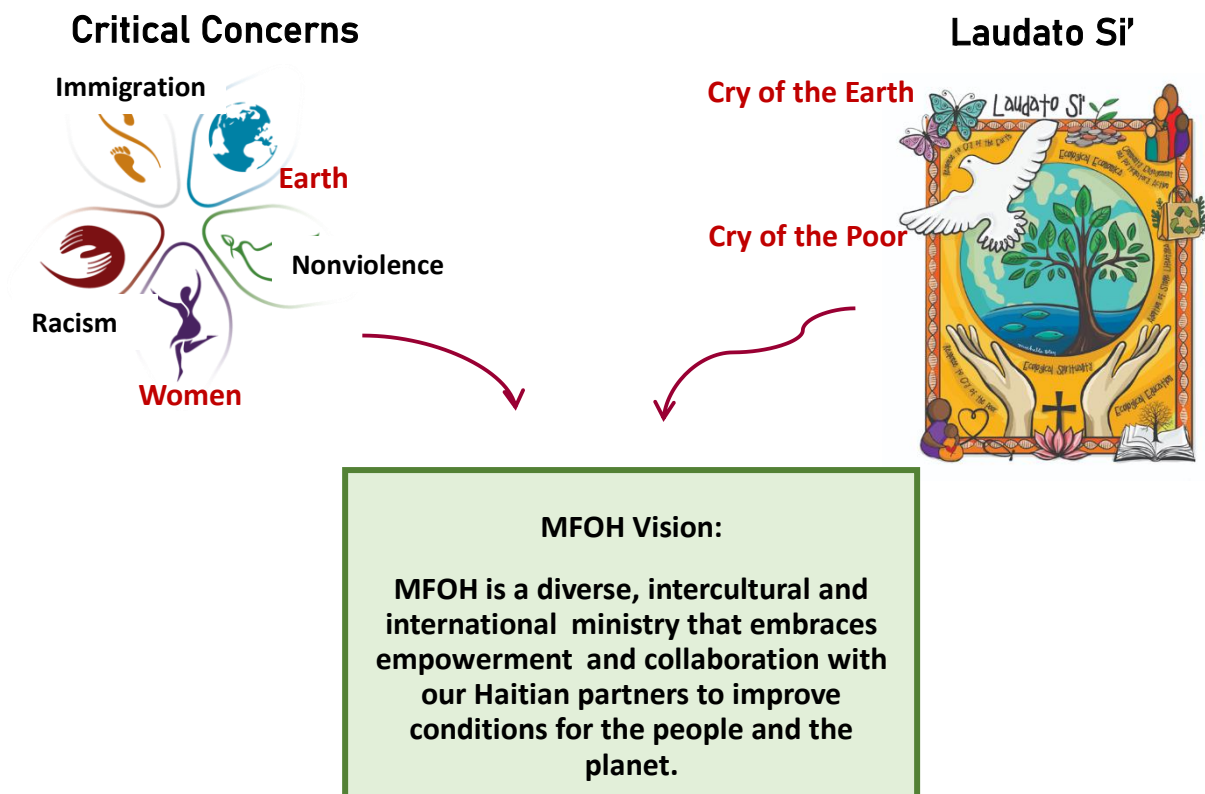
*Passionate for the Gospel
of Jesus Christ and witnessing to
the legacy of Catherine McAuley,
Mercy Focus on Haiti members
are led to service and solidarity with
people who are materially poor,
especially those living in Haiti.*

MFOH INSPIRATION AND VISION

The delegates of the 2005 Institute Chapter of the Sisters of Mercy challenged the community members to intensify their response to the critical needs of our times, and to be open to the call to conversion which such a response would entail. The five Critical Concerns identified are **non-violence**, **racism**, **reverence for Earth**, **concern for women** and **solidarity with immigrants**. Each subsequent chapter has endorsed our continuing commitment to these five Critical Concerns. Attention to these five Critical Concerns is a significant part of each ministry of the Sisters of Mercy.

Additionally, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas has embraced Pope Francis' call to take action to respond to the urgent concerns he addressed in his *Laudato Si'* encyclical. Two of those concerns, **Responding to the Cry of the Poor** and **Responding to the Cry of the Earth**, resonate with the work being done by Mercy Focus on Haiti.

MFOH is at the intersection of the Critical Concerns and Laudato Si'



APPRECIATION

Mercy Focus on Haiti could not continue without the generous support of our donors!

You inspire us and our Haitian partners.



Do you know about our recurring givers program?

Haiti Helpers

**Your recurring gift – small or large – makes a big difference
for our programs in Haiti.**

**We also invite you to join us in prayer daily for and
with our brothers and sisters in Haiti.**

**Contact Gigi at GGlending@sistersofmercy.org
MFOH Development Team**

*** Denotes a Haiti Helper**

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Gifts shown in the listing above are those received 7/1/22- 6/27/23. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, we apologize for any incorrect or missing listing; please inform us of any changes/corrections that need to be made.

Do you know about our legacy giving program?

Callaghan Society

There are many ways you can support MFOH.

For gifts in your will, stocks, mutual fund contributions, and insurance gifts, please consider joining The Callaghan Society.

**Contact Marion Grimes at grimesmv@aol.com
MFOH Development Team**

The Callaghan Society

Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, worked for Catherine and William Callaghan as their household manager in central Dublin. The Callaghans, who were childless, loved Catherine McAuley and regarded her as their adopted daughter; they bequeathed Catherine their entire estate. The Callaghan inheritance enabled Catherine to build the House of Mercy on Baggot Street, with its shelter for homeless servant women, school for poor girls, and daily visitation of the sick and dying poor.

It is fitting that those who name Mercy Focus on Haiti in their wills, seeking to partner with them in their merciful focus on our Haitian brothers and sisters, should be called the Callaghan Society. Through their planned legacy gifts, these donors join the Callaghans, the Mercy family's very first donors, without whose generosity there might never have been a Mercy Focus on Haiti.

MFOH PROGRAM UPDATES

AGRONOMY

Program Update:



MFOH donations helped support the Grepen Center's team of agronomists and agronomy/ veterinary technicians who engage local farmers to develop new techniques, problem-solving skills, and community leadership.

Training included sweet potato weevil eradication, soil enhancement/conservation, reforestation, and animal husbandry, including communal goat-raising. Also supported were satellite nurseries, a seed bank and a lending program for community farmers.

Two key crops – plantains and yams – were expanded to support both food production and income generation.



AGRONOMY

The Grepen Center, just north of Gros Morne, is the home base for the Agronomy team, in collaboration with other partners, for the expert development of animal and agricultural formation programs that are responsive to the needs of farmers and their families in the region. The goal of these programs is the promotion of food security and economic stability in the communities of Gros Morne.

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

PATHWAY TO A BETTER LIFE: Chemin Lavi Miyò (CLM) Program Update:



MFOH funded its **third cohort** of 200 women to benefit from the ultra-poverty eradication program based in Gros Morne. A graduation ceremony for the women was held in December 2022.

A **fourth cohort** of 200 women is underway, completing the rigorous selection process and determining who can most benefit from the life-changing program. Graduation takes place 18 months after the start of training.

Additionally, in partnership with Fonkoze Foundation, MFOH identified several new initiatives that will benefit past graduates of the CLM program. These programs are slated to begin in the coming fiscal year.

Partners: Fonkoze Foundation; Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative

PATHWAY TO A BETTER LIFE ("CLM")

Chemin Lavi Miyò (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%! A fourth cohort is now underway.

CLM – Before and After Graduation



Before CLM, these women:

- ▶ Are unable to feed their families daily.
- ▶ Can't send their children to school.
- ▶ Are unable to read or write.
- ▶ Live in isolated, flimsy, leaky huts.
- ▶ Have no regular income and no hope for the future.

CLM by the numbers:

200 women in each cohort x 5 family members (average) = 1,000 served per cohort.

3 cohorts to date = 3,000 served!

Two more cohorts funded → additional 2,000 to be served. **Impact: improvement in the lives of 5,000 women & children**, and the communities in which they live.



After 18 months, CLM graduates:

- ▶ Feed their children daily and have no untreated malnutrition in their homes.
- ▶ Send their children to school daily.
- ▶ Live in a 1-room house with a metal roof and their own latrine.
- ▶ Have at least two sources of income.
- ▶ Have a plan for the future and the confidence to know they can succeed.

CATHOLIC SISTERS HAITI COLLABORATIVE:

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation awarded the Catholic Sisters Haiti Collaborative for Community Empowerment a generous grant to support economic and human development services for 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 collaboration among the eight member congregations and their ministries in Haiti, and to build a network for shared learning, coalition building, and joint advocacy.

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas / Mercy Focus on Haiti is a member congregation of the Haiti Collaborative. Funds from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation grant are enabling a new cohort of 200 women in the Chemin Lavi Miyò program in Gros Morne, Haiti.



NEW CLM INITIATIVES:

(1) Create five Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) for the graduates of the first MFOH-sponsored cohort. (These are now an integral part of subsequent cohorts). VLSAs provide the women a safe place to save money and access small loans.

(2) Initiate an EdTek program of tablet-based modules to train CLM graduates in the fundamentals of finance and business skills.

These initiatives were developed in response to feedback from CLM graduates.

MAISON BON SAMARITAIN (MBS) Program Update:



MFOH donations helped support the team at MBS -- nurse administrator, assistant administrator, and support staff -- to ensure its 20 residents lived in a safe, dignified, and loving environment.

Additionally, MFOH secured funding to continue the popular “**Forever Friends**” program, a cross-generational program that pairs MBS residents with elementary school children from the *Lekòl Jezi-Mari* (Jesus and Mary School). Through periodic and activity-filled visits and outings, the young school children and the elderly residents forge bonds of deep friendship and supportive family.

MBS

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.

New Initiative: virtual walk-throughs of MBS and visits with the residents by a US-based MFOH member who is a physician.

Partner: *Religious of Jesus and Mary*



Forever Friends resumed this year after the reopening of school in January 2023. The twice-monthly meetings involve games, storytelling, crafts, and snacks or a meal. The students and residents look forward to this change in their usual fare each month.

The children bring their songs and energy. The elders share their wisdom and encouragement.

The expense for the art supplies, games, food, refreshments, and field trips are funded by FOREVER FRIENDS, Inc., a Milwaukee-based not-for-profit organization whose mission is rooted in the value of intergenerational relationships.



[Photos on this page have been altered to protect the identity of the children and residents, due to the risk of kidnapping in Haiti].

IMMERSION Program Update:



*Immersion:
Bring Haiti to the campus
for Mercy high school
and college students*

MFOH works in partnership with Gwynedd Mercy University's Task Force to Focus on Haiti. This academic year, the school raised awareness and funds for the Rainwater Harvesting program in Gros Morne, and hosted Hebert Artus, Chemin Lavi Miyò Director, on campus to meet with faculty and students.



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

IMMERSION

The MFOH Immersion Committee simply wishes to increase knowledge of and thereby serve our Mercy Critical Concerns as they are revealed and expressed in Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, and now suffering a potentially catastrophic civil unrest complicated by a pandemic. In partnership with Mercy schools, we hope to help our Mercy students realize the interconnectedness of all human lives and to grow in their global knowledge and sympathy as they become actively engaged in campus projects focused on Haiti.

RAINWATER HARVESTING Program Update:



*Rainwater Harvesting:
MFOH-trained masons
building cisterns
for farmers & families*

MFOH continued to leverage the program's formally trained masons to build additional cisterns throughout the Gros Morne region and to train additional masons through a formal days-long training program. In the last year, over 100 cisterns have been built!

The chief mason has increased production to 10 cisterns a month, for an additional 120 cisterns.

RAINWATER HARVESTING

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.



New initiative: MFOH will support in-country training for cistern beneficiaries to teach them the fundamentals of vegetable gardens, tree planting, and reforestation. This will support food production as well as opportunities to sell surplus food at market.

JESUS AND MARY SCHOOL

Program Update:



*Jesus and Mary School:
Food, tuition,
& material support
for elementary school*

MFOH continued to contribute tuition support for needy students and funding for the daily hot school lunches. An 8th grade was added to the school this year, and plans are underway to initiate a 9th grade in the coming year.

Funds were also provided to address the need for kitchen remodeling and to build school benches for the new 9th grade.

MFOH continues to support the “Good Egg” program which provides a hard-boiled egg to the children for their nutritional needs.

Partners: Religious of Jesus and Mary

JESUS AND MARY SCHOOL

Lekol Jezi-Mari School in Fon Ibo, operated by the Religious of Jesus and Mary, currently teaches 500+ ultra-poor children, Pre-K – 8th 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.

**“Passing the Baton”:
Reflections by Kathy Thornton, RSM
Executive Director, 2015 - 2023**



So the Music Can Continue

It was a little more than a year ago that I decided it was time to step back from my responsibilities as Executive Director of Mercy Focus on Haiti, to pass the baton to someone else. Over the months that image of passing the baton stayed with me.

I came to understand that I'm passing the baton so that the music can continue, that is, the music of Mercy Focus on Haiti. Music is not a singular activity, nor is the work of Mercy Focus on Haiti...

The music of Mercy Focus on Haiti continues because of you, because of your generosity...

The music of Mercy Focus on Haiti continues because of your commitment to the people of Haiti...

The music of Mercy Focus on Haiti continues because of the creativity and determination of our partners in Haiti...

The music of Mercy Focus on Haiti continues because of the Sisters of Mercy...

The music of Mercy Focus on Haiti continues because of the members of the MFOH Governing Council...

With joy and delight, let the music of Mercy Focus on Haiti continue.

Blessings,

Kathy Thornton, RSM



**MFOH Leadership Team
As of July 1, 2023**

Executive Director (To be announced)

Governing Council (GC) Members:

Scott Allison	Bob Keenan
Anne Connolly, RSM	Ann Lemire
Tatiana Díaz	Eileen McDonnell, RSM
Alex FieFie	Karen Schneider, RSM
Kathy Gauthier *	Sarah Smith *
Elizabeth Hasson	Kathy Thornton, RSM
Andi Healy *	Jill Weber, RSM
Dale Jarvis, RSM *	Jenny Wilson, RSM

* Also serves on Executive Committee

The Executive Director serves as an ex-officio member of the GC and Executive Committee.



MFOH Governing Council members and other volunteers recently gathered at Mercy-by-the-Sea in Madison, CT for their annual in-person meeting to conduct annual and strategic planning.

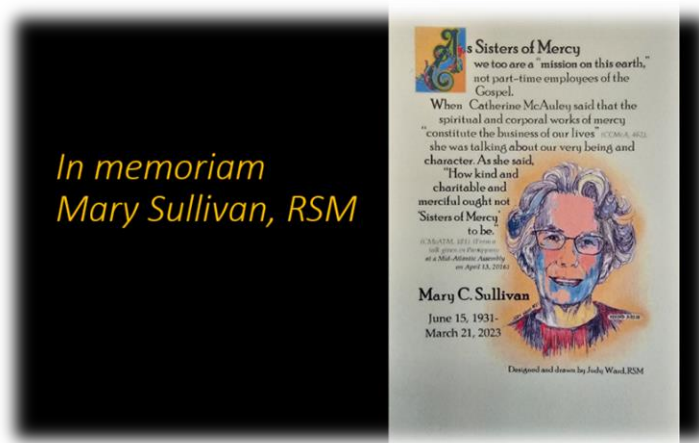
MFOH Committee Member-Volunteers

Scott Allison	Marion Grimes	Kathleen Roeder
Anne-Marie Bourque, RSM	Elizabeth Hasson	Betty Scanlon, RSM
Anne Connolly, RSM	Andi Healy	Karen Schneider, RSM
Beth Dempsey, RSM	Dale Jarvis, RSM	Sarah Smith
Tatiana Díaz	Bob Keenan	Kathy Thornton, RSM
Maureen Falcon	Ann Lemire	Paul Tramo
Alex FieFie	Anne Marie Lesutis, RSM	Jill Weber, RSM
Marge Friedhoff, RSM	Eileen McDonnell, RSM	Jenny Wilson, RSM
Kathy Gauthier	Maria Vidala Moise	

MFOH Staff

Gigi Glendinning, Development Assistant

Executive Director (To be announced)



Sister Mary Sullivan was one of the founders of MFOH. Always passionate about and deeply engaged with the mission, she held multiple leadership positions with MFOH. She is missed!

To learn more about the vital work you are supporting in Haiti:



Mercy Focus on Haiti
PO Box 11
Gwynedd, PA 19437

www.MercyFocusOnHaiti.org

www.facebook.com/MercyFocusOnHaiti



