

Helping Haitians Help Themselves

PO Box 1062, West Bend, WI 53095 • www.viphaiti.org

A Message from the President



Have you every thought about the road not taken? Should I change jobs, invest money, buy this house...or not,—I could go on. We all make decisions daily about so many things, some big

and some small. I hope a decision that you never have to face is, should I feed my family or put gas in the car. Should I send my child to school or know they are safe at home? There is so much unrest in Haiti that many have left their homes and try to find a safe place. There is not a lot that we can do from here but pray and hope.

We may be a small organization but we are determined to help where we can. Clubs for 4-H, clean water and education do bring normalcy to many lives in Haiti. When you sit down this holiday season with family and friends please remember all the things that we are lucky enough to have and enjoy. Thank you for your continued support of Ventures In People. You make a difference in the lives of the Haitians. Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2024!

~Julie Stauss—VIP President

4 Generations of VIP



Our newest VIP supporter joined us for our brat fries this summer! He is a 4th Generation VIPer. Following in the footsteps of George Schowalter—LouAnn Parsons and Sarah Fischer joined the board many years ago. We are excited to teach Carson Fischer to serve others as he is raised in a family of supporters of Ventures in People.



Some VIP Board Members joined by Samuel (Haitian coordinator for the VIP Water Project) at a Brat Fry!

A Testimony: Dick Linhart

In 1984, we booked a spring trip to Jamaica. What we saw of local life between the Montego Bay airport and our hotel in Ocho Rios remains with me almost 40 years later. Until this trip, I had not come face-to-face with people living so vastly different from my middle class standards of living. Our Caribbean neighbors live in an economic lifestyle widely divergent from our lifestyle. Haiti is the second country in the western hemisphere to break from its European colonial rulers. Haiti has been crippled by decades of multiple foreign inventions, epidemics, political instability, social unrest, and devastating natural disasters. Today Haitians reportedly live on less than \$1,800 USD per person annually. It is inconceivable to imagine living on \$150 per month. Haiti is slightly smaller than the state of Maryland with a population estimated at about 11.5 million. Most Haitians are descendants of slaves brought from western and central Africa. Subsistence farming helps many feed their families.

Shortly after we joined Pilgrim UCC, George and Joyce Schowalter brought a VIP teacher to speak to our congregation in Grafton. That personal testimony is how Tink and I learned of the needs of our Haitian neighbors and the mission of VIP to “bring hope to the Haitian people through appreciating and supporting their efforts to become self-sufficient.”

Sponsoring a child’s education, supporting 4-H club grants, and purchasing water filtration systems are ways to improve the lives of Haitians. We take for granted that we can turn our water tap and have safe,

clean water. Imagine collecting water from a polluted stream or rainwater which must be boiled before it can be used. Partnering with Rotary International, VIP has helped install 30 wells and distributed over 10,000 water filters throughout Mirebalais in the central plateau. For \$35, a volunteer will distribute a water filter and teach a family how to prevent water borne diseases.

Educating the next generation is critical to our future. The spark of excitement and joy as a child learns to read and write is contagious. Think of the many ways education has helped you and your family enjoy time together and eventually build a better tomorrow. For \$175 a year, we help a child pay for tuition, books, and a uniform where they learn in a safe, clean environment.

4-H is an international youth development program teaching young people leadership roles, and giving back through community service. In Haiti, VIP 4-H focuses on the Goat Project. Training youth to raise and care for hardy goats which graze off the land will supply a family with milk, meat and a means to sell them at market for additional income. To learn more about any one of these ways of encouraging Haitians to learn, grow, and provide for their families, please go to viphaiti.org. In conclusion a prayer for us as we consider how to help our neighbors: Dear Lord, Help us to be your voice speaking out and living our love and acceptance. Help us



to be your feet walking beside those in need. Help us to be your hands to clothe, feed, and shelter them. Amen.

~Dick Linhart



4H Update

- First, some good news. At the time of our last newsletter, we were just short of sending funds to hold another goat class. I am happy to say that we reached our goal and **we were able to host a goat class this summer**. Another ten young people learned valuable animal husbandry skills that can provide food and income to their families!



- Secondly, if you have been following along with Ventures in People for a while, you know that the situation in Haiti has not been good for a while now, but at the end of September, the gang attacked Mirebalais, the city where our programs are. I heard from Bernine shortly after saying that she was okay, her home was fine, and everything was safe again. However, I can not help but imagine how terrifying that must have been to experience. My heart hurts for all those suffering around the world, but especially for our Haitian friends whom we know by name, have met, and spent time getting to know. We may not be able to fix it all, but let's at least **hold the people of Haiti in our hearts this season, pray for them, and if we are able, donate to keep our VIP programs alive and doing as much good as we can**. Thank you!

Water

The demand for water filters continues to be high in the central plateau area of Haiti. The Security situation in Haiti continues to be very bad. The Mirebalais area is relatively quiet but they did have one attack by a gang which scared a lot of people. Since then there have been no more incidents as of this writing.

While we would like to distribute water filters again next January we will not do so for a number of reasons. First because of security concerns we do not want to put our workers at risk. Also we may have problems getting filters delivered. In addition donations for water filters are down this past year so we do not have funds to do a full project. We will plan to distribute water filters in January 2025.

Please continue to support Ventures In People's water and sanitation efforts.

~Ken Schumann

VIP Hits the Road

Pilgrim UCC in Grafton invited Ventures in People to participate in their volunteer fair on Sunday, September 10th. George Schowalter, Barb Seefeldt, and Ann Neumann displayed the work VIP does in Mirebalais, Haiti area. They had the opportunity to tell VIP's story and meet several of the people who generously support our programs.



Turn Your Trash Into Cash and WIN, WIN, WIN!

VIP is starting a new and exciting Ink Cartridge Recycling Program!

This ink cartridge recycling program is a

WIN for VIP!

WIN for decluttering your home!

WIN for the planet!

We will share more information about this program next year but for now we encourage you to collect those ink cartridges over the winter months.

The ink cartridges can be new, used, any brand, and in any condition. Funds raised from the initial ink cartridge collection will be contributed to the VIP General Fund. Please note: this recycling program does not extend to toner or laser cartridges, or large print cartridges at this time. VIP will take care of the collection and shipping of the ink cartridges. We will follow up with more detail on the program and the success of our initial collection early next year. For now—please collect your ink cartridges!

In Honor/Memory Of

Donation made in

Honor of George Schowalter

~Given by Ralph Schultz

Student sponsored in Honor of George & Joyce Schowalter's Anniversary

~Given by Catherine & Richard Linhart

2 Students sponsored in Remembrance of Marhitza & Heidi Thomas

~Given by Kerry Franklin