

many hands

QUARTERLY

Transforming together, to be love in action, in a broken world.

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THIS IS LOVE IN ACTION

Liz Clarke, Education Manager, Haiti



Liz Clarke (L) during a group activity at the Maliarette campus



Rusunie Nelson with her son and twin girls



Viola and Christelle

January 2020 was a very special month as it not only marked the one-year anniversary of our Maliarette campus and programs, but I also personally celebrated four years of service with Many Hands IN Haiti! Praise the Lord! What an exciting time as we continue to see our organization developing well beyond our Sylvain borders. It was a leap of faith and the results have blown us away!

Since starting our programs, Many Hands for Haiti has believed that “every child deserves to be fed from 0-2”. We stand by this foundational value through the First 1,000 Days Program. Within this program we are investing in the child’s future by ensuring proper nutrition today. Daily, over 3 million children all over the world are missing the mark of their developmental potential. This is due largely in part to the lack of nutrition available to them. Serving over 350 meals a day between our two centers, we know the efforts of this program WILL pay off!

Of course, not all of the pay-offs will be immediate.

Meet the Nelsons. Mathias and Rusunie, parents of 22-month-old twin girls, were the very first family to enroll in our Maliarette program and they have continued to be faithful participants. Micah Aurand, who has been visiting and spending time with the family, shared: “Through the First 1,000 Days Program, Mathias and Rusunie are beginning to understand the connection between proper nutrition and development and the role these will play in their daughters’ capacity to learn in later years. Even Mathias said to me: ‘I see the value of this program which is why, if my wife cannot attend on a certain day, I make the effort to bring the girls to the program myself.’

“The Nelsons are also already dreaming about their children’s education. Rusunie wasn’t shy to share her hopes and dreams for her daughters: ‘I want them to grow up and be able to go to college. They can choose what they want to study...but really, I would like one of them to be a nurse.’”

For some families, the future gain is the focus. For others, the effects of good nutrition today bring immediate and life-changing transformation.

Having already missed the mark to a healthy start, Christelle was 12 months old when she joined our Maliarette First 1,000 Days program. Her big brown eyes, lifeless, seem to pop right out of her tiny head. Just below you couldn’t miss her big puckered lips that were not yet able to maneuver a spoon. She hadn’t begun teething and for these reasons alone, she was miles behind in her nutritional development. Stunted growth is usually related to economic distress. Viola, Christelle’s mother, was skin and bones. At the rock bottom of poverty, she was desperately struggling to feed herself, let alone her two young children.

Today, through daily meals and extra interventions, Christelle is working towards a healthy growth chart status and Viola’s face has changed. Old Christelle was lethargic and uninterested. New Christelle has energy, is full of life, reasoning, laughter, and has become very opinionated! She LOVES the program and all the staff. As she receives weekly weight checks, the First 1,000 Days assistants have all become trusted friends. This is where the First 1,000 Days program is about so much more than food.

I once heard someone challenge a group of young people with this question: “How can we use physical hunger to impact spiritual hunger?” When we met Christelle, her tiny body was physically hungry. She was weak, therefore susceptible to illness and stunting, keeping her from living out of her fullest potential. On the same side of the coin, something we aren’t able to measure with a scale, her spirit was also weak. Christelle lives in a home where evil spirits are honored and called upon to help with various problems. In a culture of voodoo, fear reigns, inhibiting people from living out of their fullest potential spiritually. Now, with their friends at First 1,000 Days, Christelle and her mother are not only fed physically, they are also fed with God’s Word, the bread of the spiritual life. They partake in various classes that teach about life-saving nutrition, sanitation practices, and the health of their eternal soul.

As I reflected on the question of using physical hunger to impact spiritual hunger, I realized that is exactly what we are doing! In the process of simply offering a meal today, we are building tomorrow: physically, cognitively, emotionally, communally, and spiritually.

This is Love in Action.

#1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR TO SPEAK



In 1987, John O'Leary was a curious nine-year-old boy. Playing with fire and gasoline, he created a massive explosion in his home and was burned on 100% of his body. He was given less than a 1% chance to live. Today, O'Leary uses his epic story of survival to inspire over 50,000 people at 100+ speaking events each year, where people consistently describe him as "the best speaker we've ever had."

Many Hands is proud to bring John O'Leary, #1 Bestselling Author and Speaker, to Des Moines as the keynote speaker for the third annual Many Hands Business Breakfast on October 2, 2020. When Tim Brand, Many Hands Executive Leader, was first introduced to John O'Leary, he quickly realized he was the clear choice as the keynote speaker for the Business Breakfast.

"Many Hands serves those who daily overcome vast obstacles just to survive," said Brand. "John's story reflects those same qualities and inspires us to continue to walk day-by-day to help others. It is with tremendous excitement we bring John to Central Iowa to share the gift of his story with us."

O'Leary is the author of the instant #1 National Bestselling book, *On Fire*, and host of the top-rated *Live Inspired Podcast*, which has over 2,000,000 downloads. He has shared his message in 48 states, 11 countries, and at 1,600 events for clients including LEGO, Southwest Airlines, Microsoft, Pepsi, MetLife, St. Louis Cardinals, and more. His second book *IN AWE: Rediscover Your Childlike Wonder to Unleash Inspiration, Meaning and Joy* will be published by Penguin Random House in May 2020.

This year's theme, "The Power of One," will encourage leaders to embrace the power of their own leadership. O'Leary believes one person can make a profound difference in the lives of others and will encourage leaders to use their personal and professional challenges to strengthen their vision.

"Great leaders are authentic individuals and meet people where they are. There is something that moves people when a leader can stand up and own the adversities they have walked through," said O'Leary. "What great leaders know is this: You can't always choose the path you walk in life, but you can always choose the manner in which you walk."

Because of the year-to-year growth of the event, the Business Breakfast will be moving to the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center. Last year's numbers for the event doubled, with an attendance of 275 people, representing over 20 businesses and organizations. In two years, the event has been able to raise \$75,000 to support sustainable poverty alleviation and community development work in Haiti.

The Many Hands Business Breakfast will be co-hosted by corporate sponsors BHFO, Inc., Cellular Advantage, and Vander Haag's, Inc. Proceeds from this event support the work of Many Hands.

Individual and table registrations are available. For more information or to register, visit www.mh4h.org/bb2020/

Growing Blessings



Many Hands agronomy department recently received three shade structures from nonprofit Sustainable Food Production to increase the department's level of production. Two structures are open air while the third and largest is covered on all sides. This shade house protects its occupants from 50% of the harsh sunlight and rains until they are ready to be transplanted. Already we are seeing the first harvests from these plants such as bell pepper, leeks, tomatoes, and more. Many Hands Temporary Manager Thomas Dent says, "These are the best looking tomatoes I've ever seen on this campus. I can see how proud the staff is of the work being done in these shade houses."

Two of the shade structures are dedicated to growing legumes, leaving the third as a tree nursery. The tree nursery boasts nearly 2000 saplings such as mango, avocado, various citrus fruit, and morenga. When ready, these trees will be shared with our Love In Action families and surrounding communities. Agronomy Instructor David Alcina states, "This is a good project and a blessing to the community. You don't see anyone else sharing trees like this around here."

"For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessings from God..."
Hebrews 6:7

The Wooden Jungle



The structure loomed two stories high against the Haitian sky. The students at the Sylvain Christian School of Light watched its construction as the team from Hope Spencer Church focused love, sweat, and energy into the new playground's completion. First graders, Guervants and Damingka, were invited to test the teeter-totters so the builders could determine the proper height. Though the children had never seen such a game before they quickly mastered it. With a soft smile Damingka asked, "Are they really making more games like that for us?"

A member of the Hope Spencer team explained the thought behind the jungle gym's layout, "It was designed so we can easily expand the structure in the future as the children and number of classes grow." Easier activities such as the swings and ladders can be used by everyone. More advanced pieces such as the monkey bars and peg boards will allow the kids to challenge themselves as they grow older.

The students, teachers, and staff are thrilled with the new playground, which will engage and strengthen young muscles for years to come. Thank you to the Spencer Hope Church and team who made this beautiful gift a reality.

FLOURISHING OF THE GOSPEL

Thomas Johnson, Spiritual Development Manager & Missiologist



Jean Ronel (L) and Lumanes (back) during a distribution



People gathering to listen to an audio Bible



Mobility Cart recipient, Maxino, listening to his new audio Bible

Our four Spiritual Shepherds (chaplains), Pastors Lumanes, Jean-Ronel, Wilna, and Jeanrupert, not only share the Good News, preach, teach, offer advice and counseling to those Many Hands serves, but also represent us in the communities where we're active. As part of their ministry, they have long distributed Bibles in French and Creole in the Pignon area.

In 2019 we added solar-powered audio Bibles to the mix through a partnership with Audio Scripture Ministries in Holland, MI and 10 supporting churches. These churches chose the audio Bible as their summer VBS giving project providing us with hundreds of audio Bibles ready to be distributed into Haitian hands. With almost 80% of Pignon's adults functionally illiterate, these digital audio Bibles are already making a big impact in our Haitian communities. Once the Bible is turned on, children and neighbors gather to hear God's Word! Our Spiritual Shepherds have begun seeing the fruits from these audio Bibles. Jean-Ronel recently shared this update with us:

"Pastor Lumanes and I were able to share the audio Bibles with some of those in our Bible studies, as well as other people we have evangelized in communities who wanted to hear the words of God because they cannot read. We have two stories that we want to share with you.

"The first is a 15-year-old boy who asked a question in the Bible study. He asked if the lottery had been around since the time of Jesus. He asked me this question because he was listening to his mother's audio Bible and he heard about the girl who had the bad spirit that the people were making money from and they were not happy when Paul threw that evil spirit out. This testimony came from Fontaine.

"The second is from Madame Lacoste who said that her audio Bible was like her husband! She sleeps with it while it is talking (playing) and wakes up with it while it's talking. She said that when she has it on in her room, others can listen in the other rooms of the house. If she forgets to turn it on, the other people in the house remind her to do so!

"So now many other people we meet every day are asking for one. Thank you, this is very useful for the flourishing of the gospel of Jesus Christ!"

Digital media has become an effective way to reach many Haitians today. Since few homes have television and radio, sharing Christian songs, teachings, Bible stories and films through a portable device like the audio Bible permits our chaplains to more effectively share God's Word wherever they go.

Find out how you and your church can help send audio Bibles to Haiti: www.audioscripture.org/vbs/

LETS Conference



In February, all of our First 1,000 Days moms were invited to a family planning conference. Partnering with LETS to facilitate the conference, the women were taught the essential basics about fertility, health, and wellbeing. This program is having a significant impact on communities in crisis, and we are looking to expand this program into as many communities as possible.

During these and future conferences, most of these women will learn about their bodies, their menstrual cycle, and what ovulation means for the very first time. Knowledge is empowering for them, and they can now make choices about their family size.

We will be training staff to teach the LETS Training Program, which delivers face-to-face fertility, health and wellbeing training, as well as how to use the LETS Lunar Essential Tracker Bracelets.

LETS manufactures and sells Lunar Essential Tracker Bracelets which help women and couples to track their menstrual cycles, including their most fertile times so they can actively engage in family planning.

You can find out more about LETS here: www.letsempower.org

Raised Gardens and Hopes



The raised gardens on Many Hand's campus were designed as easy-access garden beds for the Mobility cart recipients. The idea started when Many Hands staff wondered if these marginalized peoples could create and maintain an income through agriculture. This led to a three-staged pilot project. In the first stage, three Mobility cart recipients were invited to test raised-bed prototypes to grow a garden using Many Hands land, water, tools, seeds, and staff instructors. This stage was successfully completed as the recipients had a bountiful harvest and chose the best prototype - a square wooden structure.

In January, the second stage saw the same three recipients each receiving two of these beds in their own yards. Equipped with fertilizer, seeds, a watering can, and access to their previous instructors, it's up to them to grow a garden.

The third stage of this pilot project will determine its true success. Can these three Mobility cart recipients who received personalized training, hands-on practice, and additional supplies continue their gardens by their own means?

The raised-garden farmers were thrilled with stage one and are encouraged by stage two. Many Hands will be cheering them on with high hopes when stage two finishes and stage three begins.

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IMPACT TEAMS IN HAITI - JANUARY TO FEBRUARY



Pella Christian Winterim, Pella, IA
Jan 2-9 | People: 17



Church of the Way, Newton, IA
Jan 23-30 | People: 10



Hope Church, Spencer, IA
Jan 30 - Feb 6 | People: 18



Mobility Worldwide, Leighton, IA
Feb 6-13 | People: 11



Haven CRC, Zeeland, MI
Feb 13-20 | People: 12



Sunnybrook Church, Sioux City, IA
Feb 20-27 | People: 9

Join us in Haiti. Create **IMPACT.**

Contact us to book your individual or team trip and create an impact.

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www.mh4h.org/trips