



Clean water: no longer just a dream in Desvarieux, Haiti

The timetable for bringing clean drinking water to Desvarieux, Haiti is on schedule. Trainers from Water Mission International (WMI) were in Haiti in September 2013 to conduct a



two-day training session for the water committee.

The members of the committee were trained on how to manage the project and on preparing and writing reports to WMI. Training was also conducted on microfinance in order to better manage the small fee that they will collect from the people who come for water. The committee is required to open a bank account at the bank of their choice.

Once the water purification unit is installed in Desvarieux, WMI will pro-

vide all the assistance necessary to keep it in operation for one year. By that time, the committee should be able to save enough to take over operation and maintenance of the system.

WMI representatives have also trained 12 “promoters”. These 12 people are now traveling throughout the community educating and developing relationships with families. It is their responsibility to speak about the project and inform the villagers about the quality of the water from the system. They will also educate them regarding the importance of using clean water and demonstrate methods of avoiding recontamination. In essence, their role is to prepare the population for the proper use of the system prior to the time when it is up and running.

The water purification unit and the training methods used by WMI personnel are very impressive. They are meant to ensure that the people who receive the system will know how to maintain it and use it wisely and well!

Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink

In wealthy parts of the world, people turn on a faucet and out pours abundant, clean water. Yet nearly 900 million people in the world have no access to clean water and 2.5 billion people have no safe way to dispose of human waste.

Dirty water and lack of a toilet and proper hygiene kill 3.3 million people around the world annually, most of them children under age five.

Excerpted from National Geographic, April 2010 issue.

Mission team covers a lot of ground in Haiti

Hands and Hearts with Haiti mission team members Ray Freas, Kay Schumacher and Rachel Westenberg traveled to Mirabalais, Haiti on January 16. When they returned on the 23rd, they had much to report.

WMI Water Purification System

Upon landing, we went to Mirabalais and then to Desvarieux to see how the construction of the enclosure for the water system was going. We found that a crew was working on laying the foundation and we were told that the “roof” would be on by the end of the week.

Mirabalais Planning Initiative

We met with Enrique Silva and Jack Wiggins from Boston University and the University of Massachusetts, respectively. They have been working on the Mirabalais planning initiative sponsored by the Kellogg Foundation. The city of Mirabalais is seen as an area of opportunity influenced heavily by the new Partners in Health hospital. We hope to find a way for HHH to become involved in the initiative.

Education in Mirabalais

We visited three schools: L’Ecole les Choix, L’Ecol Msgr. Reme Augustin and L’Ecol centre Culturelle. Each one has its own strengths and weaknesses. We came home with a number of ideas of ways in which HHH could assist the schools.

Goat Project is a life changer

Hands and Hearts With Haiti's agent on the ground in Mirabelais reports that things are proceeding well with the goat project. For the chapels of Desvarieux and Noyau, a total of 60 female goats have been distributed (3 apiece) to 20 families. Each chapel has also received one male goat.

Many of the goats have already had offspring and a number of others



are pregnant. According to Mr. Murrassaint, one of the chapel directors, each family must give back to the committee two female offspring from

each of the three goats they have received. In this way, the project can be expanded to other families.

Included on the wish lists of the participants are

- one of them will receive training to become a veterinarian technician to take care of the goats when they are sick;
- a pharmacy for easier access to medicines for the goats;
- regular visits to all participants in the program to keep them motivated.

The participants seem to be very motivated about the program and are working to expand it. They have been encouraged to create a federation with members of all the chapels so that in the future they'll be able to find a good market for selling the goats.

News Briefs

School Update. At Noyau, good progress is being made in updating the facility that is being used as a temporary school. The people are very aware of the importance of education and want to be involved in the start-up process. They're very happy to help in any way they can.

Goat Project. Dr. Jerome, a veterinarian in Mirebalais, said that he would be able to provide services for a small fee for the goat project. He would also be able to send a technician for training and consulting in order to equip the people with the ability to handle health problems of the goats.

First Time in Haiti. According to first time mission team member Rachel Westenberg, what stood out most for her was the smiles of the people she met. "The people of Haiti, who have nothing, have the most amazing smiles you will ever see. I can't wait to go back and start giving them back all that they have given me!"

A Promise Kept: A family's journey to Haiti

by Mary VanDenHeuvel

My oldest grandchild, Andrew, was four when I first went to Haiti. When he was five, I bought him a book about children from all over the world. There were pictures of children who lived in hovels, walked miles to go to school and had no clean water to drink.

As we were looking at the pictures, I told Andrew that I would take him to Haiti when he was 16. On October 16 of this year, he turned 16. I went out and bought myself a gift—a ticket to Haiti for myself, Andrew and his mother, my daughter Mandy. As

we traveled, we practiced our bon jous, bon swa and mesi (good morning, good evening, thank you).

Sharing with my family the country and people I have come to love and watching them interact with the children there, is a memory I will hold dear in my heart.

Haiti continues to enrich me!!!



If you'd like to help Hands and Hearts with Haiti, donations can be sent to:

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