

October 14, 2013

These past few months have been very exciting for The Tree of Life Orphanage. As I last wrote you, we opened the orphanage in July to fifteen children between the ages of 4 and 11. The dormitory, kitchen, and dining room were already in place; and a staff was hired to take care of them during the summer months.

Between then and now, a four-room school building has been constructed. This was made possible by my classmates at Hackley School, Class of 1962 and envisioned by fellow classmate, Ken Bernhard. Ken has helped me in so many ways to plan for the orphanage's needs and direction. In addition, we hired four teachers and a tutor to work with the children. On October 1, the school officially opened for our fifteen children (with uniforms and backpacks) and 50 children from the nearby community who could not otherwise afford to go to a local school. Presently, we have grades kindergarten through third/fourth grade and are following the Haitian national curriculum. We have a big challenge ahead of us because there are several children who are eight years old who have never been to any school.

This is a typical school day schedule for our children:

- Out of bed by 6 a.m.
- Make beds, wash, brush teeth, dress, etc.
- Breakfast at 6:45-7:10
- Flag raising and prayer at 7:30
- School from 8:00 to 10:00
- Thirty minute recess
- School from 10:30 to 12:30
- Community children leave
- Lunch from 12:45-1:15
- Do homework with tutor from 1:15 to 3
- Free time
- Dinner at 6
- Bed by 7

Each day, they are blessed with a place to sleep, three meals, clothes, a good education, recreation and crafts during their free times, and a loving staff of women caretakers, teachers, and administrators.

This summer, The Tree of Life helped to sponsor a program in New York City that promoted NGOs (non-government organizations) who are helping improve Haiti's future in many ways. Konbit Mizik (a community music facility) was the main organizer,

headed by Nick Cannell and Cyndy Jean. The event was held in the Ogilvy Theater on September 7 and honored The United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery team and Michele Mitchell, director and producer of the award winning documentary “Haiti: Where Did All the Money Go?” The evening included a film showing, musical and dance performances, a silent auction, a live Skype chat with a group in Haiti, and a VIP reception on the rooftop. We were honored to have been part of this event.

Finally, thanks to some of my students, Daamiya and Nicole, for making bracelets and selling them to raise money for the children.

I am grateful for all who have helped our orphanage grow. What a huge difference it has made in these children’s lives.

Sincerely,

Roger Garrison

P.S. If you wish to make a donation or have a question, send it to Tree of Life Orphanage, PO Box 324, Katonah, NY 10536. Children can always be sponsored. (\$30 a month or \$360 a year).

- website (www.treeoflifeorphanage.org)
- e-mail address (info@treeoflifeorphanage.org)
- Facebook (Tree of Life Orphanage)
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