

Opportunities for Communities, Inc. Newsletter

May 2013

Dear Elizabeth,

It's hard to believe, but "Lekòl Dete 2013" will be our third annual summer school! The children, their families and the community now recognizes OfC's Lekòl Dete as an opportunity for Restavek (indentured servant) and "free" children to learn, play and grow together and to help break down the social and cultural barriers that often prevent the Restavek children from learning, participating in sports and other activities that other children enjoy.

Please consider making a special donation for Lekòl Dete 2013, and be part of the excitement of the educational programs, food program and beach day closing ceremonies for 200 beautiful children!

[Lekol Dete 2013 - PayPal donation](#)

Ouragan success - National Tournament



Ouragan FC - 2009



Ouragan FC - 2013

OfC-sponsored Ouragan FC (soccer club) has made it to the 3rd Division Boys National Football Championship! Congratulations to the team and our own Timothe Indrik, President and Founder of the Ouragan FC Under-20 team! Keep an eye open for updates this summer as the Ouragans ("Hurricanes") take on teams from all around Haiti. Not only are the Ouragan players incredible athletes, they are remarkable young men. Timothe and their coaches require them to stay in school and to belong to a church or community group so that they are role models for younger children and learning how to be productive members of their communities. **Go Team Ouragan!**

OfC partners with the University of Massachusetts (UMass) School of Public Health and Health Sciences (SPHHS)

Since OfC's beginning, UMass students and faculty (Professors Dan Gerber and David Buchanan - also one of OfC's Advisory Board members) have been active participants in OfC courses in Haiti, in independent studies for credit, and holding fundraising events on campus. With the January OfC course, the OfC-UMass collaboration expands to include several structured projects as part of the Masters in Public Health curriculum. This will be

expanded in the 2013-2014 academic year to include for-credit directed research and public health practice opportunities for graduate students - including field work in Haiti - and service opportunities for UMass Public Health undergraduates.

UMass graduate students Alice Fiddian-Green and Travis Gagen describe their work and their experiences with OfC.



UMass group - January 2013

Alice Fiddian-Green : Rural Pre- and Post-natal Care



Alice speaking at Village meeting

I am an MPH student at UMass SPHHS, and I spent 2 ½ weeks in January in Bellabe, implementing a needs assessment to determine the access to and quality of care available for pregnant women and infants in the village of Bellabe. With the guidance of Professor David Buchanan, Community Health expert Epi Bohdi, MPH, and pediatrician Dr. Laura Price, I developed the needs assessment, including questionnaires and data collection instruments (in Haitian

Kreyol!) used during one-on-one interviews with the young women of the village. Over the previous semester, the other students and I met weekly with the UMass/OfC advisory team at OfC headquarters, and we discussed our research goals and ideas, and prepared for the field research part of the assessment.

What an experience! Not knowing what to expect, I was particularly struck by the positive and welcoming nature of the people that I met and interviewed (with the kind assistance of Stephanie Voltaire - UMass MPH student and other translators). Despite having limited access to health care, employment, education, and clean and running water, each woman from the village greeted the UMass/OfC team with big smiles, an amazing openness, and a willingness to share their ideas about how to improve life for those living in Bellabe. I'm still busy analyzing the data we collected and soon should complete my report. I am planning on sharing the report and my findings not only with OfC and UMass, but also with the kind residents of Bellabe. I feel strongly - consistent with the methods OfC teaches and promotes - that those I interviewed continue to participate as a team in the process of translating the needs we identified into plans and proposals that are responsive to my findings as well as acceptable to the women in the community.

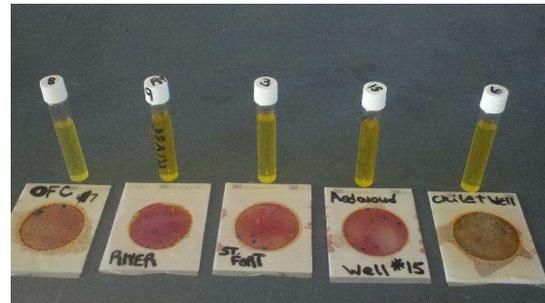
Travis Gagen: Safe drinking water for the Bellabe community



A troubled political history has left Haiti with little government support for basic human needs such as safe drinking water. Working with OfC give me insight on how relationship building and teamwork with the 300-resident village of Bellabe can accomplish small projects to improve the health and quality of life for its residents. After months of preparation, I was ready to launch my project, but first needed to present my project to the Village Council and win their support and buy-in. To my amazement, I was warmly welcomed by the Council and the village - and over the next several days, a team of volunteers from the village, a translator (OfC's Samy Emmanuel from Port-au-Prince) and I surveyed every dwelling in the village (ranging from cement block

structures to huts of woven strips of wood and thatch roofs, evaluating the quality and placement of their latrines (if they had one), and identifying every source of drinking water. Next, we tested the water from the major wells and the river using a Colilert 24-hour test for fecal coliforms (indicating contamination from human and animal wastes).

Results of the 24-hour Colilert test revealed that ALL drinking water sources in the village were contaminated, and further testing using a petrifilm incubated for 24-hours demonstrating clear E. coli contamination in every sample. Our team presented the results to two members of the Village Council, and we immediately formed a village water committee to begin to tackle the problem(s) we identified.



Under the leadership of the village water committee, two programs were developed and implemented during our stay. The first was to provide immediately, in a central location, a source of safe water. The second was to train community health aids to go door-to-door and assist families with the proper treatment of their drinking water with bleach (provided by OfC and the UMass Team).

Our long term goal: raise the funds needed to provide a deep well for the community.

March 2013: Bellabe Village Blood-Pressure Screening Program

Students from the University of Massachusetts, Clark University and the University of Colorado screened nearly every adult resident in Bellabe for high blood pressure and high blood sugar. Most importantly, our team, led by Sarah Mundt, RN, trained and worked with three young women from Bellabe (Fredcia, Roudeline



and Samentha) who had volunteered to become Community Health Aids during the January programs. Screenings took place on three mornings at OfC's classrooms, as well as home visits by the Community Health Aids to villagers unable to attend the scheduled screenings. Eight members of the community identified as having high blood pressure were taken to the local clinic in Bois Landry and were treated. Family and friends were invited to help support these folks and to encourage them to keep up with their treatments. The three Community Health Aids will continue to monitor residents using the equipment provided by OfC.



OfC High School course, February 2013



A OfC team of high school students pitched in to paint the kitchen at the community school at Lafresiliere (above, left) and teach the children Bob Marley's unifying song, "One Love." They also taught some English words and phrases and entertained students at the Maranatha school for Restavek children in Les Cayes (above, right). The children and teachers at both schools appreciated the OfC team's programs.

Massif de la Hotte Mountains



Pic Macaya with its cloud cap from the road between Les Cayes and Jeremie

A highlight of the January 2013 trip was a two-day hike in the mountains. The Massif de la Hotte, with Pic Macaya its highest peak at 7,700 feet, is just to the west of Bellabe. We often look at these mountains in wonder, as they seem so close yet so inaccessible. What's most intriguing is that they hold one of Haiti's remaining bits of forest. OfC hopes to develop a course for students to learn more of the sensitive ecology of this area

and perhaps help the local residents find ways to conserve it. We will be developing this course and will explore some more next January. Watch for our announcement!

Haiti Course announcements

Lekòl Dete 2013: June 30-July 10, 2013

Join OfC leaders for Lekòl Dete teacher training week, followed by the opening sessions

with 200 children! Be a part of something great where continued success can be measured by the lasting friendships formed among the children, living Lekòl Dete's slogan, "Nou tout se youn" ("We all are one"). As Restavek and free children grow, they will realize that the Restavek system limits children's potential to learn, develop and contribute to society, and should be dismantled.

2014 courses will be announced in our next newsletter

for more information contact: registrar@opportunitiesforcommunities.org

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)

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