



J.A. CLERMONT FOUNDATION

Hope for the Children of Haiti

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April, 2016

Dearest Friends,

I'm delighted to finally be able to share with you some good news for the Center. Water and power, two essentials for life at the Center, have long been serious issues for us. Now, with the help of a wonderful non-profit organization called SamanHaus, it appears that at least some of our dreams are moving towards reality.

We were introduced to SamanHaus through another Non-Profit Organization, "Harambee, Sustainability Project". SamanHaus is a group of young architects, Ivan O'Garro, Robin Bankert, and Mike Johnson, whose mission is to build environmentally sustainable architectural designs to assist institutions like ours in Haiti. They were in Haiti and visited the orphanage in Jacmel even before meeting us. They fell in love with the kids the first time they met them. They met with us subsequently and indicated that they would like us to be their pilot project in Haiti. They had so many wonderful ideas to improve life at the center. They returned last November at Thanksgiving where the kids enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner with them. They got the kids involved in the project by asking them their likes and dislikes; they showed them the plans and explained the graphics, what their rooms and their place of recreation would look like. The kids got very excited. I'm not sure they understand how long term this project will be. SamanHaus has called this Project Cité Vèt, and you can read about it and see their designs by visiting www.samanhaus.org.

The arrangement is that SamanHaus will provide the designs and plans and facilitate contacts with organizations that might provide free or nearly free materials. We will be responsible for all other costs. We agreed that the initial phase of the project will consist of two major areas of basic need: water and electricity. At the moment we have to buy water for everything including cooking, bathing, washing clothes. The kids absolutely cannot drink it. It's polluted water, which makes them sick, even when treated. The cost of trucking in so much water is draining on our budget. SamanHaus contacted Water for Life, a non-profit committed to providing clean water to communities around the world. They have agreed to dig a well at the orphanage. Digging a well is very expensive but the cost is shared between Water for Life supporters and us. If the well is successful, that water will still need to be filtered. SamanHaus has designed a water purification system that can handle both water from the well and an extended rain catchment system.

Access to electricity is a huge concern. At the moment we have about two to three hours a day of power from the grid and even that is not consistent. During the trip to the Center last November, SamanHaus measured the roof for the installation of solar panels. They are currently looking for donations from suppliers or direct contributions to buy and install the panels. There is a manufacturer of solar panels now in Haiti. If possible, buying them in Haiti could save money, support the local economy and also avoid the difficulties with high fees, delays and other risks at the port. Things move more slowly in Haiti, but I feel that we're making progress in these two vital areas thanks to our recent affiliation with SamanHaus.

SamanHaus has some wonderful designs for future projects to make the Center more liveable. The goal is to allow the boys a little more space to study and to separate the older boys from the younger ones, thereby giving everyone a little more privacy and minimizing friction. Eventually, we hope to be able to serve even more children but that's tomorrow's dream. Today we are working on water and power and are grateful to be partnering with SamanHaus.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Louise Clermont".

*"Most important, they gain a sense of family."
- Dr. Jacques A. Clermont*