

# Hands Across the Sea

2013 / 2014 Annual Report



# Hands Across the Sea Haiti

A beautiful country ravaged by political upheaval and natural disasters, Haiti is rebuilding its infrastructure and working for sustainable development and growth. The poorest nation in the Americas, half of its population lives on less than \$1 US per day. Nearly half of Haiti's children do not attend primary school, resulting in a literacy rate of 53%. And only one in five attend secondary school.

Haiti's future depends on its children. Through education, children will become Haiti's future leaders. By supporting educational initiatives and strengthening families, Hands Across the Sea is uniquely positioned to contribute to a brighter future for the Caribbean nation.

Through our educational sponsorship program, our orphanage and our community partnerships, Hands Across the Sea is bringing about lasting change and raising future leaders for sustainable development in rural Haiti.

Our children's home provides full time care for children aged 0-18 years who come to us through a variety of tragic circumstances. The love, support and guidance they receive at Hands Across the Sea are key to their healthy development.

Our work in the community through partnerships and our mercy ministry help us bring hope and healing to families in the Artibonite Valley of Haiti.



## Children are Haiti's Future

Education

Character Development

Sustainability

Compassion

## It's All About the Children





## Who We Are

### Vision

Hands Across the Sea believes that children are the key to Haiti's future. Through education, children will become leaders in their families, in their communities and in their country.

### Mission

Our goal as an organization is to educate children to be the future leaders of the country. Children thrive within healthy families and supportive communities.

We are a Registered Charity with the Government of Canada working with needy children and families in Deschappelles, Haiti. We operate a children's home, a school from preschool to grade 9 with over 250 children, and an outreach ministry to families in the surrounding communities.

As an interdenominational Christian ministry, we employ local staff, thus encouraging economic development in the community.



# 2013 – 2014 Highlights



## School

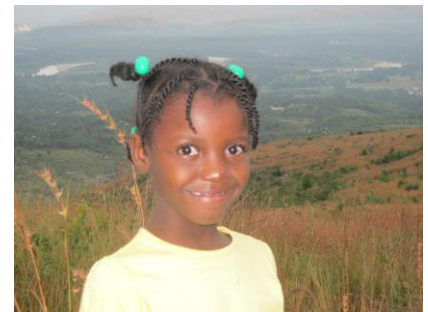
Hands Across the Sea provided high quality education to children from preschool to grade 9 at our safe, well-constructed school campus. We also supported students registered in senior secondary at other community schools. Registered with the Haitian Ministry of Education, our school follows the prescribed federal school curriculum, while working to incorporate modern approaches to teaching and learning. Ongoing teacher training and professional development help our teachers provide the highest quality education possible.

- 275 children in preschool to grade 9 completed the school year.
- 92% of the students who wrote exams in our school passed.
- 36 students wrote grade 6 or 9 government exams. We are very proud to announce that all but one of our students passed these very difficult government exams.
- All 21 Senior High students sponsored outside of IMKH passed.
- At the end of the school year, all of our sponsor students had sponsors contributing towards the costs of their schooling.



## Children's Home

Our children's home provides full-time care for children aged 0-18 years. We currently have 16 children in our home. Our newest addition, Magdala, joined the HATS family in June 2014. We are open to having additional children in our full time care as the need arises, taking utmost care to verify that the children have no other family support options before we bring them into full time care. We are working on finding a place for our 19-year old boy who by Haitian law needed to move into an outside living situation at the age of 18. We were unaware of this legal requirement until recently and will continue to support him until he is fully independent.



## Community Partnerships & Projects

- We continued to partner with Radio Creole, a local radio station broadcasting commentary advocating responsible citizenry, strong community values, Christian messages and music as well as community service updates. Many visitors in the past year had the opportunity to share music and insights live on the radio.
- We supported local community groups like soccer teams and sports clubs, providing soccer jerseys and balls so that young men and women could engage in healthy sport and team building activities.
- During the past academic year, we invited teachers from other community schools to participate in professional development opportunities at our school.
- We distributed 2000 kg of rice, 1000 kg of beans, 1000 kg of cornmeal, and 1500 L of oil to families in the community facing severe financial need.
- Through our goat/chicken Christmas project we gave 74 goats and 136 chickens to children in our school program and to needy families in the Artibonite Valley.

# Highlights 2013/2014



## Staff and Volunteers

Our Directors, Karen Huxter, an administrator and teacher who has been living and working in Haiti since 1995 and Luckner Estimable, a lawyer, educator and respected member of the local community, continue to provide great leadership in Haiti. Their hard work and dedication to children and families in Haiti is bringing lasting change to the Artibonite Valley.

Local staff is integral to the functioning of our mission in Haiti as they work with our children, facilities and visitors. In the past year, we have employed:

- 11 full-time teachers
- 15 part-time teachers
- 11 mission staff members, including house mothers, housekeeping, and maintenance staff
- 4 security staff
- 10 day labourers who have worked on various construction projects

Our visiting mission teams are key to sharing the vision of Hands Across the Sea as they engage with the local community, participate in a variety of projects, then return home to share the work and vision of our organization. We hosted 9 teams this year with 57 visitors staying and volunteering at our mission in Haiti.



## Our Board

The Hands Across the Sea Association, a non-profit board of volunteer directors from across Canada, oversees the work in Haiti. The role of the board is to raise awareness of the work in Haiti, fundraise on behalf of Hands Across the Sea, be responsible for budget and to provide direction and administrative support to the organization.

Our board members for 2013 /2014 fiscal year were:

Beate Rufft, Member, Ontario  
Bud Hurlburt, Member, Nova Scotia  
Dickie Macdonald, Treasurer, Nova Scotia  
Don Huxter, Member, Newfoundland  
Ed Rose, Member, Nova Scotia  
Gerry Rhyno, Chair, Nova Scotia

Julie-Ann Mullen, Member, Nova Scotia  
Karen Huxter, Member, Haiti  
Liette Wilson, Secretary, Alberta  
Mara Hawkins, Member, British Columbia  
Tim Newell, Member, Nova Scotia

# Highlights 2013 / 2014



## Capital Projects

- Construction of a roof over the top floor of the main mission building, using the frame from the old water tower. This area can be used for meetings and for a quiet place for visiting team members.
- Construction of a new 400 square metre church building that will be used for school devotions each morning as well as Sunday services. The main structure is completed and the inner walls and ceiling will be done in the next few months. Future fundraising will be needed to enable us to complete the floor and outside walls. Teams will be traveling to Haiti in October and November to construct church benches.
- Repair of major plumbing issues, both at the school and in the main campus.
- Thanks to many generous donors in Newfoundland, \$21,471 has been raised for the purchase of a new generator. The down payment has been made and the new generator to replace our aging one has been ordered.



## Success Story

Roseline Joachim was first sponsored through Hands Across the Sea as an elementary student because her family was unable to send her to school due to lack of funds.

We continued to support her through her high school education and then through three years of teacher training.

Roseline is currently a professional and enthusiastic grade 4 teacher at our school. She has taught at our school for the past three years and we're happy that she'll be working with us again in September of 2014.

Roseline is proof that school sponsorship changes lives! She is now helping us teach and train a new generation of young people who are Haiti's future.

# 2013 / 2014 Challenges



## Challenges

**Sponsorship** – Our sponsorship program is a successful one, allowing individuals in Canada and the U.S. to sponsor children in our school and orphanage so that we have the financial means to care for the children, providing a high quality education and nutritional support. However, the administrative work involved with maintaining our database, communicating with sponsors, assuring sponsorship donations, and translating sponsor letters is significant. It is very challenging to run this program with no paid administrative support in Canada.

**Finances** – Overall, our donations are down over \$22,000 from the same period last year. A commitment to increased fundraising initiatives will be essential in assuring the continued functioning of our organization at current levels. An appeal by Karen on our blog in May 2014 resulted in increased donations of \$33,000.

**Generator** – Our generator has not been working properly for several months, resulting in needing to use only one fridge for the children's home and one in the main office / visitor's centre. When the water tanks need to be filled, the refrigerator needs to be unplugged as the generator cannot generate the amount of power needed. The funds have been raised for a new generator and the generator has been ordered, but there may be a delay of several months before the replacement generator arrives in Haiti.

**Health** – Chikungunya, a rarely fatal but intensely painful mosquito-borne virus has infected 40,000 people in Haiti in 2013/2014, according to the Pan American Health Organization. Many of our school students and staff suffered the high fevers and extreme joint pain of this illness that Haitians call "kraze le zo" which means breaking your bones. Illness among teachers during the exam period caused disruption to the exam schedule and significant juggling among the remaining staff members. Several house mothers and other campus staff became very ill and were unable to work. We're happy to report that all of our staff members are currently in good health in Haiti.

In October 2013, Dalioty, one of our elementary teachers, fell ill with kidney problems and died after a very short illness, leaving behind two daughters. The loss of this much-loved teacher was very difficult for the staff and children in our school.

# Our Future



## Strategy

HATS' core strategy of caring for Haitian youth, and educating them in preparation for leadership of their generation, remains as important and relevant a mission as when HATS was founded. Indeed, the need is probably greater now than at any time in the past. The testimonies of the children impacted by the orphanage and school bear witness to the success of our organization in changing young lives.

## Ongoing Work

- Provide full time care for children aged 0-18 years at our children's home, accepting new children as the need arises
- Provide excellence in education from preschool to grade 9 at our school, Institution Mixte Karen Huxter (IMKH)
- Support the work of Radio Creole
- Support local community initiatives such as soccer teams with donations of jerseys and balls
- Provide emergency nutritional support to families whose children are at risk of malnutrition

## New plans / projects for 2014/2015

- Complete the church building by finishing and painting inner walls, finishing the inner floor and building benches
- Add grade 10 to our school so that our students can continue their schooling past grade 9 at our school

## Long term plans / projects

- Build additional classrooms for grade 10 students and eventually the final grades of secondary
- Partner with local women's groups to fund and guide microenterprise initiatives

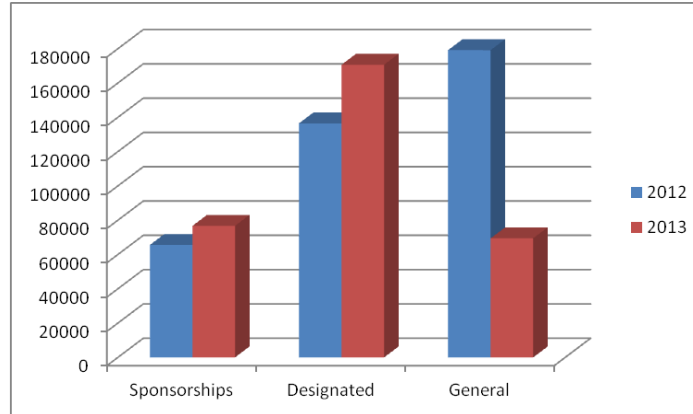




# Finances



Donations in 2013 saw increases in funding for child sponsorships (+17%) and designated categories (+25%), such as construction projects, but a huge drop in donations for general funds (-61%). This resulted in an overall drop in revenues of -17%.

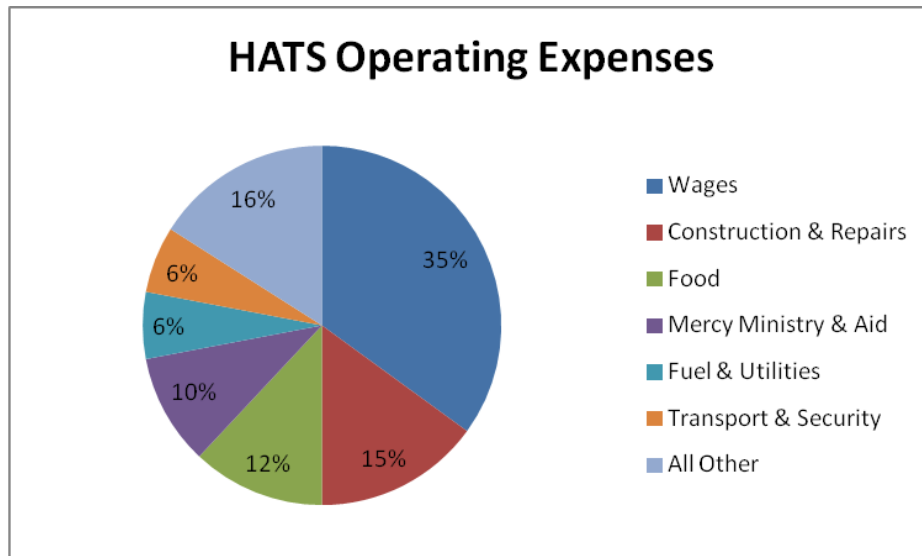


The steep decline in general donations prompted a special appeal by Karen Huxter and other board members in the spring of 2014, which was successful in generating some special gifts from concerned donors. Without that effort, HATS may have finished out the fiscal year in a much worse condition.

More attention needs to be placed on fundraising in 2014-2015, to bring in new donors and stabilize funding levels, especially in light of the expanded school grade levels. Other potential revenue streams should also be explored, such as CIDA programming for NGOs.

Most expense fluctuations were within normal ranges for the year. There was an increase in executive director salaries, as the board decided to begin contributing a small amount each month to a retirement account for Ms. Huxter who receives no monthly salary. In addition, food costs jumped due to market pricing.

The largest area of expense is wages/salaries at \$112,872. This entire amount is spent on people providing services in Haiti. It includes 2 directors, 11 full-time teachers, 15 part-time teachers, 11 mission staff members (house mothers, housekeeping, and maintenance staff), 4 security staff, and 10 day labourers who have worked on various construction projects. In short, HATS receives tremendous value for the money spent in this category.



**HANDS  
ACROSS  
THE SEA**



## Hands Across the Sea

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