

THE CATALYST

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The Haiti Plunge mission is to challenge and empower young people to make a difference with their lives and to be of service to others.

2018 HPI Team Updates

February team members (photo) gathered to meet each other and begin organizing team supplies for their trip during their winter vacation. They are packing boxes of candy canes to give out as a treat for the village children. The 2018 teams will be painting the classrooms in the new school that was just completed in 2017. This group will also be building raised gardens for women,

March teams will follow. The first week in March Susan Yates-Mulder, OBGYN and Ruth Harrison, R.N., both members of HPI's Board of Directors will accompany Sr. Eunice Tassone, Executive Director and a few others in the medical profession to conduct seminars for the nineteen birthing attendants from the nine villages that HPI serves. They will also be joined by Dr. Gabrielle Cajuste, who staffs the clinic in the village of Desab. The purpose of the seminars is to evaluate and upgrade the skill levels of the participants. Once these seminars are completed, HPI will provide the financial resources for the group to continue their specialized education with a Haitian organization. Laurah (Turner) Lurkin, PhD and Dean of Medical Education at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, will document the program. Laurah had her first Haiti Plunge experience as a student at Drury High School in North Adams, MA.

Holly Bradley, HPI staff and Spencer Moser, HPI Director and on staff at Mass College of Liberal Arts will lead the **2nd March** team and will complete the painting of the classrooms.

April team members will distribute Mango trees to the children in the HPI villages, Photos will be taken of the children receiving their trees and sent to their donors. To date 165 trees have been donated for distribution this year. This team will also begin updating the photos of the 161 children who are sponsored for school.

June is a unique team. Former team members, who were part of the plunge in the 90's, will share the experience with their own high school kids. They are coming from TN, CO, NV and New England.



New Directors

Haiti Plunge Inc. welcomes new members to its 2018 Board of Directors. The new directors are Donald Rochelo, Spencer Moser, and Kathy Morrisette. Student directors are Katherine Howe and Jenah Janz. They will join the sitting directors: Ruth Harrison, Susan Yates, Robert Petricca, Nicholas Raschdorf, John DeRosa, Justin Harrison, Alex Daugherty and Sarah Raschdorf.

TEAMS CON'T.

The June team will complete the distribution of mango trees, finish updating photos for the sponsorship program and build a raised garden.

August team will start the slurring of the outside of the school and prepare it for painting. No project is easy in the mountains. The greatest challenge is hauling the supplies from the city through the 7 miles of rugged terrain to the village of Brely. All work projects begin early in the morning in order to avoid working in the intense heat.

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2018 Trip Schedule

Feb., March, June teams are filled. There is space for two on the April 13—22, The August team is opened to anyone interested. Fundraising brochures are available to help defray the cost. The trip cost is \$1,650 and covers all expenses for the participants.

ROOTS & SHOOTS PROJECT

HPI is happy to report that the Roots & Shoots organization will once again fund an environmental project. In past years they funded the Raised Garden Project, which builds gardens for women next to their homes, to provide an additional food resource for families. They also gave a mini-grant for Project Oasis, a program that fills in sinkholes and plants trees over it for erosion control. The organization supplying financial resources to build a community compost bin in the village of Brely. There is a great need for the women to have access to compost for their gardens. The greatest challenge for them individually is to have enough organic material to feed compost. Building it in the village center will involve the entire community. The construction of the compost bin will be undertaken by students from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts during their March alternative break.

Shoutout to Henriquez Fund



HPI is truly grateful to the Alice & Richard Henriquez Fund that has benefitted Berkshire County students who participated in the Haiti Plunge. Financial aid is made available to those who need help to defray their trip expenses.



Girl Scouts Unique Gift

Troop names HPI "Gift of Caring" Recipient. It didn't take long for Jenah Janz, a member of the HPI Board of Directors, to get

her Girl Scout troop # 11221 to agree to do something for the children she met in Haiti. Jenah is one of many volunteers who returned home from the Haiti Plunge needing to do more. "The Haiti Plunge was an eye opener. It made me want to do more to bring the Kingdom of God to others," she explained, "even through the hardships and devastation, I've never experienced such community love and hope."

When I told this to my Girl Scout Troop, they wanted to do something for them as well. We pitched in to buy four mango trees but felt it wasn't enough. When cookie season started, we needed to choose an organization for the "Gift of Caring", Janz continued. These are the cookies that people donate to a group or organization. For the past few years, her troop gave to Soldier On in Pittsfield. This year, the girls decided to split the donations between the two organizations.

It is too easy to take the simple things, like cookies, for granted here. In Haiti everything is important and nothing is taken for granted. It is so different than what we understand or can even put into words when we see it for the first time.

I would not change you for the world, but I would change the world for you.

4th Quarter

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