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Fall/Winter 2019 Newsletter

www.heartswithhaiti.org

Taking the message of Hearts with Haiti and the St. Joseph Family on the road

With the political problems in Haiti in the past year, many guests have cancelled their trips to visit the St. Joseph Family. That means fewer people getting to experience first hand the wonderful things happening with the SJF in Haiti. It also means decreased income as the SJF guest houses sit empty for weeks at a time.

In an effort to maintain and strengthen relationships when groups can't travel, Hearts with Haiti partnered with the SJF leadership this year for two tours to bring Haiti to the United States. SJF leaders spent time in both North Carolina and Virginia to bring the message of the SJF to our friends, new and old, and to raise funds for the work in

Haiti.

In Richmond, VA, in October the SJF were featured performers at a gala that not only raised money directly for the SJF, but also raised funds for a partner organization, Broadway's Babies, which sponsors arts classes — dance, drumming, music and art — at Lekòl Sen Trinite and Wings of Hope.

We are currently exploring travel plans for the SJF leadership for 2020. If you are interested in sponsoring a tour by SJF leadership in your area to share the story of the work happening in Haiti, and to raise funds, please contact us at info@heartswithhaiti.org.

Saying So Long and Farewell to Sr. Irma

In September the SJF had a going-away party for Sr. Irma. She decided that it is time to leave Wings of Hope and spend the rest of her days with her biological family in Port-au-Prince.

In 1994, when the St. Joseph Family took over the work with handicapped children that would become Wings of Hope, Sr. Irma came along too. She had lived and worked at the home that the SJF took over from the people who were leaving. It was a package deal — 14 kids and Sr. Irma. She was and always has been the spiritual center of Wings of Hope. Her main duty was to pray for the work, the residents and the staff. It was a role she took very seriously. She also helped out with feeding and care when needed. When she became a part of the St. Joseph Family she also took over providing catechism to the boys at St. Joseph's Home and saw many of them through their First Communion.

Her prayerful dedication to Wings of Hope, the SJF and all of Haiti was never more evident than in the days and weeks following the earthquake in 2010. While everyone — Wings residents, St. Joseph's Home residents, staff, volunteers — were huddled together for the first couple of weeks after the earthquake, first in the guest dining room of the old Wings and then in the living room of one

of the rented houses, Sr. Irma was in CONSTANT prayer. There was no privacy in those days and there was no quiet, as everyone shared the small spaces we deemed as safe. Sr. Irma carved out a little corner for herself and sat on the floor on a pile of blankets, running her fingers over her Rosary non-stop. All day, and also all night. There was no sleeping during the day because everyone was on top of each other trying to get through the day and keep all the Wings residents cared for and entertained. When everyone finally quieted down at night and she could get a few hours of sleep, she did not. She was there, in the dark on her pile of blankets, eyes closed but not sleeping, her fingers running over the well-worn Rosary beads in fervent prayer.

She's given her whole life to others. She's given the last 25 years to Wings of Hope, and even more to the children before that when she was with the other organization. She's 87 years old now. She deserves to rest and spend some time with her family. But Hearts with Haiti, along with the St. Joseph Family and the Wings of Hope family, will miss her terribly. We know we will always be connected, and we know we will remain in her daily prayers, and we take comfort in that.



Sr. Irma and the three remaining members of the original Wings of Hope — Vivianne, Eriquer and Raoul.



Daniel, Walnes and Jacky drum at church in North Carolina.



ABOVE: Walnes, Gerald, Bill and Daniel perform at a gala event in Richmond, VA.

Below: Broadway performer Mary Page Nance and SJF dance teacher Gerald Joanis perform at a gala event in Richmond, VA.



Walnes leads children in a dance in NC.



Broadway performers sing for Haiti at a gala event in Richmond, VA, in October.



Musicians from the SJF and Virginia jam at a house party in Richmond.



Gala photos by To Catch the Moment Photography

GIVING CHRISTMAS & GIVING TUESDAY

allow your holiday gift to go twice as far and earn you a chance to bring Haiti home

Christmas came a little early this year to Hearts with Haiti! A very generous Secret Santa has agreed to match all financial gifts up to \$50,000 through the end of 2019!

We hope this incentive, called GIVING CHRISTMAS, sparks your holiday and end-of-the-year giving spirit, and helps us do more to support the St. Joseph Family's wonderful programs and activities in Haiti.



As a special incentive for holiday giving, we are participating in the GIVING TUESDAY movement again this year. Coming on the heels of "Black Friday", "Small Business Saturday" and "Cyber Monday", "Giving Tuesday" encourages gifts to charitable organizations on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. This year Giving Tuesday is on December 3. All online donors to Hearts with Haiti on that day will be eligible for drawings for the three original Christmas paintings by art students from the St. Joseph Family — Felando, Peter and Vilner — which will be used by the SJF for their Christmas cards this year.

Please continue the gift of giving to support the important work of the St. Joseph Family — caring for some of the most vulnerable people in Haiti. Thank you to our Secret Santa, whose generosity along with your gift will shine the light of hope, love, and peace for many during this Christmas season.



Dates to Remember:

November 10:
25th Anniversary
of Wings of Hope

December 3:
Giving Tuesday

January 12:
10th Anniversary
of the Earthquake

January 31:
35th Anniversary
of the St. Joseph
Family

Why I am a sponsor for the St. Joseph Family...

Who agrees that there is still nothing quite like opening a hand-written letter in the mail? In a world of ever increasing technological noise (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, texting) there is still something so special and heartwarming about receiving a solid piece of paper, especially when that piece of paper has a picture of one of your loved ones on it. The staff and kids at Wings of Hope are my loved ones, and I miss them horribly when I am away. Child sponsorship is one of my favorite ways to stay connected with my family away from home and when I get those sponsorship letters with updates from Gesner and Peterson, my whole week is made.



Child sponsorship is also important to me because it is part of how I show constant commitment to my second family. By being an automatic, monthly donor, I can ensure that my Wings of Hope family is supported and sustained and because it is a part of my monthly budget, it is more manageable for me than large, one-time donations. In addition, child sponsorship helps my Wings family plan their monthly budget and know what they can

and cannot afford. I may not be able to give all that I wish I could monetarily, but my consistency is an important part of the funds that we all know are so important for ensuring quality care for the family we love.

The pictures that Gesner and Peterson sent me as part of the sponsorship correspondence program, and the picture of Vilner (who my husband sponsors) are displayed on our refrigerator all year long. In addition, we like to rotate whatever new creations they send us seasonally as they make us feel that much closer to the people we wish we could hug every single day. When friends come over, these pictures and pieces of artwork are conversation starters and allow us the chance to

share stories about Haiti and Wings of Hope with people who may otherwise never learn about the small but mighty island in the Caribbean and the St. Joseph Family that has stuck together through dark and beautiful times. I grew up with the phrase "family first," and this includes my Wings family, always and forever.

~ Sara Caparelli, sponsor, former volunteer and frequent guest to Wings of Hope

Reflect on the Power and Mystery of the Advent Season with the St. Joseph Family

December 1
HOPE

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14;
Matthew 24:36-44



"...they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks...."

These words from Isaiah have resounded through the centuries with hope for a future where every good thing is fulfilled. It is said that a good background sound for this text would be the sound of metal weaponry being beaten and reshaped into the tools that help us grow food. Advent is a time for us to reflect on being reshaped ourselves, into a people of hope and love. We have hope for new and renewed life for the St.

Joseph Family members and all the people they serve, and we are called to reflect on how we live into the hope that shapes us to assist in that becoming a reality.

December 8
PEACE

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13;
Matthew 3:1-12



"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

Surely, to our eyes, this is a picture of peace. Animals are no longer prey and hunter, and an innocent child is in their midst. We long for peace, and none of us need look much further than our own hearts, much less our communities, to know that peace is not yet realized. But we can live in the promise that peace will be fulfilled. This year has been filled with stories from Haiti of its people fighting for justice, of peace being disturbed over and over. Those struggles have affected

Wings of Hope and LST. The biblical promise ties peace to justice again and again, and so this theme invites us to reflect on living out peace as participants in a world where all are loved and valued and can celebrate together with joy.

December 15
JOY

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10; James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11



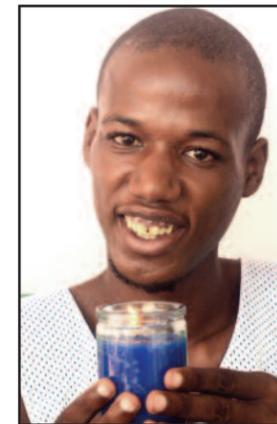
"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing."

Building on the two beautiful texts from the first two Sundays of Advent, where weapons of destruction are turned into farm tools, and where all creatures are living together in harmony, this week turns to joy. Indeed, for Isaiah hope and peace are the roots of joy, roots that will blossom in beauty and wonder, and lead to the Holy Way of God. One of the easiest ways to experience joy is

to spend some time at Wings of Hope — in a smile from Marhitza, in a leap from Steve, in a hug from Gesner. We are invited to move into the joy that comes from walking the Holy Way, in anticipation of the birth of Jesus.

December 22
LOVE

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25



"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him 'Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'"

Love is the basis for all. Hope, peace and joy are fulfilled in the love of God who is with us, one of us, knowing us, loving us. Our response is to love one another in return. The St. Joseph Family is rooted in this strong calling to live love in all that they do, reaching out to the least and sharing new life with them. Being centered in God gives us the grace to look forward with hope, to build peace, to rejoice with our lives,

and to love, perhaps taking the stories of the wonders of the St. Joseph Family as examples to strengthen our journey. The invitation of Advent is clear: respond to the amazing grace of Jesus Christ by living love.