

## LEARNING AND GROWING

By Denise Dent, Director of Education



Front of the School of Light with new additional classrooms



Students perform at their recent graduation ceremony



Teachers workshopped in groups at their recent training



Teachers hold their certificates at the end of the training

Wow! Lots of things have changed in the School of Light in the past year, starting with our name. Because of the school's growth, we are now required to be known as an education 'institution' in Haiti. So we are now officially known as the Institution of Light of Sylvain! Regardless of our name, we are still here in Sylvain educating the next generation of Haitians, and we are excited for the year to come.

In the 2021-2022 School year, we were proud to graduate all 124 students. 100% of our preschool and primary students passed their exams and moved to the next grade! Considering only about 60% of elementary-age students in Haiti attend school, and fewer than 30% of those students reach 6th grade, this is a huge accomplishment. We attribute this success to building intentional relationships with parents, refining our classroom strategies, and ensuring our students have the best learning environment possible. We are grateful for the hard work of our staff, teachers, and administrators.

Lord willing, this coming year will see 166 students attending from preschool to 4th grade. Our staff has grown to 19 teachers and helpers, including a new school secretary and a student monitor. Our school principal, Micul, has been a blessing to the school. He navigates all the laws and regulations of having a school in Haiti. We are thankful to have someone to deal with those difficult bureaucratic issues that are critical.

Also new to the Institution of Light and the Sylvain campus are two new buildings. Construction began last fall on the new 4th-6th grade building and the new school administration building. Everything was completed in time for us to move in and set up before September 5th, when the new school year begins. The new space has given us ample storage room and a dedicated space for teaching training and meetings.

Speaking of teacher training, we kicked off the school year with a fantastic three-day training led by a group called P4H, a Haitian-based organization out of Cap Haitien. They focus on training teachers in current teaching theories and practices. It was a great learning and bonding time for our staff as they learned some new ideas on discipline, classroom management, collaborative learning, and learning styles. Our teachers will benefit from this training and the ongoing support this group will give. Teacher training is all part of our intentional effort to invest in the future of education in Haiti.

We want to thank everyone for your support and prayers for our school. We feel the love and appreciate your continued interest. Our school is getting bigger, our students are growing taller, and our staff continues to grow. We pray that all our efforts glorify God. We are thankful for His love, blessings, and what He allows us to do in Haiti.

Ke Bondye beni ou!

# PIGNON IN PELLA

On September 10, Many Hands will take supporters on a virtual journey to Haiti at the Pignon in Pella fundraiser dinner. The event will provide experiences and insights into our work. Through virtual reality video, storytelling, and special guest speakers, you will experience the impact we are making together for the Kingdom.

During the night, Many Hands will showcase 20 new stories from families whose lives are touched by our work. Each table will have the chance to meet a family unique to them, getting a glimpse into their lives and the hardships they are trying to overcome.

“The marketing team was privileged to be in Haiti to capture these stories,” shared Director of Marketing Rob van Beek. “Meeting these families was a moving experience. Our team has done a fantastic job of bringing these stories to life, and I can’t wait to see how people engage with them. Each story serves as a reminder of how critical our work is. It’s going to be a moving night.”

The fundraiser will benefit the construction of our next Love-in-Action Center, aiming to raise \$100,000. Focusing on women and children, these centers support families, providing access to programs and tools that address the root causes of poverty in Haiti.

During the event, guests can bid on a range of generously donated auction items. These include tickets to major sports teams, experiences, and packages. All money raised from the auction will go towards our goal.

Tickets and tables are available and limited. So join us as we aim to raise \$100,000 to build our next Love-in-Action center. Together we will rebuild, restore, and renew another broken community.



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# WEEK OF IMPACT CONCERTS IN IOWA



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and special  
concert dates.



On November 4, Many Hands is hosting its fourth Business Breakfast, bringing together business leaders across Iowa to #ChallengeWhatsPossible. This year Many Hands has invited Eric Genuis as the keynote speaker. A multi-talented composer, pianist, and speaker, his music has brought him all over the world. Eric has wowed and inspired large and small audiences for decades, performing nearly 100 concerts worldwide yearly with a group of world-class musicians. His live shows consist of stories, humor, and audience interaction.

Looking to continue our grow our vision to ignite generosity, we have invited Eric Genius to lead the Week of Impact. For six days, from October 28 to November 3, Eric will travel across Iowa performing multiple charity concerts. He will engage with hundreds at schools, shelters, and prisons, bringing hope through his music and message. His final performance will at the Business Breakfast, where he will share his message as keynote speaker.

“The Business Breakfast will have the same elements as years past - world-class speakers, the best venue, great food, and community-building. But, it will be slightly different, as we will utilize the power of music to move and transform us as leaders,” shared Tim Brand, CEO. “During the Week of Impact, we will go to prisons, rehab centers, youth shelters, and at-risk student activities to host concerts. The Business Breakfast will be the capstone of the week, a time to celebrate the good happening in the world through love in action.”

No stranger to generosity, Eric performs through his charitable effort, Concerts for Hope, to bring beauty and dignity back to the imprisoned and marginalized. He has performed over 1,000 prison concerts in his lifetime, including in most maximum-security facilities in the U.S.

“I’ve been able to touch people through my music in ways that uplift them,” shared Genuis. “What a tremendous gift to give them this gift. [Some] see their humanity for the first time in a new way. To see men sitting there covered in tattoos, gang life, and crying and not even moving after a show. There is something about how the music is presented that uplifts his humanity. He feels alive; he feels dignified; he feels worthy.”

# STAFF EXPERIENCE IMPACT IN HAITI

*In August, Many Hands sent a staff team to Haiti to experience an Impact trip. This opportunity allowed several US-based staff to experience Haiti for the first time and connect with their coworkers. The following are highlights from their blogs.*

## **Magen Andrasko - Executive Assistant and Marketing Specialist**

I remembered the quote from the Bible that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. Standing on top of a mountain that took a lot of work to get up, this verse is a little more...impactful, if you will.

The faces of the Haitians that we pass on the streets, the stories I have heard of trials they endure, and the realities they face that I witnessed for myself were all instantly brought back to the front of my brain. The farmer that climbed the mountain has a mustard seed of faith. The man with the rocks in his wheelbarrow has a mustard seed of faith. My coworkers at Many Hands have mustard seeds of faith when they show up and work so incredibly hard every day...

And through it all, everyone is quick to say "it wasn't me, it was God" that got them through. I want to have attitudes like them. I want to have drive and determination like them. I want to have unwavering, always-focused faith like them. I pray that their mountains move. And I give thanks for the ones that already have. Because as the Haitians will tell you, "if it is God's will."

## **Steve Lucas - District Manager**

1023! What does that number mean? That number doesn't mean much to many, but to our Many Hands team and to one deserving family, it means the one thousand and twenty-third concrete floor installed by Many Hands. This floor would be the one that I get to work on and be a part of.

Prior to starting, we had time with the family. Melissa used her Polaroid camera and took pictures of the children, and presented the photos to them. The children were thrilled with seeing their own image, maybe for the first time... then our bucket brigade formed, and we were ready to turn a dirt floor into concrete. It only took around two hours of Haitians working side by side with Americans to complete the concrete floor and a small pad of concrete for a front porch...

God put all of us in the position to work together, help one another and bring the light to where there's darkness. Today I feel like we made a difference. I feel like I made a small difference... The Haitians are hard-working people that aren't looking for a handout. They may just be looking for people to walk with them and show them how, so they can lead their own people to a future they earn for themselves.



*Magen and Herby at the summit of Mt. Pignon*



*The team poses in front of their completed concrete floor.*

## **Jon Pedersen- Director of HR**

We were given a chance to take food to people that are in dire need. Probably, even more important, Christi Gabhart was able to share and show what people go through just to survive. It's embarrassing to see what I take for granted. I'm also humbled to see the strength of these Haitian people. They survive with very little infrastructure – things that I take for granted. I think about the last time the electricity went out. I was angry because I had to go without air conditioning and had to throw some food out. These folks do it each and every day.

Even with the immediate, the most important thing about Many Hands is the focus on the long term, building economic and spiritual opportunities for our Haitian brothers and sisters. I'm proud to be part of an organization that focuses on building communities, not just solving an immediate issue in the short term.

Lastly, I've personally moved spiritually. Today I had the opportunity to attend a Haitian church service. Most churches that I've been to are grand buildings modernized to include all modern conveniences... But, it was moving to attend a service under a corrugated metal roof supported by poles and no walls. It is a special thing to see people gather to learn and praise God, simply to praise God.

**You can read their blogs in full on our website.**



## NEW FACES

*Many Hands continues to be blessed with a strong staff. Meet one of the latest additions to our team:*



## **Tyler Kamerman - Chief Development Officer**

Tyler Kamerman joined Many Hands, filling the new Chief Development Officer (CDO) role. As CDO, Kamerman will plan and implement development and fundraising strategies to provide for the organization's short- and long-term needs. He will work alongside Many Hands' partners, donors, and volunteers, fueling its capacity to fulfill its goal to generously grow impact locally and globally. Tyler will focus on strengthening these relationships while expanding the current base to accommodate the mission's expected growth.

"I'm excited about the role because I feel like my entire career has been leading me to this point. I have the opportunity to work with so many different people and organizations because the variety of ways to get involved and support Many Hands is so vast. There's not a day that I'm going to be sitting still!" states Kamerman.

"I have the opportunity to be a part of building God's Kingdom here on earth, and I can hardly contain my excitement about that. The work Many Hands does creates new jobs, puts food on tables, and provides education for children. Knowing that every conversation I have, event I attend, and talk I give brings potential impact gives me a level of motivation that I've never felt before."

# many hands

QUARTERLY



SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

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## MANY HANDS BUSINESS BREAKFAST

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## FRUIT IN THE VALLEY

Tim Brand, CEO | An excerpt from his weekly email and blog, *3...2...1 Impact*



I had a long conversation with a pastor from Pakistan. I'm always interested to hear what is happening around the world from first-hand sources as so much of our news is filtered through biased media. As you can imagine with Afghanistan being a bordering neighbor, extremist numbers are increasing every day in his country.

He made a sticky statement, paraphrasing Billy Graham, and I haven't been able to get it out of my head. "In life, the mountain top experiences are great for sight-seeing, but the fruit is grown in the valley." He knows hard times are coming his way, even the potential of being killed for holding true to his beliefs. He also knows real work is done in the hard times, producing something far better than the mountain top experience.

Each of us needs that mountain top experience to ignite (or sometimes reignite) our vision. But,

we can't stay there as the real work is done in the valley. In the tough places. In the hard circumstances. Where do you need to continue to work "in the valley" in your life? Are you trying to flee the valley, circumventing the fruit being grown in that harder place? I pray for my new pastor friend from Pakistan as his faith encourages me in my life circumstances. He was able to share his fruit from his valley with me. Where are you able to share your fruit with someone this week?

**"All of life is peaks and valleys. Don't let the peaks get too high and the valleys get too low."**

**-John Wooden**