

# many hands

QUARTERLY

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## A SEASON OF GROWTH

**BY CHRISTI AND CRAIG GABHART - OPERATIONS MANAGERS, HAITI**



The Many Hands campus

It's Mango Season! For rural Haiti, this is known as the time of year when no one goes hungry. In the Central Plateau where the Many Hands for Haiti campus is located, there are numerous varieties of sweet, juicy mangoes to 'pick' from. OR, if you use the traditional Haitian method of obtaining mangoes, there are many varieties to 'throw a rock at' to get it from the tree, into your hand, and into your mouth.

Last week, we waited for the Missionary Flights International plane to arrive at the Pignon grass airstrip with a college team that was saying goodbye after a week of mission service with Many Hands. The wait was longer than anticipated due to a delay in Port au Prince because the recently elected Haitian president was in transit. There was time to enjoy one last delicious mango, or two, picked directly from the tree while we waited. The team marveled at this beautiful experience. We wondered how many airports there are that can offer fresh picked mangoes right on the airstrip while passengers prepare for departure. We concluded that this is the best airport in the world.

Haiti is always a beautiful land but more so right now during the rainy season. However, the rain brings MUD, so Many Hands is currently doing some road maintenance for our own sake but also as a service to the community. So far, two big truckloads of gravel have been delivered and spread over places that have been impassable.

The rainy season is an exciting time of year for Many Hands agronomist, Claudin Augustin. Gardens at Many Hands and all around are turning green as planted seeds begin to grow. Claudin's second year of offering a class in the agronomy technical school is met with great interest by twenty young adult students. The class also offers business teaching by Many Hands Leadership Development Manager, Appolon Paul Elysee. Animal Husbandry is soon to expand as Many Hands has secured a rental agreement for two carreau of land on which to work.

Also, Many Hands ministry continues to grow as we hear God's call to multiply the work being done. Investigative efforts are well underway to identify where and how to multiply the Many Hands program called Thrive for Five by offering a nutrition center in a second community. Many Hands Chaplains, Pastor Lumanes and Pastor Jean Ronel, visited every home in a neighboring community to help determine the people's need and interest. With a desire to educate families on the critical importance of proper nutrition during a child's first thousand days of life which begins during pregnancy, we have found a very promising connection with Dr. Jean Baptiste, a well-respected Haitian doctor with emphasis in pediatrics and gynecology.



Waiting on the airstrip in Pignon



Mango season has begun



One of many home visits for Lumanes



The roads after daily rains

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Our first year preschool class in “L’ecole Lumiere” has shown visible success. Teacher contracts are being signed in preparation for year two, which will include a total of 40 students.

Jean Rene Deforge, Construction Coordinator for Many Hands, is serving with Safe Homes projects. We continue to use concrete floors in homes as a way to drastically improve living conditions which in turn fosters improved health. This is a great short-term mission team project where team members work side by side with a Haitian concrete crew. Safe Homes has also brought six new homes for individual families in recent months, with five upcoming home building projects being planned, and with an endless number of families still in need.

Throughout the summer, Many Hands campus will see over 100 team members. Team activities are woven into the whole of Many Hands ministries making short-term mission teams a vital part of the work being done in Sylvain and the surrounding area. Often people come to know Christ on the arm of a trusted friend.

The desire and reason behind every effort of Many Hands ministry is to BE that arm of a trusted friend. Praise to our Lord who is willing and able.



MH4H Staff ready for a home visit



Delivering goats in Sylvain



Laying the foundation for a house build

# FIRST 1000 DAYS

BY BEV BRAND

We are excited to announce some changes in the current Thrive for 5 program in Sylvain for the upcoming school year! Currently, the Thrive program has two foci: a feeding program for moms and children ages 0-2 and a pre-school program for children who are 3 years old. For the 2017-18 school year, the Thrive program will have a new name and a more intentional focus. We will also be adding a new pre-school class for 4 year olds.

The first 1,000 days of life – from conception to age three – open a critical one time window of opportunity for healthy physical, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive development. During this period, children’s brains can form 1,000 neural connections every second. Science is clear that the first 1,000 days of life lay the foundation for the rest of that child’s life.

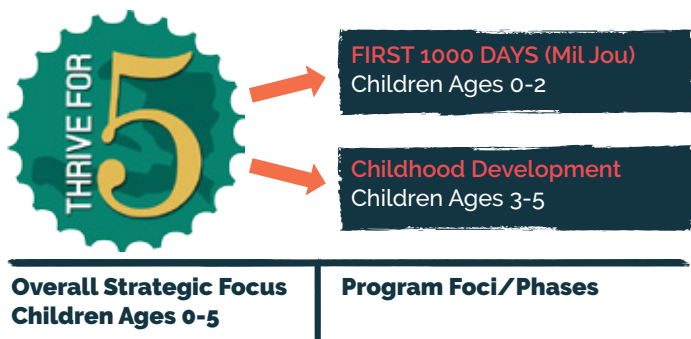
The Thrive program will have a new area of focus called ‘First 1000 days’ (Mil Jou in Creole), to reflect the focus on this critical time frame. We will continue to provide feeding a nutritional meal each day, health checkups monthly, educational classes on parenting, health practices and spiritual development. However, we will be adding a more intentional focus on stimulation and brain development for the 0-2 year olds in the program.

The program will also undergo a change in time; starting in September, the program days will be in the afternoon rather than mornings. This will allow Haitian mothers to do their normal morning chores, come for lunch, and stay for afternoon class one or two days a week. The School of Light building will be used for early intervention for the children while mothers attend classes at the Equipping Center.

School of Light will also be adding a classroom for 4 year olds! The room is being made ready, and teachers are being hired for the 2017-18 school year. Lots of exciting things are happening, so we appreciate your prayers and continued support of these programs.



Ms. Juna teaching our Yellow Iron School of Light class



Stimulation through play is critical for cognitive development and strengthening motor-skills



Nutritional meals will continue to be provided at lunch

If you feel led to help us impact lives through our education programs, you can donate to **support a new teacher**. Checks can be sent to MH4H directly to PO Box 204, Pella, IA, 50219. Or you can donate online at [www.mh4h.org/donate](http://www.mh4h.org/donate). Donations are tax deductible.



# WORKING WITH DETERMINATION

The Ag Department is working hard to develop a greater agricultural understanding within the Pignon region. At this time, we're hosting our second Agronomy Technical School training course. We currently have 18 students who come for two trainings every Monday and Friday. Each 3 hour session includes two hours of Agronomy Technician training taught by Claudin, as well as one hour of training in Management Tools and Accounting, by Appolon.

This has been an opportune collaboration as the Ag students will learn methods in not only how to grow crops, but simultaneously how to make their gardens profitable. We are hopeful to see a more sustainable yield from this addition to the class.

The students in the class are growing a vegetable garden. They are responsible to plow, plant, and maintain the garden. Each day a designated group of students comes to water, weed, and do whatever other applicable garden duties are needed. You can always find them in the dirt with big smiles and laughter, as they collaboratively groom the rows of cabbages, leeks, carrots, and spinach!

In addition, Many Hands Agricultural Department in general has been busy planting peanuts, Congo beans, sweet manioc, corn, and a vegetable garden. The peanuts and Congo beans have a longer term yield as we'll harvest them at the end of the year. The other crops will be used for the Thrive program and some for the Guest House here on campus. We have also continued to share goats in Sylvain with our goat sharing program. Our objective through this program is to improve the living conditions of each family.

We are willfully working with determination and wisdom to further the Kingdom of God here in Sylvain and the Pignon area. Please continue to pray for God to use Agronomy to advance His plans!



The Agronomy Technical School class



Students working in their training garden



Appolon teaching the Management Tools and Accounting class

## HELLO TO THE MANGO TREE

Earlier this year, we announced that we were re-opening and operating the Mango Tree with the intention of selling the store to another ministry for them to operate. When the time came to complete the sale, the deal fell through so the Mango Tree will not be sold to that ministry at this time.

As we felt called to re-open the Mango Tree, we believed it was also very important to keep it open through the summer operating under Many Hands for Haiti. However, we didn't have management to run it past the initial two weeks. As we prayed, God lifted some names for us to contact, and we are pleased to announce the day-to-day leadership of Mango Tree for this summer: Austin & Jessica Blanchard and Josh DeWaard.

Austin Blanchard, a Central College graduate, originates from Oskaloosa. Since graduating, Austin has been involved in missions around the world. He has spent time in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Hawaii, and England. Austin is passionate about communities coming together to experience and enjoy God. He and his wife, Jessica, believe that communities transform with God by starting small businesses in small communities. Jessica, from England (come hear her accent!) has spent the last 6 years serving with YWAM in Australia and Papua New Guinea, and she will be spending some time volunteering at The Mango Tree.



(L to R) Josh DeWaard, Jessica Blanchard, and Austin Blanchard

Josh DeWaard will be in Pella through this summer, but he is no stranger to the town. After graduating from Pella High in 2013 and graduating from Central College in 2017, Josh co-founded Unite Midwest, an annual event to unite believers across the region to experience God through the fullness of worship.

We are excited for the Mango Tree to return to its roots this summer by creating a missional space where people can feel a touch of Jesus. The store will be open Tuesday-Sunday, from 2 PM – 10 PM.

Volunteers give us the ability to create the world-class experience we want for the store. If you are interested in volunteering with us this summer, please send an email to [joshuadewaard@gmail.com](mailto:joshuadewaard@gmail.com). These volunteer hours will still count towards a mission trip with Many Hands for Haiti.

# IRENE'S PLACE

To help with the increase in teams visiting our campus, we have recently started construction on a new building. Irene's Place will be a three-story building, providing accommodation to longer-term teams and permanent U.S. staff. The first floor will provide several rooms and shared spaces for teams staying longer than the usual week. The second floor will provide more of an apartment-style layout, giving couples, families, and permanent staff a self-enclosed space for living. The third floor will be an educational space, perfect for classes, group discussion, and education.

Irene's Place is so named after Irene Van Roekel, who bequeathed a financial gift allowing us to begin construction. Irene's servant heart was the inspiration for the name. Our hope is that those who stay at Irene's Place are able to go out into the communities of Pignon with the same heart of service that Irene shared in her lifetime.

We are currently set for the building to be finished by mid-July.



## NEW LOOK FOR GUEST HOUSE

Just a grassy field of scrub and trees two years ago, the MH4H campus has become a bustling hub of work and ministry. Our Guest House has seen hundreds of visitors already, enabling many to experience Haiti first hand.

Though painting the large building had been on our to-do list for some time, we were finally able to use a 'quiet' week in April to give it a much needed coat of paint. Marcena Schwab organized a team of professional painters from the Pella area to complete the mammoth task. The team consisted of Kyle, Caleb, and Hannah Wipf, Greg Renaud, and Guy and Marcena Schwab.

The team worked through sun and rain to get the job done. They were able to complete almost all of the building's exterior and a majority of the interior. Even with multiple interruptions from tropical rains, they finished the project in five days.

"It seemed a daunting task, but we all got to work and got it done. A great work ethic goes a long way on a project like this. It was the willingness of all these great volunteers that made it possible. I thank God for each person on this team!" said Marcena Schwab.

This paint not only helps beautify the campus, but it will also protect the Guest House from the elements for years to come.



## TEAMS IN HAITI - MARCH TO MAY



**Lutheran Church of Hope, Des Moines, IA**  
March 11-18, People: 18



**Painting and Leadership - Pella, IA**  
April 22-29, People: 10



**Trinity Christian, Chicago, IL**  
May 11-18, People: 11



**Mango Tree & Central College, Pella, IA**  
May 18-24, People: 18