



# Merger Student Sponsorship



December 2016

## My Haiti Mission Trip Report by Cal Swanson

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the words of God, if anyone serves; he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever, Amen."*

*1 Peter 4:10, 11 (The October G.O. Team verses)*

Great wisdom and insight was present when these verses were chosen for our team to memorize. All nine of us went to Haiti in October believing that in God's grace, He had gifted each of us to serve in whatever capacity we might encounter. We knew that it was going to be a week of hard work, but none imagined how much we would have to rely on "the strength God provides." As we look back on it all, we give God the "praise through Jesus Christ".

Here is how it happened:

- **September 30** – a safe "red-eye" flight to Boston, connecting and arriving in Port au Prince about 12:30 Saturday afternoon. It was a semi-chaotic airport scene including an hour delay in getting the twenty suitcases off the baggage carousel, followed by hauling them through customs and out into the welcoming arms of Mason and Lauren, Glenwood's missionaries in Port au Prince. Two pickups loaded with luggage and bodies took us across the city and up to the Seminary campus (twelve miles in fifty minutes, all the while avoiding people and potholes).
- **October 1** – Arrived on the campus and settled into our housing (three bedrooms w/three beds each, and a common kitchen where we would be fixing our morning coffee and breakfast that week). We enjoyed the first of six dinners that was prepared and served by Lauren (what a great hostess!). We had an Orientation and tour of the worksite – Mason gave us our team assignment: build, install and trim as many door frames and doors as we could in the next five days!
- **October 2** – The Lord's Day. We climbed into the two pickups along with seven seminary students (standing room only in the back) and drove back through the city, past the airport to Merger, a very poor neighborhood where Haitian Pastor, Johny, and his wife Rosadite started a church and a school. It was a special time as we observed and participated (in spirit since we did not understand Creole) in a two and a half hour worship service with about sixty-five Haitian brothers and sisters. We worship the same great God! Before leaving we drove to the school campus and had a tour of the classrooms in their various stages of completion – another major construction project that previous teams have worked on, but with much still to be done. Our lunch was at a restaurant on the mountain (3500 feet above Port au Prince). It was our opportunity to look out over the vast mission field of several million people who are lost in a gripping spiritual darkness. I will never forget it.



- **October 3-7** - Our days began by rising about 5:30 and at 7:00 walking, (each with his tool belt), the two blocks to the worksite, where we began hauling the major tools from the tool building to the work building. We were told that the new building would eventually have sixty doors throughout, thus our challenging assignment. By Friday afternoon the team had installed seventeen frames and doors, and had trimmed seven doors (both sides) plus five interior windows. I might add that this was no ordinary framing and installing, since each door opening was “unique,” which especially affected the trimming. I worked the entire time with Tom Nichols, our master cabinet maker, and our job was trimming. It was definitely a learning experience for me and I loved it.

I know, you want to know how we survived Hurricane Matthew, right? We are all praising and thanking the Lord for His protection. The eye of the storm crossed over the western tip of Haiti, about 150 miles from our location, so we had one day of heavy rain and strong winds. No damage to the STEP seminary campus and we were all working indoors. The airport was closed for about three days. Our hearts go out to the thousands of Haitian people who are suffering tremendously at present, including the families of the over 900 killed by the storm.

I especially felt the results of your prayers. My seventy year old body felt daily the tiredness of eight hours of hard labor in high heat and humidity. God’s strength was given to me each new day, following a night of sleeping on top of the sheets, and guess what – not a single mosquito bite! It was a privilege to get to know Mason and Lauren and their two children, James (5) and Ashlyn (2). They are a God-sent dedicated young couple.

Finally, I learned much from listening to Wawa, (president of the seminary), who has a huge job in leading this vital educational institution, producing many pastors for Haiti.

Thank you all for your prayers and to those who gave financially, the team so appreciates your sacrifice. We give Praise to the Lord for being with us. Please continue to pray for the Haitian believers as they minister in such a spiritually dark country.



The new STEP campus building



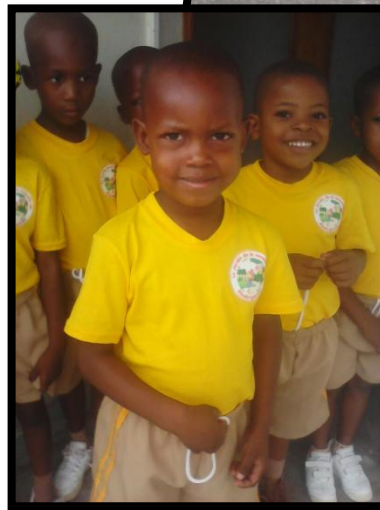
## Praises For...

- A successful beginning to the school year.
- The new board established for CENV.
- The safety of the school and all the families in Merger during Hurricane Matthew.
- The safety of our October G.O. Team during Hurricane Matthew.
- The work accomplished by the October G.O. Team.



## Construction Update

The construction of the newest building on the CENV campus is progressing well. The building will contain two large rooms for the kindergarten classes and is greatly needed to reduce the crowding in this area. When the walls are completed, the roof and finish work will begin. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this project in the last year. We hope to have pictures of the completed building in the next few weeks.



## Please Pray For...

- The spiritual maturity of the teachers at CENV and that they could help the students mature in their faith also.
- The parents and students who do not yet know Jesus - that their hearts would be receptive to the Gospel.
- The security of the school. Specifically that the school would be able to build a wall around the school campus.
- The CENV board members and their families. That they would trust God as He leads them in decisions for the school.
- The families affected by Hurricane Matthew.

*With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. Ephesians 6:18*

# For the kids

(or the kids at heart)

Haitians love to use bright, bold colors in their paintings and craft items. Color the picture below using the brightest, boldest colors you have!



If you have any questions regarding your sponsorship, please contact Shelly Kirgiss at the church office at 360-571-3300 or [skirgiss@glenwoodcc.org](mailto:skirgiss@glenwoodcc.org). Thank you for your sponsorship!