



The Haitian Connection Newsletter

Lorraine Antieau, Editor

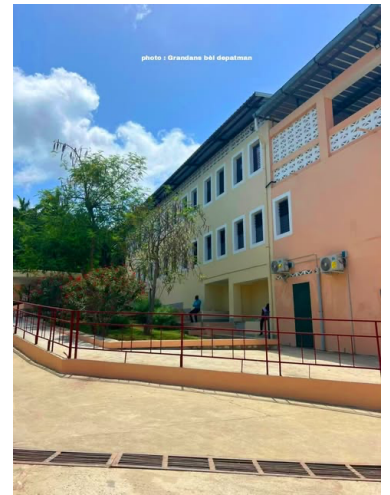
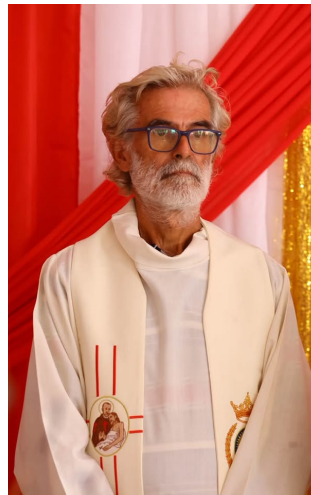
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From Renate's Desk:

Hospital St. Camille Opens to Patients



I have some very exciting news to report: the Hospital St. Camille is finally open to receive patients. It was a visionary, Fr. Maxime of the Carmellian Order, who thought and planted and planned the idea of the hospital many years ago. He was my next door neighbor for the whole time I lived and worked in Jérémie. I used to go to mass at the small church of his up in the mountains. It took many years to complete the construction of the hospital. During a period of time the funding dried up, but the hospital is finally finished. It will treat patients at no or little cost. A great new asset for Jérémie which will benefit the population tremendously.



Mental Health Program Continues in Deschamps



Pastor Erik, who is one of our foremost community mental health agents, continues the work of providing stress relief and general mental health group counseling. Pastor Erik makes his church available for community meetings and mental health education. He mentions in

his report that many of the women have been displaced because of gang activity and have suffered great losses. These mental health meetings are very helpful to them.

Kotex Project



Collaborating with the salesforce of women selling comparets (a scone well-known and liked in Jérémie), after consultation with the women we asked them to add sanitary napkins to their sales inventory. This idea was enthusiastically received by the women, and while we initially only wanted to work with 15 women, the enthusiasm and willingness was so great, that we

allowed 25 women to be part of this project. This effort addresses period poverty in the Jeremie area where hygienic period materials are not easy to obtain, especially in rural areas. Young girls who have their periods often miss school because they lack the necessary sanitary items. The women involved in the sales force are moving in their areas and in local markets, so that access to those items is much easier for those in need of them. While Haitian Connection is subsidizing the sale of sanitary napkins for the first three months for this group of women, they know that after three months their business must stand on its own. Haitian Connection will then subsidize a second group of women to get their business started.



Book Corner



Haïti, The Richest Culture in The Western Hemisphere by Jean-Jacques Stephen Alexis, 2026

They call Haiti the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. It is a sentence repeated so often it feels unquestioned. A nation reduced to numbers, its story narrowed to lack. But what if that measure is incomplete. Haiti is the first Black republic, born from a revolution that reshaped the world. For that, it was isolated, indebted, and constrained. Its economic struggles are real. But they are not the whole truth. Beyond the statistics lives a country of extraordinary cultural richness. A place where language carries memory, where spirituality preserves African cultures, where art, music, and daily life create meaning with remarkable intensity. For such a small nation, Haiti's cultural presence reaches far beyond its borders, shaping the world in ways rarely acknowledged. This book challenges how we define wealth. It asks what has been overlooked, and what remains uncounted. What if Haiti is not the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, but one of its richest in culture. Once you see it, the measure changes.

So-Lead Launches Health Education Programs



So-Lead, a group founded by a young nurse, Sophie Jourdan, serves young people, especially young women, through educational programs around health, especially around, menstrual health and their own bodies. Many women in Haiti, both young and old, are not well informed about how their bodies function. The founder of So-Lead and two other nurses presented a program to 200 school children, mostly young girls, to teach about the body, how to take care of it, and its function. They presented

the program at two schools, and the administrators of the schools want them to come back as do the teachers. This program was not only valuable for the students, but also for the nurses who learned a lot about organizing such an event, and preparing the necessary materials.

They designed their own uniforms and obtained permission from the relevant authorities to conduct the program. Haitian Connection provided financial support. We would like to put on more educational and informational activities. If you feel so moved, please look at our donation page to see how you can give to this valuable effort.



Flag Day with So-Lead



May 18 is Haiti's Flag Day, an important holiday in Haiti. The nurses from So-Lead decided to celebrate with the children and passed out small Haitian flags and talked about the significance of the day and the meaning of Haiti's flag..

Summer Camps



This summer Haitian Connection is sponsoring three summer camps, one in Caracol/Jérémie and two in Deschamps. The photo to the left is from Caracol under the leadership of Eliasme Silfin, our after school coordinator. The kids participated in many different

activities, such as games, first aid, skits, and a talent show. In Deschamps Pastor Erik facilitated two summer camps with his group of helpers. The children come to the camps with great anticipation and joy. They receive a full meal, much more and better than what they can have at home. This is the third year that Haitian Connection is supporting this program.



Afterschool Students Pass State Exams



Our afterschool program closed with success for this year school year (July 2026). All of our 9th graders who participated for the past year completed their state exam successfully! This is remarkable because school closures and political unrest are always present in Haiti. Congratulations to all our students who consistently and persistently came 5 afternoons each week that school was in session. The program will resume in September at the start of the new school year.



Youth Empowerment Program Summer 2025



Amazingly enough the Youth Empowerment Program was able to conduct its 2025 summer program in two locations, Cap Haitien and Jérémie. Considering nationwide insecurity, the cost of transportation, and the increase in general living expenses, it is a true miracle that we were able to have the program for 20 young people in each location. Participation for the youth is completely

free, in other words all their expenses were paid for. Haitian Connection contributed financially and in an advisory role to the success of the program. The young people learned about global policy, elections, human rights, and much more. There was also time for leisure and community building since none of the participants knew each other before the program started.





Temporary Protected Status Ends for 350,000 Haitians

In a 6-3 decision the Supreme Court on June 25, 2026 decided to end TPS (Temporary Protected Status) for Haitians and Syrians. This decision impacts about 350,000 Haitians who fled the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Since then Haiti has been engulfed by violence and a humanitarian crisis, with Haitians facing gang attacks, gender-based violence, exploitation and trafficking.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of State has placed Haiti under a Level 4 travel advisory — its highest alert level, reserved for life-threatening risks — urging Americans, “Do Not Travel.” The US has already started with deportation flights, at least 2 flights per week. These will be ramped up to 1,000 people per month. To send people back to a country that has the highest travel alert for Americans to travel to is just inhumane.

While the US immigration system needs to be overhauled, it does not need to be done on the backs of Haitians who have made a life for themselves, paying taxes, contributing to their communities. Meanwhile, an effort to pass a bill that would have extended TPS protections failed to pass the Republican-led chamber. The bill that would have allowed hundreds of thousands of Haitians to remain in the U.S. without fear of deportation, at least until January 2029 did not pass the Senate.

Temporary Protective Status for Haitians (TPS) ended Monday, July 27. As Haitians brace for projected deportations, the disruption to Haitian family life is hard to imagine. Contact your Senators and Representatives to protest these injustices. Let's keep the pressure up!

Haitian Connection

Haitian Connection is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization founded in 2005, which focuses on the needs of women, children, and young adults in the Jérémie region of southwest Haiti. A variety of projects have already touched thousands of lives: houses have been built for more than 104 women and their children; a cash without condition initiative is providing hope for women in 2 communities; our summer camps for children help them take their minds off the difficulties they see all around them, and our after-school program inspires the necessary motivation to keep the children's minds focused on learning.

As a response to the earthquake in January 2010, and its psychological aftermath, Haitian Connection has established a mental health program in Jérémie to provide counseling as people resettle, tally their losses, and adjust to a new reality. 27 members of the community have been trained in psychological first aid. This served the greater Jérémie area well after Hurricane Matthew in October of 2016. Our mental health agents were able to hold community meetings to give people an opportunity to debrief and receive some training in stress reduction techniques. During the current crisis in Haiti, the mental health program is a necessary tool to help people in the community cope with ever mounting stress

Support Us

Haitian Connection is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation registered in Illinois and your gifts are tax deductible. Our projects depend on volunteers and the financial support of people who desire to help.

Scholarships for needy students from elementary to secondary schools help to develop a cadre of educated youth who form a resource for the future of Haiti.

Teachers' salaries. To help students learn and advance we need teachers who are paid and motivated. Many rural schools do not have any means to pay their teachers, and the students do not have the possibility to pay tuition.

Summer Camps and Afterschool program need financial assistance so we can offer more children participation in these programs.

Cash without Conditions is providing poor women with a monthly stipend to help with school expenses as well with the ability to provide food for the family and pay medical expenses when needed.

Mental Health Program: This is crucial to provide more outreach and also to train additional community mental health agents.

To support our projects financially, donate online by visiting our website at: <http://www.haitianconnection.org/> and clicking on the PayPal button.

If you would prefer to send your donation by mail, please address checks to: **Haitian Connection**
5300 South Shore Drive # 27
Chicago, IL 60615

Get Involved

We are looking for volunteers to search for grants and help with grant writing, as well as groups and organizations interested in having us give a presentation on the situation in Haiti, mental health in Haiti, leadership development, remote English teaching, or infrastructure development for computer literacy. Contact **Renate Schneider** at haitianconnection@gmail.com or by phone at **312/493-3719**.

