

Spring 2024



many hands

Quarterly



A BEACON OF HOPE

Many Hands celebrates the dedication of the Murphy Town Community Center

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Board of Directors

President of Board.....Kate Guess
Vice President of Board...Tim Van Maanen
Secretary of Board.....Jenny Sorheim
Treasurer of Board.....Jennifer Douma
Director.....Kendra Meyer
Director.....Art Sathoff

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I am honored to join a board that exists to facilitate the spreading of the gospel and helping others

-Art Sathoff

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P.O. Box 204 Pella, IA, 50219
www.mh4h.org | 641.629.6633



COVER IMAGE: An Impact Team visits the lighthouse in Abaco

NEW FACES

Many Hands is excited to announce the addition of a new board member.
Art Sathoff started his position in the Winter of 2023.



Art Sathoff
Board Member

We are excited to welcome Art Sathoff to the Many Hands Board. Art has joined our team, bringing with him a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to serving others.

He is currently serving in his fourth year as the pastor of Ackworth Friends Church and as a consultant with Grundmeyer Leader Services, helping school districts with administrative hires and strategic planning. Having had a successful thirty-four-year career in the education sector, Art has served as a teacher, coach, and administrator in four different schools.

The connection to international missions is strong through Art's family. His wife Cindy and sons Jordan and Trey have been actively involved with international mission trips for years. Art learned about Many Hands through Cindy, who has worked for and volunteered at the Many Hands Thrift Markets.

Art's admiration for the sustainable model of missions that Many Hands follows is evident, as he believes it makes a significant impact. He appreciates the economic engine of our thrift stores, which not only provide places to donate and volunteer but also offer paid employment and affordable quality goods.

"I am honored to join a board that exists to facilitate the spreading of the gospel and helping others," said Art.

He is enthusiastic and thankful for the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Many Hands Board with his decades of leadership experience, ministry work, and service on various boards. We look forward to working with Art and seeing how his unique talents and experiences will contribute to the mission at Many Hands.



A DECADE OF DEDICATION

Karmen Brown Announces Retirement

Karmen Brown, the store manager at our Many Hands Thrift Market Spencer location, has announced her upcoming retirement.

For the past ten years, Karmen has played an integral role in our organization's journey. Her unwavering faith and commitment to following Jesus have been a guiding light throughout her time with us. As manager of Many Hands Market in Spencer, Karmen has blessed our team and the community we serve.

In reflecting on her remarkable tenure, Karmen shared these words:

"In our journey of following Jesus – our lives have a variety of chapters. Each one is led by Him. In my life, I can honestly say the Lord has always prepared me for the next chapter. It has been an amazing journey – I have loved serving with my whole heart during these past 10 years. The memories and friendships are priceless. The time has come, and the Lord is pressing on my heart;

there is another chapter on the horizon, and it is time for me to pass the baton. I am at complete peace with this – while I have no idea what the next chapter holds – I know the Author, and I trust Him."

These words beautifully encapsulate Karmen's deep sense of purpose and surrender to God's plan. Her dedication and wholehearted service have left an indelible impact on Many Hands and the lives she has touched.

While Karmen will be with us until Fall 2024, we understand that her retirement marks the beginning of a new chapter. Our hiring team will be searching for her successor, ensuring a smooth transition as we continue to uphold the mission and values of Many Hands.

Steve Lucas, Many Hands District Manager, shared about Karmen, "Working with great people is a tremendous honor, and Karmen has proven that to me time and time again. Karmen is

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I have loved serving with my whole heart during these past 10 years. The memories and friendships are priceless.

one of the most faith-driven people that I have ever worked with, and she has even helped me in my faith journey. What makes Karmen great is her love for people. Not just the ones who are good to her, not just the ones who love her, but the ones who have made her life challenging. I have learned so much from Karmen in how she loves all people and truly leads like Jesus. Thank you, Karmen!"

"As we bid farewell to Karmen, we look toward the future with optimism, knowing that the Lord is already preparing the heart of the individual who will follow in her footsteps. The impact of her leadership and devotion will resonate for years to come, and we are grateful for the foundation she has laid," reflected CEO Tim Brand.

Join us in celebrating Karmen's incredible contributions and expressing our deepest gratitude for her unwavering commitment to Many Hands. May her retirement be filled with joy, peace, and new adventures. We are confident that she will continue to support and be involved with Many Hands in different ways, bringing her wisdom and experience to future endeavors.

Thank you, Karmen, for your decade of dedicated service. Your impact will be felt long after your departure, and your spirit will forever be a part of Many Hands.

CHRISTI RETURNS TO HAITI



Christi looks out over the landscape from the Citadelle in Haiti.

Christi Gabhart, who was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL), has returned to Haiti after a series of chemotherapy treatments.

"There have been four rounds of chemo with four nasty injections in four months," reflected Christi. "During this time, I have experienced priceless moments spent with family. This alone I could say, outweighs the times of pounding headaches and persistent nausea. What an inspiring time of being shown love and care, including a long list of gifts of generosity shared by the Beloved Children of God who have reached out to me."

Now that she is back in Haiti, Christi has been focusing on the tasks at hand, including the construction of Many Hands' fifth Love-in-Action Center.

"I am ready to be back in the swirl of the day-to-day 'hard stuff' in Haiti where life won't become easier any time soon," shared Christi. "Craig has carried the load as the sole 'spinner of plates' for Many Hands' operations. Currently, with 130 Haitian staff working hard and collaborating, there are many plates to spin. I am ready to share the load."



CELEBRATIONS OF LEARNING

Many Hands Celebrates Graduations

By Melissa Kauk, U.S. Lead - First 1,000 Days

Celebrations are an important part of life, and in Haiti, they are no less important! As Christians, we joyfully celebrate God's work in our lives through prayer, praise, and outward expressions of mutual fellowship, singing, thanksgiving, and testimony! This past December was the culmination of many months of study and learning and an opportunity to give thanks for new leaders trained through the Lead Like Jesus training and new hope for those in the literacy class.

Celebrations for the three Lead Like Jesus level 1 classes for the PMJ (Prenmye Mil Jou or First 1,000 Days) staff were held in the guesthouse on consecutive afternoons, followed by a meal prepared for the graduates and their guests. Graduates were each recognized and received a certificate of completion and a beautiful journal personalized with calligraphy by Christi Gabhart, which they can use for reflection, study, and planning. We are excited to see these being used by these graduates at Many Hands every day!

The pictures show the joy of completion from each center. PMJ assistants clean and set the center to be ready to greet the mamas and babies daily. Before serving lunch, they lead a time of worship, read God's word, and say a prayer. These ladies also keep attendance charts and service points, pass out vitamins, and do home visits. The cooking staff pictured arrive at each center by 6:30 am to begin the day's meal. They are ready to serve anywhere between 60-100 mamas at the three centers. The security guards know each

mama that passes through the gate and help serve the program in many ways. We also have amazing drivers who transport nurses to the different centers each day. All supplies and food are brought over by them. The drivers are often in the 'kizin' (kitchen), helping to cut or wash vegetables!

Graduates of the level 1 course of 17 weeks focus on a right-heart relationship with God as a follower of Christ and a leader of others. They then work on cultivating five spiritual disciplines into their life and develop a personal mission, vision, and values statement for themselves. Finally, they work individually or with others to come up with a strategy called an action plan whereby they can better serve others they are leading or working with.

Jean Boule PMJ assistants and Maliarette assistants from the two different centers shared their common action plan, proposing to have a project to make soap as an economic way to help families supply this important family and community need. Research will be done on the process, materials, costs, training, and funding necessary for such a project to see if it is feasible.

Many action plans were written to serve the program participants better. Each center works together daily to provide hospitality to each mama. Our goal is to make each center as welcoming as a second home. With this amazing staff, we have achieved this goal!



Students learn to read out loud to each other during class.

LITERACY CLASS IN HAITI

By Mark Kauk, U.S. Lead - Leadership and Development

What do you do when you can't read or write due to the difficult circumstances of your earlier life? One leadership action plan made a difference for these adults by offering a literacy class which just concluded with eight months of classes, meeting two times a week. The class finished with 15 graduates who humbly persevered to reach a basic level of reading and writing. What a joyous day it was to celebrate! Ely and Tania, one of the two couples enrolled, were exemplary in their hard work to excel. Walking more than a mile to the center for the PMJ program, noon meals and activities, and then attending the class while having their child fuss or fall asleep on their lap during the class was typical of the challenges that they had to overcome. Tania amazingly attended 61 consecutive classes in a row to have perfect attendance. What an example to us of their perseverance!

Final activities included reading a children's book out loud to a partner, writing a thank you note to a staff member, writing out the names of their family members, making a list of items that could be purchased in the market, reading John 3:16, and learning and reading together at the celebration a Haitian Christian prayer.

We praise God for the marvelous gift of the mind to comprehend the written word and spoken language. We pray that this is just the beginning of continued progress in a lifetime of learning. The t-shirt expresses the mission of the class: Learning to adore God through reading and writing Kreyòl!

Local residents celebrate the grand opening of the Murphy Town Community Center.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Tim Brand speaks during the grand opening ceremony; Community members celebrate the grand opening with song and dance; Children enjoy playing on the newly built playground next to the Community Center.

A BEACON OF HOPE IN ABACO

The Abaco Islands witnessed a momentous occasion on December 2, 2023, with the grand opening of the Murphy Town Community Center. More than just a ribbon-cutting, it was the completion of a project representing collaboration, resilience, and renewed hope.

The center stands as a vibrant symbol of unity, offering a nurturing space for the island's youth and families. Its doors open wide to welcome community events and celebrations, enrich academic and sports programs, and provide a safe space when storms threaten.

This beacon of hope wasn't built overnight. The generous support of community members and partner organizations like Sol Relief and the local government allowed us to completely restore the center. With help from our partners, we added a new roof and interiors, introduced solar panels, installed new electrical and plumbing, and added a community playground. Special recognition goes to the incred-

ible residents who poured their hearts and hands into making this dream a reality.

Tim Brand, Many Hands CEO, was in Abaco for the ceremony.

"The Murphy Town Community Center is more than just a building; it's a testament to the transformative power of unity," explained Brand. "It serves as a powerful reminder that when we follow God's call and join hands for a common purpose, even the most ambitious vision can be realized."

The hope is that the impact of this building extends far beyond simple gatherings. The center has already begun offering programs with essential services, addressing crucial educational needs, and bringing the community closer together. Many Hands also plans to hold its new First 1,000 Days program at the center starting in March. We are excited to see how God uses this new beacon as a light for the community.

A rainbow appears overhead during the dinner at Poinciana Driftwood Farms.



Dinner guests listen to Tim Brand speak about food insecurity in Abaco.



FROM THE FARM TO THE TABLE

The crisp air of January 27th crackled with a different kind of energy as Many Hands and Driftwood Food Company joined forces for a Farm-to-Table dinner at Poinciana Farm. This wasn't just a meal; it was a gathering of hope, a testament to the power of community and collaboration in overcoming the daunting challenge of food insecurity.

Local leaders and partners came together, not just to break bread, but to ignite a conversation about the future of food in Abaco. Glen Kelly, co-owner of Driftwood, shed light on their innovative hydroponics systems, unveiling a sustainable solution for producing food and empowering families. His words resonated with Many Hands CEO, Tim Brand, who emphasized the critical role of good nutrition and the synergy between the two organizations.

The stark reality of food insecurity in Abaco cannot be ignored. The Bahamas grapples with heavy reliance on imported food (over 90%), while a mere 3.2% of its workforce is engaged in agriculture. This disparity paints a worrisome picture for families and future generations.

"This is an urgent call to action," declared Brand. "Limited arable land, insufficient agricultural knowledge, and a high cost of living are pressing challenges. We are confident that hydroponics presents a sustainable and cost-effective answer."

This cutting-edge technology boasts numerous advantages: increased yields in smaller spaces, significantly reduced water consumption, and the potential for year-round production.

Many Hands is taking the fight against food insecurity head-on. In Abaco, we are cultivating a network of programs and partnerships focused on food production, agricultural training, and school-based initiatives. Our vision is to empower families with the knowledge and tools to cultivate fresh, local produce and build a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

This collaborative effort will see the construction of twelve shadehouse greenhouses, leading to a projected 30% increase in food production among partner families. Moreover, hydroponic training offered by Driftwood in partnership with Many Hands will equip residents with the necessary expertise to thrive in this innovative agricultural landscape.



From as little as \$50, you can make an impact through our agricultural programs. Please consider a gift through our online catalog or donation form.



Many Hands hosts a community conversation in the Murphy Town Community Center to invite local residents to learn more about the First 1,000 Days program.



FIRST 1,000 DAYS BEGINS IN ABACO

Many Hands is excited to announce the launch of the First 1,000 Days program in Abaco starting March 5. Designed to strengthen women with young children, this initiative aims to support low-income families, giving them a stronger foundation for their future. The launch of this program in Abaco marks a milestone for Many Hands as it expands the program outside of Haiti.

Starting with a 90-day pilot program, Many Hands will work with 15 caregivers and their children. The pilot offers a two-day per week schedule to begin with.

On Tuesdays, educational classes covering medical, spiritual, and social/cognitive development topics will be held, some led by local experts, including nurses and community professionals. To help participants focus, childcare will be provided through a convenient creche.

On Fridays, each participating caregiver will receive a pack filled with essential items such as diapers, supplemental food, developmental toys, and books.

"This trial period holds immense value. It allows us to

evaluate the program's effectiveness, closely observing participant interactions and outcomes," explained Deborah Winkler, Director of the First 1,000 Days in Abaco. "This will help our team make necessary adjustments. It will also help us understand the specific needs of participating families, which is crucial for tailoring the program to better serve the community."

To ensure local involvement and support, a recent community conversation was held in Murphy Town, where the program will launch. This shed light on the program's goals and gathered important feedback. This valuable input helped finalize the selection of participants.

After assessing the pilot and making necessary refinements, Many Hands plans a full-fledged program launch in September. As we launch this program, please consider a donation to support this essential program and the families involved.



Donate to become a foundational supporter of the First 1,000 Days program in Abaco.



Pella Christian Winterim, Pella, IA
January 2-9 | People: 24



Church Of The Way, Newton, IA
February 3-10 | People: 16



Many Hands Thrift Market & InOnTime
January 23-30 | People: 13 & 12



Haven Church, Grand Rapids, MI
February 13-20 | People: 17

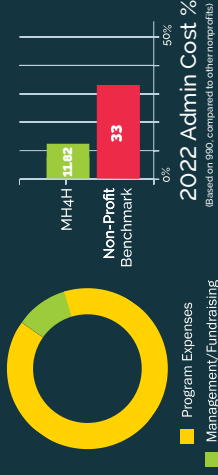


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We are Accountable



With financial accreditation, including GuideStar Platinum accreditation, you can trust we steward your gift wisely for its intended purpose.



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