Dear friends,

As we continue to navigate through a post COVID-19 world, Habitat for Humanity Haiti is more committed than ever to the people of Haiti. The need for safe housing has been emphasized by a pandemic that requires people to stay home and shelter in place in order to remain safe from disease.

With that in mind, habitat Haiti continued its work on houses in the northern communities of Haiti, in the cities of Port-de-Paix and Saint Louis du Nord. Twenty-two families now have a safe place to call home, after their houses were destroyed or badly damaged during an earthquake in 2018. Families like Cado’s, whom you can learn more about in this newsletter.

We continue to educate people in the community of Canaan, a makeshift city of thousands of people that was cobbled together as people fled the capital after 2010’s earthquake. Those people now need to learn the proper channels to navigate in order to claim the land where they have been living for close to a decade now.

We have also continued our work with long-term sustainability in mind by launching a pilot program which will reduce plastic waste in Haiti as well as provide jobs to many. We continue our commitment to the people of Haiti and our mission to empower through housing. We believe that everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

Blessings,

Jean Frenel Tham
Country Director
MEET A HABITAT FAMILY

In 2018, an earthquake rocked the north of Haiti. The city of Saint Louis du Nord was greatly impacted with some homes completely destroyed, Habitat for Humanity Haiti has built 11 houses for 11 families in need. One was the family of 71-year-old Cado who has been living in her Habitat home since December 2019. Her old house was destroyed in the earthquake. Cado, her daughter and grandchildren were forced to live in unsafe temporary accommodations, covered by a tarp.

Cado, who was widowed some years ago, has a table set up on her front porch to sell her wares. This is how she helps care for her family. Her daughter Olivine, 31, is a single mother of three adorable children, Ralph, 11, Larissa, 9, and Naelle, 4.

Cado explained to us that when she was young, her parents didn’t think it was that important to send their children to school, especially her, since she was a girl. As a result, she is unable to properly sign her name on anything. “They came up with a solution for people like me. They tell me to draw an X, and even that I can barely do,” she told us. This is why it was so important to her to make sure that all her children, and their children, learned to be able to read and write. She proudly boasts, “All the little ones know how to write their names, even the little one who is 4. She can’t quite write her name yet but can write the letter A. She’s learning her alphabet.” she says with a smile.

He daughter Olivine tells us that it was very important for her kids to get an education. Without an education, you won’t understand how to fight a virus like COVID-19. A lot of people don’t understand how it works, how important it is to wash your hands properly and what measures to take to keep from spreading diseases. “If not for Habitat, we’d have to sleep where we get wet when it rains, with no real security from the elements.” Every family deserves a home where they are safe to learn, play, and be comfortable enough to earn a gainful living. Together, we can help make a difference in the lives of families like Cado’s where three generations are able to thrive. Homes, communities, hope + you, help make all the difference.
Habitat, as part of the Leveraging Land Haiti Activity, co-funded by USAID, has hosted over 850 people in a series of thirty seminars on property law in Haiti over the past thirteen months. The most recent workshops were spread out over five days with a maximum attendance of 30 in a room that could hold the double in order to ensure social distancing norms.

One of the speakers, Marjorie Jacques, a property lawyer with CIAT (Comité Interministériel d’Aménagement du Territoire) commissioned by Habitat to conduct these seminars, explained, “I believe these interactive workshops are important, many people are aware of these issues, when you encourage intelligent discourse, people feel seen and are more engaged.” The workshop had several lively debates over urbanization, the proper management of slums, and what role, if any, the government has on managing places like Canaan, which sprang forth almost overnight following the 2010 earthquake, with an ever-growing population. James Fortuna, a graduate student at Université d’État d’Haïti, attended all five workshops as part of his research in social anthropology. Following a decree from then President Préval releasing the land in Canaan for private use, many people mistakenly believe that they now own the land where they have built their houses. “I think these workshops are essential, if only to dispel the idea that the land now belongs to those who occupy it. Now they can learn the channels to go through in order to claim proper ownership of the space they inhabit. They believe they can leave their spot of land to their children, but you cannot bequeath what you never owned in the first place,” James explained. Most of the attendees stated that they found a lot of value in the information that was shared and that they would in turn, share it with friends and family members.

These workshops are set to continue over the next two years as Habitat is committed to empower the residents of Canaan, in partnership with USAID and their joint Leveraging Land in Haiti project.
BETTING ON HAITI’S PLASTIC WASTE

Habitat for Humanity Haiti has partnered with the European Union to launch a 3-year program which aims to partner with Haitian universities to turn plastic waste into roads and construction materials. This project falls under an umbrella of projects form the European Union in Haiti called URBAYITI.

URBAYITI is a pilot program launched in three cities, Port-au-Prince, Jérémie and Cayes. Strategic partnerships have been implemented with universities and local governments to both help reduce plastic waste and pollution and build what should ultimately be cheaper construction raw materials.

In Haiti, plastic waste is already sourced by companies such as HP, to make ink cartridges, providing jobs for local communities by picking up plastic waste, which would otherwise end up clogging canals, and ultimately polluting the ocean.

In India, 620 miles of roads have been paved using plastic waste, the findings were conclusive, plastic roads were more durable than “regular” asphalt, cheaper to build, and better for the environment. Habitat has met with the Mayor of Cayes, Sylvie Rameau, to begin a partnership to help implement this program and reinforce practices that will bring revenue to the city as well as ensure safer building practices.

In addition to its recycling for construction project, URBAYITI will also target people in the construction sector to teach them the latest in proper construction techniques, so that they may have the know-how to build houses that will withstand environmental disasters. Habitat also provides training to students who have yet to enter the job market in vocational schools in the three areas of operation. Habitat for Humanity is committed to empower through innovation.

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