

# THE CATALYST

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( Mailing Address )

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## Sponsorship Update

As school begins in the United States, children moan and groan about waking up early, wearing dress code, and doing homework. In Haiti children wake up hours before school to complete chores just so they can make it to class on time. They proudly wear their uniforms and colors which represent their village and school. They are thankful to have notebooks to complete their homework. Some children are not so fortunate and practice their numbers in the dirt with sticks.

138 children to date have been sponsored for the 2017-18 school year!

This has been our most successful sponsorship program, a HUGE thank you to all the sponsors who have made the dream of education a reality for a child in Haiti. Sponsorship for one child is \$100 USD. This covers school tuition, uniform, and school supplies. There is still time to sponsor a child! Just make sure to indicate on your donation that it is for sponsorship. Donations can be made via the HPI website or by direct mail. Checks should be made payable to Haiti Plunge/SP.

### 2017—2018 Haiti Plunge Inc. trip dates

Dec. 28—Jan. 6, 2018

Feb. 16—25, March 3—11, 10-18

April 13—22 May 20—29

June 22—July 1 Aug. 3-12

Applications are available on the website or via email. Trip cost is \$1,650. Fund-raising pkts. are available to defray trip costs.

Emma Baron-Pinkowski shares a reflection on how her Haiti experience transformed her.

It didn't have anything to do with school or my home life, but with my first trip to Haiti during Feb. vacation of my high school freshman year. I had heard about HPI from a friend who had gone on multiple trips and said that it is a life changing experience. I can honestly say that it was the best choice I have ever made. I love helping people. I think it is the most satisfying thing in the world. Haiti is what helped me discover that feeling. I've always been willing to lend a hand, but I've never been so involved that it truly touches my soul and creates the happiest of feelings. One thing I learned was that although Haitians had little money, food or things, they always had time to give a smile and offer help. They never felt sorry for themselves for what they didn't have. Haiti has



inspired me to become a pediatrician so that I can help kids living in countries that do not have access to medical services.

In Feb. 2018 I will make my fourth trip to Haiti.

HPI has multiple sustainable projects that are part of its mission.

Team members learn first hand about sustainable development as they work alongside the people. We may start the project but it's the people that complete them. I have learned how to build raised gardens, work on erosion control projects, build an oasis out of a sink-hole and how to survive in a harsh environment. The opportunity to participate in this program means everything to me and it's what I look forward to each year. I have made everlasting friendships and this experience will continue to shape me as a person.

**Emma is a senior at Longmeadow High School in Massachusetts.**

**Board Highlight:  
Susan Yates MD**



Susan was born and educated in Michigan. After medical school she moved to Iowa for residency training. Susan then moved to the Berkshires in 1981 to practice OB/GYN with Williamstown Medical Associates. She has been a practicing physician in the community until her retirement in July 2017. She has participated in two Haiti Plunge trips. When in Haiti Susan sets up mobile clinics in the villages served by HPI. Operating these clinics certainly provides unique challenges and experiences. HPI serves nine villages in an area that covers a 25-mile radius. Maneuvering mountain terrain in off road vehicles is very demanding on the body. Several of the villages have to be hiked to using mules to carry the medical supplies. Add to the fact that team members live in one of the villages and sleep in tents. She enjoys the challenging lifestyle. She looks forward to returning to Haiti to assist with health education, food insecurity and access to immunization. Susan lives in Williamstown with her husband, Martien Mulder. They have six adult children and two grandchildren.

**Raised Garden Update**

Project manager. Roberge Sylvestre, is busy completing surveys with all the women who have had gardens built in the last two years. So far the responses are very encouraging. Most women are harvesting 3 times a year! This is incredibly important in a food scarce society that has been in drought for over a year and still recovering from Hurricane Matthew that wiped out last summer's harvest crops. The surveys also show that most women are using their extra harvests as supplemental food for their families, rather than selling at market. Hopefully this means that there will be more children with full bellies in school this year.



**The Giving Tree 20/20 Club**

HPI will be kicking off its 3rd annual Giving Tree Project in Nov. To date 455 children have received a mango tree to grow. HPI is grateful to all its supporters who have purchased trees for children. It also welcomes **Mike & Ellie Devlin, Bob Petricca and St. Gregory's School in Loudonville, NY.** to its 20/20 Club ( 20 trees for 20 children ) Mango trees are considered the tree of life because its fruit contains all the major nutrients.



**" The world will not change if I do nothing to change it" Caesar Borga**

**3rd Quarter Major Donors**

- |                         |                      |                                |                       |
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