

## THE DIOCESE OF NORWICH OUTREACH TO HAITI MINISTRY

*"...You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

The Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti Ministry serves the people of Haiti in the Christ Roi (Christ the King) neighborhood of Haiti's capital city, Port-au-Prince, and in thirteen parishes and communities in and around Port-au-Prince, through our Twinning Program. Outreach to Haiti has been working in Haiti for decades based on the foundation built by Haitian Ministries and Hospice St. Joseph.

Outreach to Haiti initially was established by lay Catholics in the Diocese of Norwich (Haitian Ministries 1985) and the Congregation of St. Joseph (Hospice St. Joseph 1989). In 2002, the Congregation of St. Joseph reorganized their community and asked the Diocese of Norwich to assume control of the Hospice. After Haiti suffered a devastating earthquake in January of 2010, the Most Reverend Michael R. Cote, Bishop of the Diocese of Norwich, merged the two organizations later that year creating the Diocese of Norwich Outreach to Haiti Ministry.

**Our Mission is Helping Haitians help Haitians.** As a sponsored ministry of the Diocese of Norwich, Outreach to Haiti is committed to serving the people of Haiti in the spirit and values of the Gospel. Providing sacramental and spiritual support, we have a Medical Clinic and Community Outreach Health Care Services, a Food and Nutritional Supplements Program, Education Sponsorships, Parish Twinning Opportunities, Community Development, and Hospitality for international visitors. Because jobs are hard to come by in Haiti, we only employ Haitians to staff positions in Haiti.

Haiti, the poorest and most densely populated country in the Western Hemisphere, literally sits on our nation's doorstep. The majority of the 11 million Haitians live on less than \$2.41 a day or \$880 a year. Fifty-seven percent of all Haitians do not receive recommended immunizations and fifty percent of all children suffer from malnutrition (the leading cause of death in children aged five years and younger). Haiti has two doctors for every 10,000 people, and the country has a total of approximately 125 ICU beds. There are very few to no safety nets for Haitians as they encounter life's problems.

As if this isn't bad enough, the lives of our Haitian brothers and sisters have been made worse by on-going political unrest, gang violence, and the pandemic; which have led to rampant inflation and significant food shortages. More and more people are visiting our clinic for medical aid, masks to protect themselves against COVID-19, and food for their families.

### **MEDICAL CLINIC, HEALTHCARE SERVICES, AND FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

Our clinic is staffed with Haitian doctors, nurses, health agents, a technician, and pharmacist. We have an onsite diagnostic laboratory and pharmacy; we annually perform 5,500 or more lab tests that allow us to screen for and treat common diseases in Haiti that have a huge impact on mortality and morbidity. Our small pharmacy is well stocked with prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Our medical personnel annually treat more than 6,000 patients, vaccinate 7,000 people, provide 300 expectant women with comprehensive maternal and pre-natal education and medical services, and supplies food and nutrition to 150 moderately to severely malnourished infants and children to return them to health. Our Health Agents educate 12,000 community members on health issues related to

disease prevention, water sanitation, and good hygiene; and they visit thousands of families to identify the sick and, if need be, refer them to the clinic.

This year due to all the issues taking place in Haiti including the pandemic, our health agents began distributing “food kits” to the most-needy families in the neighborhood we serve. These kits contain rice, beans, corn, oil, salmon, and 250 Haitian Gourdes so families can buy cooking gas.

Our staff also has ramped up services, supplies and food to meet the growing need of those infected by COVID-19 thus incurring unforeseen expenses. Our staff purchased PPE, additional medical supplies, and reconfigured the clinic’s waiting area to isolate suspected infected patients so services could continue during the infiltration of the pandemic. Haiti right now is experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases resulting in the shutdown of some of Haiti’s limited hospitals.

## **EDUCATION**

Outreach sponsors approximately 200 or more students annually to attend primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools. These young people would not be able to attend school without our help as most parents cannot afford to send their children to school. There are few public schools and so private schools are the only option. We must help young people to earn an education and develop their God-given potential to help themselves, their families, their communities, and their country.

Our secondary and post-secondary graduates help tutor and mentor younger students so they will succeed. Another program supports girls in secondary schools who are more likely than boys to leave school when their grades drop due to increased responsibilities at home. We also offer workshops and programs on a variety of subjects including English as a Second Language and a Computer Lab.

Another program – Fanm Avanse Kounyea (FAK): in English, Advancing Women Now! – is for women who have to support their families. This life changing program works with disadvantaged women whose families depend on them. FAK provides women with business skills training, micro-capital and loans, and coaching to build confidence and develop skills to become successful micro-entrepreneurs. This enables women to support their families, send their children to school, continue their self-development, and lead healthier lives.

We thank God daily for all that we are able to do because of friends and parishioners like you who support this much needed ministry to help our brothers and sisters in Haiti. St. Matthew (22:37-39) reminds us of the message Jesus Christ shared, “... *‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*”

***You can be a part of our diocesan ministry; the second collection is dedicated to help Outreach to Haiti. Thank you for your generosity. Please pray for us and for Haiti. For more information visit [www.outreachtohaiti.org](http://www.outreachtohaiti.org)***

**WE HOPE YOU WILL SUPPORT US. GOD BLESS YOU AND THANK YOU!**