



HAITI MISSION, INC.  
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**MAY 2014**

*"To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.  
This is to have succeeded."*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## **Voluntourist!!**

Our resident freelance writer and dear friend Joe Cunningham was on the April Holy Week Mission trip. As we have come to expect whenever Joe is present on a mission, an already powerful experience is made more interesting and insightful by way of his unique point of view on things. This trip was no different. The title of this lead article for our May newsletter is a word he coined for HMI missionaries. It speaks volumes. We are truly volunteer missionaries in the best sense of the word but we are also tourists, entering into special, precious and sacred places where life is somehow distanced from reality. The world that is moving so fast with so much technology can't be bothered with slowing down or stopping to reflect on what has happened and why. Here is Joe to explain some of it in his "out of the ordinary" way.



"Last night around midnight, as we looked out of our Miami

hotel, watching the orange glow of the lights, the constant movement of cars, and the never-ending hustle of a rich and great American city, we thought about Haiti, about our trip back to a country that mesmerizes us, to a country at once desperate and poor and so stunningly beautiful and full of hope and incredible people of great faith in a better life for themselves and their families. And we wondered what we'd find after almost three years away. Our flight went off as smoothly as ever and we were airborne as the sun came up over the eastern horizon. As it had each time before, our bodies tensed a bit as the emerald waters of the Caribbean gave way to the dark brown, de-forested mountains of Haiti, which slipped quietly underneath us.

Our group, led by David Fakier (11th trip) and his wife Laura (9th trip), includes Laura's nephew Peter Gillchrist, a 17-year old senior-to-be from Kansas City; Laura's sister Jenny Meyer and her daughter Sarah from Huffman, Texas; David's sister Beth Deitchman and her husband Marty from Princeton, NJ; HMI Board Member Hilton Michel and his wife Mabel, Kara Beth Mercantel and her twins Emile and Julian and Terri and I. Besides David and Laura, Terri and I are the only two who have been here before.

We spent the afternoon loading our distribution knapsacks with two gallon Ziploc bags filled with the remnants of 300 pounds of beans, 300 pounds of sugar, 300 pounds of flour, 6000 vitamin pills, and other items that will be given away to almost 170 families hidden among the banana and palm tree-d forest of the coastal mountains. Over the next several days we'll visit the orphanage in Jérémie, hike the mountains checking on wells and identifying huts that can be replaced with houses. We'll go Inside the prison in Jérémie and feed the prisoners and maybe we'll find some time to take the kids of the village down to the beach, pay them a few dollars to clean it up, and then laugh and play with them in the surf.

There's nothing like a good night's sleep to shake the cobwebs off of two days of travel and then immersion back into a Haitian lifestyle. And last night was nothing like a good night's sleep. It's not so much the noise from the generator, or even the tropical heat, the sweating on top of the sheets, and no breeze. Last night it was the mosquitoes. There were only about 15-20 of 'em, but there was a party and a feast, and I think I was the main course. But like everything else down here, there was something positive in the moment; escaping the biting and heading outside to the balcony afforded a 2am view looking over the Caribbean while a full moon rose high and a huge ship passed slowly in the distance. For a moment, with the stars blinking overhead and the noises from the coastal jungle quiet, you can forget the poverty and misery around you and simply sink into the beauty of the moment.

We take an early morning drive down to the HMI sponsored chicken farm - David driving one truck over the washed out main road and me driving the other. The hope of HMI is that economic development projects like this can provide a few jobs and provide resources right in the villages that need them the most. From there we drove back down the road to where donations are providing the funds to build - with local labor, more concrete houses - lifting another Haitian family out of a 400 square foot house made of tree bark and banana leaves and into a 800 square foot concrete structure with a tin roof instead of one made of palm leaves and ripped shirts. Part of the HMI philosophy is that if you provide the funds and hire local villagers to build these houses, you help create a marketable skill for laborers, pay them for their work, and dramatically improve the quality of life for the homeowner and the Haitians who can build the houses. For all of us, those seeing the misery for the first time and those of us seeing the incredible progress of the last several years, every moment is stunning and we can't wait for tomorrow so we can jump right back in. I just hope the mosquitoes have moved on.

This morning we prepared for the food and vitamin distributions, and almost 170 people arrived at the gate at 10am and we distributed bags of rice, flour, macaroni, vitamins and cash vouchers. To a person everyone here would tell you that we all get so much more out of this than we give. With a "mesi" (thank you) from them and a "pas de quoi" (you're welcome) from us, a hug and a kiss as they exit the line, there's not a person here from the HMI side that doesn't feel humbled by the opportunity to be here. If you ever question whether or not this is something that you could do, moments like this remove all doubt. A trip like this is not about what you are doing for someone else, it is the humility you feel when you realize that the only thing separating you from the people you are serving is an accident of birth.

If you think a trip like this is all hot, sweaty, uncomfortable labor, it's not. At HMI we're voluntourists. The money that HMI raises and sends down here goes to the people here. They build the houses, they teach in the schools. We come to observe and the Haitians graciously allow us to be a part of their lives. We're not preaching, we're not "trading" religion for money and material possessions. We are guests in a beautiful country with beautiful people and even though there may not be the creature comforts that we're used to back home, you can't find anyone who wants to go home. It's a beautiful time in a beautiful country with beautiful people. Wish you were here."

See what I mean. Joe is incredible in expressing his insights into Haitian life. I know it is because he has a passion to help his fellow man but especially the poorest of the poor that are found in Haiti. The complete account of the trip can be found on his blog posted on the HMI home page. Be sure to take time to read it all. You will be moved through the gamut of many emotions. Most especially you will be proud that you have been called to be part of the HMI adventure.

## Down to Business

Here we are, less than two weeks out from our annual golf tournament/silent auction and the intensity level is building. As we approach that festive and glorious day, we can't ever forget its importance. This is the HMI primary fundraiser. This is the fuel that powers the engine of love, hope and commitment. Most especially these are the funds that multiply and magnify all other donations.

The current rate of return on deposited \$\$\$ in a bank or savings accounts are so small that it is embarrassing to discuss them in investment conversations. Your HMI investments are so different. Thanks to the intercession of Rebecca Claire Fakier, her parents and the board of HMI, creative management and utilization of funds have guaranteed that almost all of the funds raised at this event will be matched dollar for dollar to be used to build houses and drill water wells in the Jeremie Region of Haiti – particularly in the village of Numero Deux and Ravine Sable. All of the income from the Silent Auction is guaranteed to be used as matching funds.

With the funds from our annual “gala at the golf course” we can build a house for a donation of \$3750 and drill water wells for \$6000. Those numbers are half or less than what it used to cost us just a few years ago. Most especially, no where can you get the promises that come along with your wise investment in the work of HMI as we serve the poor and needy. “When you give, give generously and not with a stingy heart; for that, the LORD, your God, will bless you in all your works and undertakings.” (Dt 15:10) And then the famous passage from the book of Tobit should resonate and encourage our hearts. “It is better to give alms than to store up gold, for almsgiving saves from death, and purges all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life.” (12:8-9).

Our event promises to be very special again this year and has us full of hope that we will be able to continue building a “house a month”, drill more water wells and address unforeseen needs as they arise. It won't happen without a concerted effort on everyone's part. Everyone can do something. Most especially we need more teams to play. The more teams of course the more revenue we receive, but the more people on the course the more exposure we get for all the beautiful silent auction items. We have a stunning array of items this year. Wow!! People have blessed us with beautiful, unique and exciting items of all types. We need more Tee Box sponsors. Invite your family, friends and business associates to consider a \$100 ad or donation in memory of a loved one to support our work. Most especially come on out and lend a hand. Come mingle with others who feel the tug at their hearts to help the needy via the HMI adventure.

Fr. Joe will be there. We will have a special Mass at 8:15 after the first flight of golfers leave in their carts and then the day will be filled with food, fun and fellowship. See you there!!

## Silent Auction Dollars at Work



**Building House – Changing Lives**

**Once a Month!**



## Haiti Mission Golf Tournament/Silent Auction

May 9th

Silent Auction items are up on the web!! Again this year there are some really great items and you can begin bidding now!! [www.haitimissioninc.com](http://www.haitimissioninc.com)

### **“FAIE’S FACTS”**

#### **Spring—a Time for Rebirth**

*A time for* warm air to replace the frigid cold of the past winter;  
*A time for* Christ's Resurrection to come forth from the cross' splinters.  
*A time for* flower blooming brightly to give us hope;  
*A time to* canonize two of our great popes.  
*A time for* us to share our generous gifts with others  
By drilling wells and building houses for our Haitian brothers.

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This newsletter is dedicated to raising funds to help build more houses and drill more wells through our Silent Auction and Golf Tournament. Whatever you do will be wonderful!!

**Yes Deacon Lloyd, I want to help the annual Silent Auction/Golf tournament be better than ever this year so that more of the forgotten poor will come to know that God loves them and we love them. Good Luck and God Bless!**

\_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to sponsor a team in the golf tournament. \$600  
(please print down a form from the website or call Don at 985-209-3228)  
\_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to sponsor a \$100 tee box ad in the name of

\_\_\_\_\_ (or in memory of a loved one)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (please print down a form from the website or call Charles at 985-227-3741)

\_\_\_\_\_ I can't make the tournament

**Here is my immediate donation to use where most needed:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

This monetary gift is made in memory of \_\_\_\_\_,  
please send an acknowledgement card to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Send me envelopes to be a monthly "helping hand":  
\_\_\_\_\_ I will be a prayer partner and pray for the Haiti Mission.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Please put me on your email/info list. email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in going on a mission trip. Call me @: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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*Haiti Mission Inc. is a 509(a)(1) tax exempt public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.*

***Haiti Mission -Caring with Generosity and Joy***

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Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Thanks for helping!!**

Haiti Mission, Inc. does not discriminate because of race, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin or financial status.

*“He who has compassion on the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his good deeds.”Pvb 19:17*

<p><b>Upcoming Events</b> May 9<sup>th</sup> – Annual fundraiser – Golf Tournament and Silent Auction</p>
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