

# many hands

QUARTERLY

Transforming together, to be love in action, in a broken world.

## MARCH 2019 - THIS ISSUE

- 2 FIRST STEPS IN MARLIARETTE
- 3 RINGS, VOWS, AND LOCAL TRADITIONS
- 4 JON GORDON TO SPEAK AT BREAKFAST



P.O. Box 204 Pella, IA, 50219  
www.mh4h.org | 641.629.6633



## UPDATE ON UNREST

**Tim Brand, Executive Leader**



Agronomy workers planning to plant on the Many Hands campus



Children in our School of Light preschool during a recent class



Haitian work crew painting a recently built house



Agronomy workers feeding goats in our herd



Government road work is continuing, with construction reaching Pignon

On February 7, the country of Haiti experienced a prolonged state of civil unrest, lasting from February 7 through February 17. The opposition was demanding the president to resign because of government corruption, gas shortages, a devaluating national currency, and a spike in the cost of basic goods. Over those 10 days, these protests blocked most major roads, most businesses closed, schools closed, goods were not being transported, fuel was in short supply, and transferring money between banks was very difficult. The president did not resign and we praise God that in the last ten days, the country has been fairly quiet and resumed a sense of normalcy.

Many Hands for Haiti is positioned well to handle this type of unrest. The community of Pignon is traditionally a quiet town, with strong community leaders, and is far enough away from Port-au-Prince, where the majority of the unrest happened. We saw very little direct action in Pignon, but we did feel the indirect effects of the country being shut down. Gas, schools, food, commerce, and banking were all disrupted. On our campus, we run 100% solar and we have a deep water well, so those basic needs were never an issue. We did cancel school for a few days, as we didn't want to put any unnecessary burden on our families. As well, we had to cancel short-term mission teams at the end of February and beginning of March.

The good news is that we are back up and running our programming, including the First 1000 Days program in Sylvain and Maliarette and School of Light preschool. We have been able to purchase supplies and the community is restocked with needed items. As Christi Gabhart put it, "If we didn't have internet, we wouldn't even know there was a problem."

We thank everyone for their prayers during this testing time. We ask for your continued prayers, as many of the issues at the root of the protests are still unresolved. We believe in the families in our communities and stand with them during this time of uncertainty. It is during times of tribulation that the Good News of the Gospel breaks through in powerful ways, and we pray for the opportunity to continue to be a witness of His goodness in our lives.

# FIRST STEPS IN MALIARETTE



On Monday, January 21, Many Hands was thrilled to see the opening of the First 1000 Days Program at our newest campus in Maliarette, Haiti. The day was clear and beautiful as the new moms and children, ages 0-12 months, approached the Equipping Center. One could feel the excitement as the staff interacted with the families, explaining how to use their name badges and showing them where the activities would take place.

The first day was deemed a success by all. Craig Gabhart said, "Everything is going so smoothly! It seems as though this program has been running for a whole year - not a single day!"

As the week progressed, the program participants quickly adapted to the sign-in methods and the meal schedule. Moms gathered to help each other with a new vitamin regimen for themselves and the children.

"I see this program running very well. The women are interested [in what is being offered here]! They're coming on time. They're doing the [volunteer] service. They're very interested," stated Gelene, Program Assistant.

Opening our Maliarette campus was a strategic next step for Many Hands for Haiti, allowing us to multiply our life-transforming programs, and bring the gospel to new communities. Maliarette holds some of the poorest communities in Haiti, with many forced to live on less than \$2 a day. Our Love in Action programs seek to change this, providing children and their caregivers with resources and tools to create a new future for themselves.

Liz Clarke, Education Manager, has been the lead for planning and organizing the launch of the First 1000 Days program in Maliarette. She says, "We believe that every child in this age group deserves to be fed and deserves a healthy start to life. We know the foundations of that are food, a healthy spiritual life, and a safe home life. We know we can't provide everything, but we can provide food and medicine, and we can provide an environment where people can at least encounter God and encounter Truth and His love."

As the Organization Development Manager, Darryl DeRuiter, confidently stated, "I think the opening of the Maliarette campus signifies that Many Hands is here for good. And what I mean by that is that it's here for the long haul. It's establishing itself and is established. It's the first step that Many Hands has of opening nine centers [by the end of 2029]. It's also a testament to why we're here. We're here to do good work - it's the Lord's work. Nothing that God can do should surprise us anymore. It is amazing that we're opening another center."

Liz Clarke credits the successful launch of the program to the foundations God has been laying through our work over the years. "...had it not been for the people [who came] before me, then this [program in Maliarette] never would have even existed and God knew that. So it's just a continuation of the process that God started a long time ago with Many Hands and this desire He put in us to serve children in this age group. We are excited about the chance we have, not only to have such a healthy program but that we can multiply it and continue to bring this life-transformative opportunity to other communities.

"I'm sure, as time goes, we will continue to build and make it better," said Clarke. "...more effective in terms of how we reach people in love so that they can grow in love; understanding who God is and understanding how to love one another...As the worship song we sang this morning said, 'All the glory for Jesus.'"



**If you feel led to support our Love in Action programs, please consider SPONSORING A CHILD. Starting from \$35/month, you can help support children and their caregivers in our programs. For more information visit: [www.mh4h.org/loveinaction](http://www.mh4h.org/loveinaction)**

# RINGS, VOWS, AND LOCAL TRADITIONS

Micah Aurand, Administrative Coordinator



The dress. The suit. A ring and a vow. Family and friends gathered to witness a beautiful union. These are reminders of how Christ serves His Bride. On the 15th and 29th of December 2018, a total of forty-two couples were married in the MH4H Sylvain Equipping Center. One after the other, couples walked the aisle and were seated according to the community they lived in. In turn, a pastor representing each zone stood to guide them through vows and the exchanging of rings. One groom declared, to the applause of the audience and a fiercely blushing bride, "I'll love her forever - even if all her teeth fall out!"

In attendance on the 29th was Michael and Brittany Gabhart and Stacie and Jon Sefton, who graciously organized the generous donation of dresses, suits, shoes, and rings for each couple. Along with Many Hands staff, they were not only able to decorate, but also to fit and style each bride before their big day.

"It's just as important to them to publicly display and commit themselves to God as it was to publicly display their commitment to each other," shared Brittany Gabhart. "The wedding provided a faith-centered atmosphere for them to enter into this holy covenant of marriage and we were just there to help it be the greatest day for them. It turned out to be one of the greatest days for us as well."

Pastor Jean Ronel Joseph, one of the Many Hands Spiritual Shepherds disciplining the recent converts, says he sees the long-term value in this ministry. "Many Hands is doing something amazing. I think to take the step to do something like [this] shows how Many Hands really cares about the spiritual life of those who are living together without getting married."

However, this critical work of discipleship doesn't come without its challenges. From faulty teachings to local lore, it can be hard to navigate through cultural differences as our Spiritual Shepherds teach the importance of marriage.

"In Haiti, many people, they don't believe in marriage. They prefer living together without getting married. Thankfully, in our evangelism program, we really take time to teach people about that [marriage]. People ask all kinds of questions about why [they] should get married. They would like to know why it is important for them. Now you have to take the step to show them the big part it plays in their spiritual life with God. You just have to explain to make sure it's clear in their minds so they can say, 'Ok, this is something that I want to do.'"

Pastor Ronel believes that he and the other Spiritual Shepherds are called to continue in this work, regardless of the challenges they face. Their perseverance in walking with these couples in discipleship is bearing fruit. But he knows they cannot do it alone.

"I would say [to] those who are praying for this project, those who are supporting, for God to provide for them so they can continue to provide for this program. The continuing of the program would be really important for us to do what God wants us to do as His tools."

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MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER



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## JON GORDON TO SPEAK AT BREAKFAST EVENT



We are excited to announce Jon Gordon as keynote speaker for the second annual Many Hands Business Breakfast in 2019. Jon will be joining us at the Embassy Suites in downtown Des Moines on October 4, from 7:00am to 9:00am. The business breakfast provides the opportunity for a community of purpose-driven, like-minded leaders to network over a plated breakfast while receiving specialized training from Jon Gordon and Tim Brand. Jon will be sharing on “The Power of Positive Influence.”



Jon Gordon’s best-selling books and talks have inspired readers and audiences around the world. His principles have been put to the test by numerous Fortune 500 companies, professional and college sports teams, school districts, hospitals, and non-profits.

He is the author of 17 books, including multiple best-sellers: *The Energy Bus*, *The Carpenter*, *Training Camp*, *You Win in the Locker Room First*, *The Power of Positive Leadership*, and *The Power of a Positive Team*. Jon has been featured on *The Today Show*, CNN, CNBC, *The Golf Channel*, Fox and Friends and in numerous magazines and newspapers. His clients include The Los Angeles Dodgers, The Atlanta Falcons, Campbell Soup, Dell, Miami Heat, Pittsburgh Pirates, Northwestern Mutual, Bayer, West Point Academy and more.

Be sure to save the date and look for future announcements and news, including details for tickets and table bookings, as we welcome Jon Gordon to Iowa!

**You can find more information at [www.mh4h.org/bb2019](http://www.mh4h.org/bb2019)**