

# St. Mark's School



## 2017 - A Year of Great Loss, yet Many Accomplishments

### Mark's Dream Lives On

Mark Creasser, the Executive Director of Tremesse School and President of Hands for Haiti, past away unexpectedly in August. Mark will be greatly missed by his many friends in both Haiti and in the US. We are committed to ensuring that Mark's dreams live on and grow. Upon Mark's death, it was decided in his honor to rename the school after St. Mark, the evangelist and Gospel writer. Mark Creasser was truly a powerful evangelist with his words, but more importantly with his actions of helping the poorest of the poor.



### Over 200 Students Attend St. Mark's School

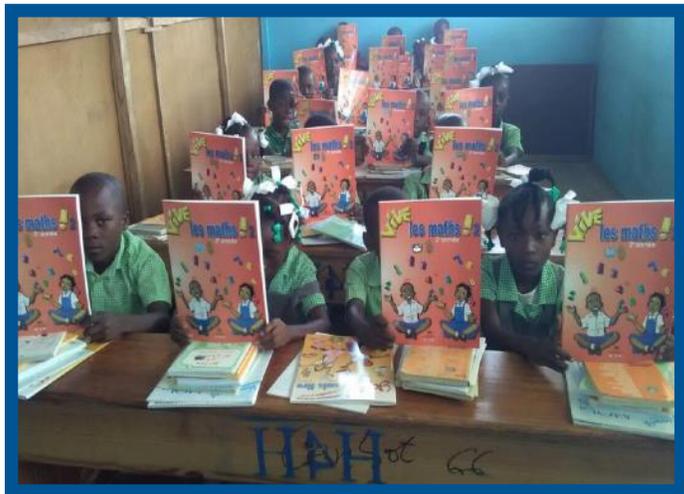
This year Hands for Haiti is celebrating its 8th year in Haiti. With the vision of Mark Creasser, Steve Favory and Cindy Tice, land was purchased and construction began on the Tremesse Solidarity School in Northern Haiti; it has continued to grow every year since. We currently have over 200 students in Pre-school to 9th grade and over 35 Haitians employed as teachers, administrators, nurse, cooks and security. Hand For Haiti has many community projects underway, including agriculture, egg production and tilapia.



Haiti is a difficult country in which to operate because of cultural differences and extreme poverty, but we always make decisions putting our children first. We believe it is not only the best choice, but also what our donors would expect.

## Partnership with Cap-Haitien Catholic Archdiocese

Our partnership with The Roi Henri Christophe University in Cap Haitien has evolved in 2017. Dr. Noisin, the President of the University, and the Hands for Haiti Board agreed there was a need for a more



experienced School Administrator. Additional expertise is required to develop our secondary school and to create a robust education curriculum that is above the required Haitian certifications. Hands for Haiti will continue to work with Christophe University to provide advanced studies for our teachers.

With the help of the Archdiocese, we were able to locate and hire Father Leon who has over 13 years of education experience both as a teacher and administrator. He brings much needed experience in education, love for the students and parents, and very strong administration skills which are already paying dividends as we expanded to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. We have become even more laser focused on education and the students.

## Feeding our Students - Body & Mind

With the extreme poverty in Haiti, comes a lack of adequate food. A child cannot concentrate in school if they are hungry. Hands for Haiti initiated a few projects to help supply food. All the tilapia and egg production now go to the students and families. Crops also feed the students. The tilapia pond is fully stocked with fish and we are able to give each child and staff tilapia twice a quarter, nearly 500 fish dinners per quarter. Our hen house contains 200 new chickens, which produce an egg a day. The eggs are included in the students daily lunch meal. And in our garden, we are growing green beans, bananas, maize, coconuts and peas; which all help supplement the daily meals served at St. Mark's.



## Dressed like a Scholar



Acting on feedback from our students and parents, we have updated the uniforms. Everyone was thrilled with the new clothing. Hands for Haiti funded the local purchase of the fabric, and the parents were responsible for the stitching. The students are very proud of their uniforms and of their school.

## HAITI QUICK FACTS

- ◆ Population 10.6MM
- ◆ Poorest country in the Western Hemisphere
- ◆ Estimated 50% of children do NOT attend school
- ◆ 60.7% Literacy Rate
- ◆ 1 in 50 Haitians is affected with HIV/AIDS
- ◆ 40% of population have access to basic healthcare
- ◆ Average income \$480
- ◆ 80% of Haitians live below the poverty line

Source: The World Bank

## 2018 Goals

With Father Leon and our partnership with the Archdiocese, we have big plans as we move into 2018.

- ◆ A full ceremony for the rededication and renaming of Tremesse School to Chapel and Community School St. Marc De Tremesse in honor of Mark Creasser will be held on January 31<sup>st</sup>
- ◆ The school will continue to expand to 10<sup>th</sup> grade next fall
- ◆ Invest in a Computer Lab and Internet Communications
- ◆ Add more English classes across all grades
- ◆ Encourage our teachers to challenge the students to excel in school resulting in exceeded government testing results.

We have three projects fully funded which should be mostly completed by the end of March 2018:

- ◆ Improve and expand our Toilets,
- ◆ Build a Fence, Gate and Security Guard office,
- ◆ Build a cement road crossing across the local stream and expand the local road.

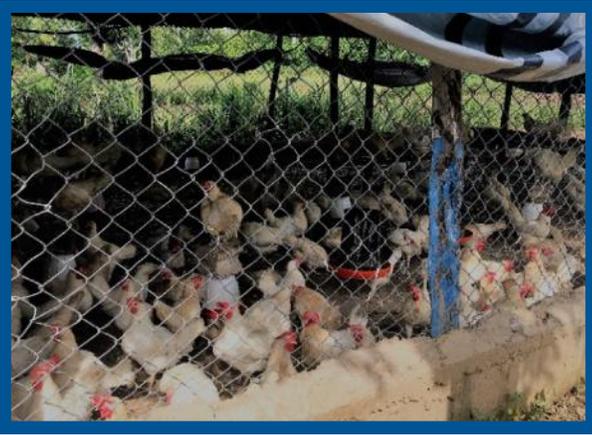
Some of our long term initiatives include:

- ◆ Build more classrooms to better support our growing secondary school
- ◆ Build more classrooms to better support computer lab.
- ◆ Formalize a trade curriculum and invest in the required tools and instruments, which will also support our science lab.
- ◆ Expand our religion classes and church presence.

**The students, staff and teachers are all very excited about the project improvements.**

**We hope our donors and benefactors are as excited as we are about the future. Hands for Haiti could not exist without the financial support of donors including our individual benefactors, churches, and Raise Against Hunger. You have made all this possible and we thank each and every one who has made this dream come true.**





The pictures above were taken during our recent trip to Haiti in October. We journeyed to the school three times during the week; which provided us the opportunity to see the rural communities, students, and families. We worked and played with students, met their families and learned more about rural Haitian life. The children and families have very little, but they are all so grateful for their education and daily meal. Their homes have mud floors no water or electricity, but they all have Attitude of Gratitude.

The simple interactions provided us all the opportunity to see the face of Jesus Christ in the eyes of the students and their families.

We thank the Good Lord each and every day for His being with us and for the help our friends have been able to provide us on this journey.

God Bless,

The Hands for Haiti Board of Directors

Steve Favory

Joe Becker

Cindy Tice

Robert Burlando

Jeff Hynes

Deborah Sargeant

Steve Gebhardt

Ally Favory