

The Fond Doux Flyer April 2026

Staff Change



Junior Merjuste

Junior Merjuste has been elevated to the position of General Manager. He will work closely with other department heads, Dr Dieuseul Istache, Clinic Director; and Agricultural Agent Mackenson Hillaire; and also Fritzmann Saint Surin, chairman of the Haitian Fond Doux Foundation Advisory Committee, to improve effectiveness and efficiency of all Foundation Projects. He will assume some of the necessary duties of liaison to the schools as Mr. Emile Maceus' contract as Coordinator of Education has not been renewed. The school heads themselves are now charged with improving their own educational endeavors and they will assume greater responsibilities for liaison to the Foundation. Where a project manager exists, the project manager takes primary responsibility for supervision of the project. However, where there is no existing project manager, he as General Manager will assume such responsibility. He continues to retain the duties that he undertook when assuming the position of bursar which he assumed last October. This includes all banking activities and investigating the financial reasonableness of all project estimates presented to the Foundation. In this position he has performed admirably giving the board prompt and comprehensive reports on all things requested of him.

Mr. Merjuste is the son of Albert and Rosemène Eustache Merjuste. He has a long history of connection to the Foundation. He grew up in the first house built by the Foundation under the initiative of Ed Cerne, then a member of the Foundation Board. Mr. Cerne also provided an English language scholarship for him. His mother Rosemène has been the janitor of the Fond Doux Community Clinic since its beginning.

Private Ministries of the Staff

Many of the leading staff members engage in charitable ministries beyond what they provide through Foundation resources. Readers may be most familiar with the activities of Junior Merjuste, formerly bursar, and his goal of creating an orphanage. He took two boys into his home, James Desulme and Zevensky Jules, whose primary care has fallen to his sister Casandra. He likewise provides the financial support for two other children. Last month we introduced you to Dawin Figaro, an infant orphan taken in by his cousin Esther Léveille. He has been providing support for this child but has asked for help with this endeavor. Our clinic director, Dr. Dieuseul Istache, provides some financial support with these activities as well. He shares the goal of establishing an orphanage.

Johnson Louis, a teacher at the Methodist School, has been active in identifying children in the community that have not been attending school because of lack of money. He used personal funds to provide ten students with school supplies, and uniforms and/or shoes for several others. He has requested the Foundation for help with many more. (See story about school uniforms.)

Lovely Felix, the head of the Methodist School has taken a young woman in her last year of high school, Shaydine Louis, to support her school needs including tuition. She, likewise, has taken her to the Fond Doux Community Clinic for help with her health needs because of some chronic stomach problems, which are being addressed by Dr. Istache.

Ancito Gene, the educational director of the Ravine Parc School, reports that sometimes he provides emergency snacks when some students come to school hungry. This was likewise the practice of Jonas Pierre, the administrator of the Platon School, before we implemented the Vita Mamba project at Platon. Jonas Pierre also has a boat which he uses to provide emergency transportation for Platon residents, especially for acute illness or childbirth. Unfortunately, the motor of the boat was damaged. He asked for and has received help from the FDF to fix the motor.

Teacher Venelson Vitelus of the Methodist School has taken his niece, Michecaëlle Vitelus, into his home and has been supplying her school expenses as best that he can. His mother and sister have provided non-financial support. Many Haitian families take relatives into their home when the parents cannot provide for them. This is quite common in the Haitian community.

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School Uniforms



Johnson Louis with Children in new Uniforms

In a somewhat controversial decision, the FDF board decided to purchase twenty-four uniforms for students at the Methodist School. These were students that originally were not attending school for lack of uniforms despite the fact the FDF had asked the Methodist School to permit students to attend school without uniforms. There remained two problems: Some children did not have clothing that could be worn to school. For example, some children regularly wore oversize T-shirts unsuitable for school (or even worse clothing) and others felt the psychological discomfort of being different because they did not have uniforms like the other students. Both situations caused the students to miss school.

Earlier the board had also purchased shoes for about thirty students and uniforms for ten other students. The cost of these non-educational expenditures for students at the school has been a major concern of several board members. It drains money from other projects. It also reflects the poverty in the community.

The Methodist School was founded precisely to provide an education for children not previously attending school for a lack of money. That remains true today.

That students miss school for lack of school fees is true in much of the country, especially in rural areas. Most schools are private. In November of 2025, a UNICEF report said, "Haiti operates one of the world's most privatized education systems—80% of primary schools are non-public with many families struggling to afford fees and materials."

At the time of the earthquake in 2010, 92% of students were enrolled in private schools. Apparently, there has been some improvement.

Vita Mamba



Vita Mamba Delivery

A major project of the Foundation is to provide the nutritional supplement Vita Mamba to 100 school children every school day. A hungry child does not do well in school. That is why the US Federal Government provides a subsidized or free school lunch program for low-income students in American schools. In fact, they provide in some areas also free breakfasts. The Haitian government provides none of these. For 80% of the students, they do not even provide a school.

The Vita Mamba project is the Foundation's way to try to do something about the problem in the Good Samaritan School of Platon and the kindergarten of the Methodist School of Fond Doux.

However, because of gang activity, the supply chain is broken. We had run out of supply. This month, Meds and Food for Kids was able to circumvent the gangs by sending the supplies part way by boat. The much-needed supply arrived.

The delivery has not solved all the challenges. We are providing an education for 300 students, not just 100. We need an additional \$10,000 US dollars to provide for all students. We need an organization or persons to sponsor this program and provide the additional \$1,000 per month. This is a very doable project if someone were willing to undertake it! Are you?

In addition, we have a Medika Mamba program which treats malnourished children through the clinic. Previously, we had about 80 children in the program. We still have 25 to 30 preschool children visit the clinic weekly. We are seeking UNICEF support, but the steps are complicated. The President of the country needs to sign a so-called "patent," but there is no President.

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The Gardening Project



Ketlie Pierre-Louis Prepares her Garden

The gardening process in Fond Doux is often more difficult than in the US. One reason is that the people often do not possess land with tillable soil. To compensate, the gardener may need to bring in topsoil from somewhere else to create a small garden near their home.

Our Agricultural Agent Mackenson Hillaire has been instructed by our board to concentrate on helping people to create small gardens and plant high-yield vegetables such as tomatoes or other plants that produce large quantities of food in a limited space. Our goal is to produce enough food that it can become a substantial part of their diet.



Ketlie Waters her New Garden

Hunger and malnutrition are chronic in much of Haiti. Teaching people to garden is one of the ways that we are trying to help the Haitians to help themselves. Every time we help people with food, we evaluate whether they could create a garden to provide a sustainable source of food.

Food Distribution



Boutoute Family

The Boutoute family is a family living in the Fond Doux locality. They have 10 children. They recently received a food kit as part of the nutrition program where three families a month receive food from the Foundation chosen by the Haitian Fond Doux Foundation Advisory Committee. The Fond Doux Foundation is supporting one of the children, Rickenlove (on the right), through a scholarship program. The Boutoute family does not have enough words to express their gratitude for this unexpected support. "They truly appreciate this gesture," said Junior Merjuste, who delivered the food.



Part of the Jeanty Family

The Jeanty family (father on the right, his brother on the left) was another family to receive food this past month. Junior Merjuste said, "It is heartbreaking to witness the condition in which they are living." They recently visited the clinic accompanied by Isemaelo Polistin, where the condition of the children was carefully observed. We are awaiting further medical details from the doctor regarding the children's health.

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The children's mother is deceased, and they are currently living with their father along with other extended family members. The family has four children, all of whom appear to be affected by the same health problems.

Following a thorough assessment, it was determined that this family is in urgent need of assistance. As a result, they were selected to receive a food kit to help address their immediate nutritional needs.

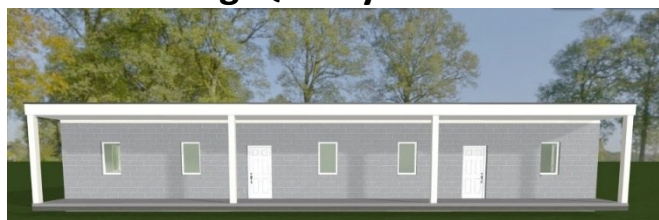


The Antoinette Innocent Family

The third family to receive emergency food this month is the Innocent family. They live in a house built by the FDF near the clinic. But, it has been a long time since then. junior Merjuste delivered some food. The family received this food with great joy. Antoinette explained that without the presence of FDF, she and her children might have been living on the streets.

She said: "I have no words to thank the people of the FDF. Only God can reward you for the support you have given me and the community."

Seeking Quality Education



Drawing of Proposed New School Building

The board is completely committed to providing high quality education in the new school building that we are constructing on our campus. To provide quality education, however, will require additional resources - significantly greater resources! We believe it will take a commitment of twice our present expenditures, probably more. We will probably need to double our

present teachers' salaries and provide considerably more classroom resources and supplies.

How can we raise this kind of money? We had hoped that the name, Methodist School, would help us with our fund raising in America. It has not. Another way to raise money is to charge significant tuition. This might enable us to provide the necessary resources, but many board members feel this violates our commitment to the poor. Is it a choice between serving the poor or high-quality education? Is there a way to do both?

The board decided to try to see if there is such a way. A gradual approach perhaps? Perhaps we can add a new university-trained teacher each year. Perhaps charge tuition for some students that can afford it? Perhaps create a new school with a new name? Details need to be worked out.

The board will work closely with the leadership of the Methodist School, who have been eagerly awaiting the construction of the building. They have been doing the best that they can under the conditions under which the school operates - inadequate facilities and underfunding. Together we can improve the quality of education, especially if we can find the adequate funds. The board has, however, decided to reserve control of the new venture.

In Memoriam

This past month marked the death of one of our generous donors who periodically gave four figure gifts to the Foundation. Carl Hamill not only gave gifts to the Foundation but made frequent inquiries as to what was going on. We wish to observe his passing and recognize his contributions to the Fond Doux Foundation and to the Fond Doux Community. May he rest in peace.

For more information on our projects or to donate, you can reach the Foundation in a number of ways:

Website: www.fonddouxfoundation.org

Email: John@fonddouxfoundation.org

By US mail at: Fond Doux Foundation, PO Box 51443, Durham, NC 27717.

Or through Epworth UMC Church, Durham, NC

Website manager: Brent Engel

Newsletter editor: Rev. John Clausing

The Fond Doux Foundation engages friend-to-friend with people in and around the village of Fond Doux, Haiti, helping to provide better access to medical care and health education, improved nutrition through agriculture and animal husbandry, educational scholarships, and intercultural faith-based activities. FDF is a 501(c)3 organization based in Durham, North Carolina.