



Rotary Partnership for Haiti

Changing Lives - Creating Futures



Project Overview - An Innovative Rotary-to-Rotary Partnership: Making the Impact of the Whole Greater than the Sum of the Parts.

Background: In May, 2008 representatives, from several Rotary Clubs located across two different Rotary districts in Minnesota, together with representatives from *Haiti Outreach*, met to discuss how they might be able to combine their energy, talents and resources to most effectively collaborate and make a big difference in the lives of the people in the Central Plateau region of Haiti.

Haiti is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped countries in not only the Western Hemisphere, but also in the whole world. Rotary has already embarked on significant projects in Haiti to bring safe water, healthcare, education and other vitally needed resources to benefit the people that live there. In partnership with organizations such as *Haiti Outreach* on safe water projects alone, real change has already taken place. In the words of one elderly Haitian woman, *'since the well has come, the children have stopped dying'*.

Realizing that a great deal more can and needs to be done, and wishing to have a more profound and 'game-changing' impact in assisting the people of Haiti to move from a 'hand-out' to a 'hand-up', these Rotary clubs have established *'Rotary Partnership for Haiti'*. The member clubs believe that there is a significant multiplying effect and benefit than can be derived by combining the resources of several clubs to take on larger projects that these clubs would not be able to otherwise address individually.

This partnership has initially been formed by the Brainerd, Hutchinson and Minneapolis-City of Lakes Rotary clubs, and additional clubs and resources are already being added. Each of these clubs has considerable previous experience working on international projects both inside and outside of Haiti. However, it's not expected or envisioned that this venture evolve into something much larger than a handful or two of clubs in order to preserve agility and speed.

Purpose: After consultation between representatives of these Rotary Clubs and representatives from *Haiti Outreach*, the initial focus of the consortium efforts will be to fund and construct a secondary school in the community of La Victoire in the central plateau region of Haiti. *Haiti Outreach* is non-profit organization committed to the development of Haiti, already well established and experienced in this region with a permanent staff of 18 people and country manager on site. They have constructed safe water wells throughout many local communities for over 10 years, as well as two public schools in the Pignon area, only 8 miles from La Victoire. In their relationship with local community leaders, they have a solid understanding of the needs in the area. They also know what it takes to get work accomplished in the country, as well as how to work with local and national government officials. Haiti Outreach is based in Minnesota and is managed by a Rotarian.

Plan: Illiteracy is a major problem in Haiti – only about half of the population can even read and write. In addition, there are only enough PUBLIC secondary schools for 2% of the students to attend. With the addition of private schools, there still are only enough secondary schools for 18% of the students that age in the whole country. The Central Plateau region of Haiti has a population of over 500,000 people. In this region of approximately 3,000 square miles, there are only three public secondary schools. Given the high poverty level of the area, most students cannot afford to attend the few private secondary schools. Unless there are public secondary schools to attend that their families can afford, they simply are not able to further their education and have to stop at the 6th grade level.

In an effort to move beyond safe water and into a sustainable means to develop an educated population so that future generations can make further progress, educating the youth of even the most remote regions of the country is critical. The La Victoire area has a population of about 10,000 people with no public secondary school. Work is already underway in this same community on a safe water system, and so education is the logical next step to advance the community.

Resources: Haiti Outreach has already established agreements with the Haitian Ministry of Education and the member of Congress who represents this region to fully staff and support the school once it is constructed. But the national government has no money to construct public secondary schools. The mayor's office and other local government officials are eager for a public school to be built, and there is community land available for the construction of a school.

It is expected that the total cost of the project, as managed by the US and Haitian based staff of *Haiti Outreach*, will be approximately \$200,000 (USD), with completion targeted for September 1st, 2009. Because Rotary International (RI) Matching Grant funds are not eligible to be used for building projects, there is no expectation that funds from RI can be provided. However, other corporate, foundation, non-profit and individual sources for funding may also be available. The consortium members are in the process of working with their own clubs and others to assess both their willingness and ability to assist in this project.

Timeline: The school year in Haiti starts in September. Working backwards from then, it's expected that the construction and outfitting of the school will take five to six months. Therefore, in order for the school to be complete by September of 2010, all of the plans, approvals, and funds need to be in place by January 2010. That is our goal.

Dale Snyder

Haiti Outreach

612-929-1122

dalessnyder@aol.com

Patrick Joyce

Minneapolis City of Lakes Rotary

612-819-0782

patrick.m.joyce@Medtronic.com

Richard Slieter

Rotary Club of Brainerd

218-251-1892

Richard.G.Slieter@state.mn.us

Steve Gasser

Rotary Club of Hutchinson

612-226-2606

steve@vimm.com

La Victoire School Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why Haiti and Why Now?

Haiti is, by all accounts, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. The poor economic, health and educational systems combine to create circumstances that even the most determined individuals would have a hard time overcoming without outside assistance. The government there has little funds with which to make significant changes in these circumstances, even if they could agree to do so.

Five years ago, a group of Rotary Clubs from District #5950 and #5960, plus some others, partnered with World Vision and Haiti Outreach with the goal of changing some of these circumstances in a sustainable way. The Safe Water Plus Project began to drill and repair 141 wells and build 1,200 latrines in the Central Plateau in Haiti, affecting 100,000 people or more.

Clean water literally saves lives, especially when medical care is expensive and not very available. Death rates in the targeted Haiti project area ranged as high as 23% for children under the age of five, mostly from contaminated water. As of December 2007, 100 wells have been drilled or repaired and 958 latrines have been built. This work is its final phase this year.

It's true that, without clean water, it is essentially impossible to lift Haiti out of its poverty. But the ultimate goal of the creators of Safe Water Plus in Haiti have always been much more than drilling wells to improve drinking water conditions. That was just a beginning. It has been to take this impoverished country and help it to develop in as many ways as possible – in ways that would make a lasting and significant difference. As many Rotarians have made volunteer trips to the area to see the unbelievable conditions, and worked to build homes and school desks for students, they have seen first hand the need to do more.

The broader goal is to target resources and energy to help the people of Haiti 'springboard' forward and make significant progress in areas of water, health, and ultimately economic opportunity and growth. But if the children do not get a good education, none of that will occur for this generation or the next. In the spirit of trying to move forward to the next level, and in keeping with doing 'substantial things' that make a sustainable difference, the La Victoire Public Secondary School project was created.

What are the schools like in Haiti and why is there such a need?

There are schools available for only 62% of the elementary school students and only 18% of the secondary school students. And of those, only about 10% of Haiti's schools are public - the rest are private. It costs approximately about \$8 USD to send a child to public school in Haiti, compared to \$50-\$300 USD or more per child for private school. Most of the people cannot

afford that private school tuition. The government has little resources for building schools, especially secondary schools.

Where are the schools needed?

While they are needed all over Haiti, they are very scarce in the Central Plateau region of Haiti, where Rotary is actively engaged in the Safe Water Plus projects. Because of this activity and familiarity, community leaders have sought assistance from Haiti Outreach and Rotary in getting schools built. The secondary school population of this region is around 90,000 children. Today there are only 3 public secondary schools serving these students. As you can see, public secondary schools are in short supply and thus great demand.

If the Haitian Government can't afford to build the schools, then who will maintain and staff them once built?

The Haitian Government has promised to staff, supply and operate any schools built, as well as provide ongoing maintenance of the school buildings. This scenario has already been implemented in this area very successfully.

Who would manage the project, perform the construction and ensure a successful outcome?

Haiti Outreach's mission is to collaborate with the people of Haiti to build and maintain community-initiated projects that advance their development. They have been on the ground in Haiti for over 10 years doing just that. Besides their clean water projects, Haiti Outreach is building public schools to allow those who cannot afford private school tuition to get a true education – which is crucial to personal and national development.

Haiti Outreach has built two public schools that already serve over 1,300 students per year in the Central Plateau region. This construction project would also be planned, designed and managed by Haiti Outreach in partnership with a consortium of interested Rotary Clubs. The actual construction would be contracted to local firms with whom Haiti Outreach has years of successful experience and relationships.

Why was La Victoire selected as the location?

The town of La Victoire has asked Haiti Outreach to build a public secondary school in their community. La Victoire is a community approximately 8 miles from Haiti Outreach headquarters which are in Pignon. There is a public primary school in La Victoire, but no public secondary school. As a result, students either need to go to private schools, which few can afford, or they simply do not continue their education.

La Victoire is a community where Haiti Outreach is already drilling and working on safe water projects. The greater town has approximately 10,000 residents, yet the closest public secondary

school is in Pignon, which is 8 miles away and full of students from that community. Even if they were not, the road between the towns is very poor and most Haitians do not own vehicles so it is not practical for students to get over there.

How large will the school be?

It's expected that the design will be very similar to other schools already built by Haiti Outreach, which is quite simple and made of concrete and steel. The design calls for seven classrooms, each with a capacity of up to 60 students each (serving over 400 students in total), as well as an administrative office. The project would also include the desks and blackboards for the classrooms. It will be built strong enough to add a 2nd floor at a later date, should that be desired.

How much will it cost and what is the timeline for the project?

A consortium of Rotary clubs in Minnesota are working to identify and raise the funds needed for this project. The cost of the project is expected to be approximately \$200,000 USD. The school is targeted to be open in September of 2009, and the construction process will take roughly 6 months to complete. If the funds are raised by February of 2009, the school can be built and open on time for the start of the next school year.

In the past, the Government in Haiti has not always been very stable. What impact does this have on the proposed project?

The people of Haiti and the Haitian government know very well the importance of education for their children. A person with an education is highly respected there. Many parents, even in primitive, rural areas, work very hard to scrape together enough money for their child's tuition and school uniform. Even in the most unstable times, the government has done whatever it can to pay the teachers and administrators to keep the public schools open. There has never been any question by any faction or party that the education of their children has primary importance.