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## Opportunities for Communities, Inc. Newsletter

June 2012

Dear Elizabeth,

See below for several exciting developments! Thank you for your interest.

### OfC Property Improvements



OfC's classroom building in Bellabe got a colorful facelift! After a team of local hired workers applied spackling (mixture of cement and sand) to the concrete blocks, which deteriorate if not spackled, a team of OfC volunteers applied some traditional Haitian colors on the exterior! On the interior, we applied a less-intense yellow to keep the space bright and cheerful. We added a covered porch in front of the classroom doors, giving us a nice spot to meet outside but out of the sun and rain. Some of us found it to be a great place to sleep on a hot, humid night!



Other improvements recently made include installing metal doors on the house and the two bathrooms. This will provide more security when nobody is there. We also strung barbed wire around the perimeter of the property to keep grazing cattle out, and will plant cactus to form a protective hedge. Thanks to Roseline (the coffee lady), we'll soon be planting corn, pigeon peas, and some banana trees!

Costs of these improvements were covered by a generous anonymous donation. Let us know if you'd like to volunteer for our next work week, or support the upkeep and improvement of our facilities.

### Microlending Program Update - A Success Story



In OfC's December 2010 Newsletter we described a microlending program where OfC provided a start-up-loan for two young men from Bellabe - Jacques and Woude - so that they could purchase two concrete block molds and start a block manufacturing business. Nearly two years later, Jacques continues to manufacture blocks for local customers. On the site pictured here, he produced 300 blocks in one day!

Woude worked with Jacques for a year, then left the area to live with relatives and start a new block-making business. To repay their loans, Jacques and Woude produced 2,000 blocks at cost for our projects at the Lafrasilere School!

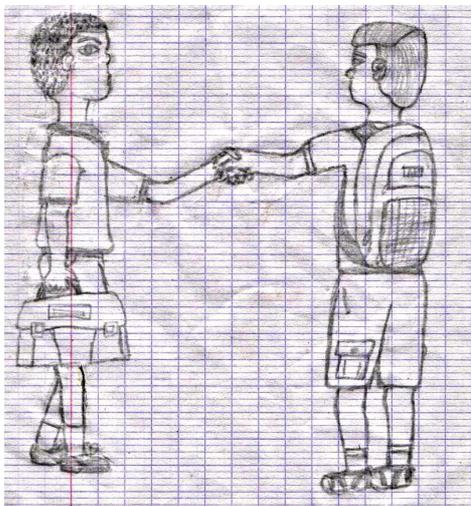
Thank you Joyce!



Joyce (4th from left) January 2010

OfC's Board of Directors member Joyce Schaubert recently retired and moved to Florida with her husband Dan. Because of her relocation, Joyce has resigned her position on the board. We want to take this opportunity to thank Joyce for all her service and support for OfC. Before joining the Board, Joyce served as an OfC advisor. She was active in all our programs, and participated in our January 2010 trip, when the Bellabe Village Council made us Honorary Residents. Everyone at OfC - in the US and in Haiti - will miss Joyce, and we hope she will join us in Bellabe again someday soon!

## Lekol Dete 2012 Update



Winner of this year's T-shirt design contest is Lavana Kenlove. The theme is "friendship"

Thanks to all our kind supporters, Lekol Dete 2012 is ready to go! Founders Amanda Mundt and Amos Filius met in June to iron out the final plan. This year 250 children are expected, and more would come if there were room! Eight talented teachers, two headmasters (including Amos), two aides and four kitchen staff are excited to deliver educational and fun programs for the combined group of Restavek (indentured servant or slave) and free children.

Although we have funding for the program - teacher salaries, supplies and buses to take the students and staff to the beach for a closing celebration in August - we still do not have enough money to provide a meal program as we did last year. Sadly, the schools that the children attend during the school year received no food from the charity school lunch programs, so many children are chronically hungry and some are

starving. Providing a solid meal every day during Lekol Dete 2012 will be an important step toward restoring these children's basic health and development needs, and allow them to learn and grow. Meals (with meat or beans) cost only \$1 per child per day. With 250 children, that's \$250 per day, or \$6,000 for the summer. Currently, we have raised over \$3,000.

***Please consider making a donation so that we can feed all the children every day - for some it will be their only meal.***

[Make A Donation](#)

## Cape Cod Fund Raising Bike Ride

OfC alums Cyn Kendall and her daughter Chaeli Barbaro (see Education for All Children, March 2012 Newsletter) found a new way to support the education of the children of our adopted village, Bellabe: riding their bikes on Cape Cod!

Chaeli, Cyn, her husband Jim, and Zach Mundt rode their bikes on the Cape Cod bike trail starting from Provincetown early on May 13. They had fantastic weather and a devoted support



Zach, Cyn, Chaeli and Jim

team - Cyn's son Noah and her parents. Thanks to many generous donors, they raised more than \$2,000 - enough to ensure that all kids in Bellabe will attend school in the 2012-2013 school year.

## OfC Alumni News - Brennan McKenna

OfC veteran and recent Ithaca College graduate Brennan McKenna launched two creative fundraisers during his last semester. For the first one he set out collection jars with descriptions of OfC and our projects. Students put their spare change into these jars, and it really added up! His second project involved convincing fellow students to give up a meal for OfC. Here's how it worked: students would have the dining hall charge their meal cards for the skipped meal, and the College kept track of these donations, and sent OfC a check! Thank you Brennan and the temporarily hungry students at Ithaca!

## OfC Announces Upcoming Courses!

### **Haiti: July 3 - July 11**

Lekol Dete 2012 will begin on July 2nd with a week of teacher training and testing of course materials, games and crafts, and the following week the 250 children will begin a five-week summer school session! Join OfC and help out with the teacher training week, and work with the children - Restavek and free - and the teachers to start the program with a bang! For those interested in health, we will be running a community health survey and screening program in Bellabe during this course.

### **Haiti: August 5 - August 12**

Lekol Dete 2012 will end on August 10th. Join OfC for the final week, including a day at the beach at Port Salut with the children, teachers and staff! You'll never see more joy in one place than the day Lekol Dete goes to the beach!

OfC is planning a session in **January, 2013** that will focus on life in the mountains, including mountain life, agriculture including permaculture, and an excursion to Pic Macaya - home of one of the only remaining cloud forests in the Caribbean. Visit Les Cayes, the birthplace of Jean Jacques (John James) Audubon.

*Thanks for taking the time to learn more about what's happening at OfC.*

Doug Albertson, President, Board of Directors  
 Ken Mundt, Board Member  
 Timothe Indrik, Haitian Project Coordinator (Les Cayes)

Opportunities for Communities, Inc.

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