



Men anpil chay pa lou.

Many hands make the load lighter.

Haitian Proverb

2016 Annual Report

“With rare exceptions, all of your important achievements on this planet will come from working with others-or, in a word, partnership.”

Paul Farmer

Dear friends,

My favorite word in Creole is **dousman**. Literally, it means “slow” or “gentle”. But, as is the case with so many words and phrases in that colorful language, there is so much more nuance to it. It is a way of moving, a way of interacting with the world, a way of treating others. Even the way one says it needs to be unhurried - almost like a warning or reminder of what is important in life: “douuuzzz-maaaaan”.

This word feels right to describe our work in Haiti. Now in our 8th year of existence, The Road to Hope continues to labor tirelessly to promote education, children’s development and increasingly, community health (more on that in the pages ahead). But, in doing so, we are constantly reminded of the need to work with our Haitian partners in a deliberate and careful way out of our respect for the traditions and cultures of the communities we serve.

We have never presumed that Haiti could be “fixed” or that we had all, or even many, of the “right” answers. However, by taking the time to build relationships with our Haitian friends, by carefully listening to their hopes and dreams, and by working alongside them in a respectful and deferential way, we have always strived to go about our business in a **dousman** way.

Of course, we all have much to learn in Haiti. Anyone who has ever tried to hurry through a meal, or count on a meeting time that is within a 2-hour window in Haiti, is reminded that their entire culture runs at it’s own **dousman** pace. It’s the Caribbean way, and we in the industrial world could really learn some lessens from slowing down - myself included, for sure!!

Finally, I would be remiss in not thanking all of you, our generous and faithful supporters. It is a privilege and honor to have your support. Together, and perhaps with an extra dose of humble **dousman**, we and our Haitian communities can work together to accomplish great things!

In gratitude and humility,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rich Harris', written in a cursive style.

Rich Harris | Chair, The Road to Hope Board

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

—Nelson Mandela

So often, when speaking of Haiti, people tend to focus on the catastrophes, the hardship, the poverty that is endemic in the country. Yes, all of that exists and needs to be acknowledged, but what always remains with me is not any of that but rather the powerful connections I have been fortunate enough to witness and help build in the past several years in this beautiful country and in the village of Nordette. Every time I walk back into the courtyard at St. Patrick’s School after sometimes a full year away, I’m overwhelmed by the authentic connections the students of Colorado Academy (CA) have made with the students and teachers of Nordette. Our returning students look forward to re-connecting with the villagers, and after multiple trips down there, it’s quite clear that the kids in Nordette also cannot wait to reciprocate this feeling. I watch Jacqueline Patel, who’s travelled to Nordette three times, searching for her good friend Adeline, while also watching Adeline looking intently for Jacqueline. The joy on their faces when they find each other is transcendent. I see Thomas Messner immediately start looking for Didi and his brother Sundi, and within moments, all are reunited and joyfully playing with one another. These two examples are repeated over and over with different students from both CA and St. Patrick’s every year. Our students who are first-time visitors are also warmly welcomed into the village as dozens of Haitians excitedly swarm around them asking “Komon ou rele?” Within moments, every CA student is either sitting with a Haitian child on his/her lap or is carrying one in their arms, happily “conversing” even though neither shares the same language. I know that next year, these first year travelers will be searching for children to whom they now are closely connected.

As one of the co-leaders of CA’s Haiti Program each year and as chair of the Road to Hope’s Student Advisory Board, I’m so blessed to witness these interactions every year, and it’s one of the most remarkable aspects of our program. Do we teach our students about Haiti’s history and the problems still facing the country? Sure. Do we talk to them about the Road to Hope’s goals in Nordette and what we hope we can do to help St. Patrick’s prosper and become self-sustaining? Absolutely. Do we work incredibly hard, whether hauling rocks to build the foundation of the school, painting the school buildings, picking up rocks and trash in the courtyard, and working with students on art projects and writing? Yes, and all of these are vital to the Road to Hope’s success in Nordette. But what is just as vital and arguably more important are the real, human connections shared between the people of Nordette and Colorado Academy. Any success we have in our endeavors is firmly rooted in our shared humanity. Each hug and kiss I receive from Monsieur and Madame St. Louis, the village patriarch and matriarch, reaffirms for me on every trip that we are all in this together, and the genuine warmth and affection we share is the true foundation the Road to Hope strives to build. —Stuart Mills, *Board Member*



"All is connected... no one thing can change by itself." –Paul Hawken



Meet Lovelie

My name is Lovelie Marcellus. I am 18 years old. I am still in school. I attend Collège Saint Pierre. My family is modest and I am the youngest child. My favorite part of school is philosophy since I like to debate. I also like biology and chemistry. I like to spend my time to practice the violin and to help teach the beginning music students. The Road To hope is the organization of Zach which works with Haiti Youth Orchestra, which helps me to achieve my dream to become a violinist, to play a marvelous instrument. I hope to become a professional violonist and to work with the Haiti Youth Orchestra because it can become part of a professional orchestra.

Mon nom est Lovelie Marcellus, j'ai 18 ans J'ai toujours allé à l'école. Je suis au college Saint Pierre. Ma famille est modeste et j'en suis la benjamin. Mon partie préféré à l'ecole est la philosophie puisque j'aime le debat, biologie et chimie. J'aime dépenser mon temps à pratiquer le violon et à aider les autres débutant. The Road To hope est l'organisation de Zach qui fonctionne avec L'orchestre St-pierre, donc qui me permet de réaliser mon rêve de devenir violoniste, de jouer un instrument merveilleux. J'espère de devenir violoniste professionnel et de travailler avec L'orchestre pourqu'il puisse devenir un orchestre professionnel et philharmonique.



CONNECTION is Key

Erin McCoy



Every year, The Road to Hope partners with Colorado Academy to provide cultural experiences to students from the U.S. and Haiti. Erin traveled with The Road to Hope in 2016.

Stepping into a foreign place for the first time is terrifying whether it be a friend's house, a new school, or a new country. When I arrived in Haiti so many nerves coursed through my body that I was unable to focus on the sole reason I came to Haiti, to change something. Mr. Mills, our trip leader, announced that we were going to have lunch at Perre Alfonse's house. We parked our cars on the busy streets and walked inside. All of the students were so hungry that they headed straight to the food, but I noticed a scared little head poke around the corner of the kitchen. Then another head popped out. However, these two girls were too frightened of us to say hi, but their curiosity intrigued me. I downed my meal, so I could go into the kitchen to meet these sweet girls.

Before heading to Haiti, I had learned no Creole, but I had 6 years of French under my belt. Luckily, the students in Haiti learn to speak French. However, most of them have a programmed response to any French they hear, "Ça va bien et toi?" Which translates to, "I'm good and you?" As I walked into the kitchen the girls scurried away to the corner of the room and sat on the stairs. I smiled, slowly walked over, and sat on my knees so they wouldn't be as intimidated by me. I introduced myself, and, suddenly, the girls went into a fit of giggles (I'm assuming they laughed at how poor my french was). Immediately, my heart started to beat fast, and a smile increasingly grew bigger on my face. I had never experienced anything like this in my life; the girls didn't have to say anything to me, but their laugh and presence in the room made me feel as if I had known them forever. At that moment, all my nerves vanished. The girls and I continued to talk to each other with broken up French. Then, we started playing hand games and singing. Everyone in the room was laughing.

This experience was so small, it happened in a matter of minutes, yet it impacted me greatly. It was at that moment that I realized the strongest connections in the world don't need to be through language or culture, but togetherness. We are all humans, and our experiences in life are unique, but sometimes the strongest human bond is togetherness. In the end, I don't know if I changed those girls, but they did change me.

"We are like islands in the sea, separate on the surface but connected in the deep."

William James



The Music Connection

I travelled to Haiti to work with the Haiti Youth Orchestra in June of 2016. I went with Zach and a team of three musicians from the Colorado Symphony Orchestra. On our second trip, my 19 year old daughter, Anna, joined us as an apprentice. I agreed to participate because I was eager to put my teaching skills to work in an environment of less privilege, meet the people of a culture quite new to me and just have fun traveling. My experience has been that and more. The team has built a summer camp from scratch. We have networked with other professional musicians who also volunteer in Haiti. We have learned to work within a very different culture. And we have had the pleasure of teaching the children of HYO individually and in small and large groups.

I had a funny moment on our trip to Haiti which got me thinking about things in a slightly new way. During some fun "down" time, we visited a market that makes beautiful metal artesiania. While walking around, I mentioned to Zach, regarding how much time we would be shopping, "Now I see why we just want an hour." The merchants in this market tend to speak limited English, and have to vie for your attention, as there are hundreds of little shops and stalls to choose from. One enterprising gentleman heard me say this, and called to me, "I have hour! Very nice hour," and set his helper to fetch some "hours" for me. Of course this was a light-hearted moment for me, as the man made his effort to gain my attention. And it also made me reflect. How much is an hour worth? It depends on lots of things, really. But I would like to say, one of the most valuable hours I can think of is one working alongside the delightful students of the Haiti Youth Orchestra.

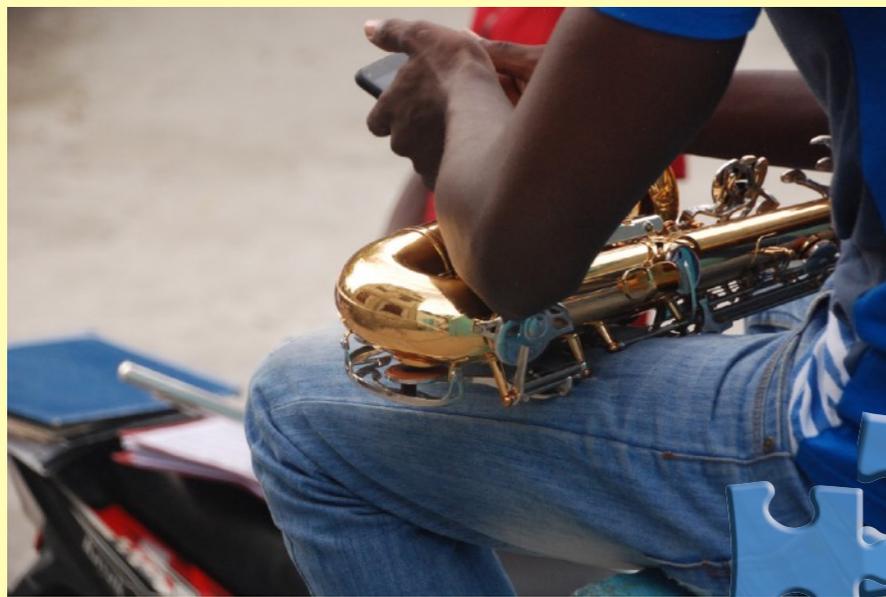
The Haiti Youth Orchestra is growing like a teenager, so fast it's hard to keep up with. I am so privileged to have worked with these young people two consecutive years, and to witness their growth. How else would I believe it?

On our trip, I asked Zach if, when he started the orchestra with the handful of instruments he brought to students at Saint Pierre, he ever imagined it would become the 80 players it is today. "Not really," he said!

It was a magnificent treat to see so much improvement in the students. String players who were absolute beginners last year were able to play in the beginning string ensemble. They were even able to join the advanced orchestra for one piece. Some of the advanced students had flown ahead, with improved technique and musicality. All this, with students who have no private lessons, have no regular string teacher and cannot take their instruments home to practice.

The moments that stand out for me: the look of delight on a face as a child plays in third position for the first time; the look of amazement when they hear themselves, after some hard work, turn a beautiful phrase; the sense of pride and the ambience of sheer joy among the young musicians after performing their culminating concert. For me, these moments make a priceless hour.

–Helen McDermott



My Heart is in Haiti

by Anna Martens

*Written after traveling to
Haiti with The Colorado
Symphony Orchestra to
teach the Haiti Youth
Orchestra*



Haiti is a place that captures the heart

It may not have a tourist draw, but the moral heart strings it pulls are counted in the milye

I would eat only plantains at every meal (maybe throw in some fries) if I could stay

I give away my all each day, but the generous sun does not let me wake without shining energy

It was all I could appreciate to look out the window and absorb every colorful tap tap, every curious goat, every basket atop a woman's head

But if I could, I would scrape the trash from the gutters, converse in Creole, purify the water

Rolling hills thick with palms, compact clouds illuminated -- the road is a rope tugging me in deeper

This is all nothing compared with the smiles on kids' faces

White teeth contrast dark cheeks

Pearly eyes open wide, crinkle at the edges, and stare back

Bodies sway slightly to their music, laugh, yell "silence" in creole when necessary

They hug goodbye, kiss a cheek, say "I love you" and plead, "learn French"

The kids don't forget "mesi," they pay close attention, are proud of what they accomplish

This is all that matters while in Haiti, and home is far away and irrelevant...

Save for the complex considerations of wealth distribution that bounce off the walls of my brain

Is it not just the beauty, but the potential

If every kid could touch an instrument, feel its joy? If TB and earthquakes did not take disproportionate lives?

And so, open minds and caring souls who travel to Haiti are compelled to give their lives

Always with espwa to see the round, welcoming faces again soon

Always bidding the temporary "na we pita" instead of the permanent "au revoir"

Because a piece of the heart is still in Haiti



Project Cure

In the spring of 2016 I was so fortunate to have been able to participate in a joint effort between the Road To Hope and Project C.U.R.E., to conduct 4 mobile clinics in rural Haiti. We also enjoyed the friendship and expertise of Food 4 The Hungry who provided translators and logistical support for the first two clinic days in the northern part of the country.

These clinics were the culmination of months of preparation and planning. Project C.U.R.E is an international organization based in Greenwood Village, CO. They provide medical supplies and medications, logistics and additional volunteers to support organizations, like ours, in developing countries. We had worked together in 2014 to ferry a load of supplies to a clinic in Mirebelais and we knew at that time that we could do so much more for Haitian families.

Our team consisted of three pediatricians, a rheumatologist, an obstetrician, a certified nurse midwife, and two nurses. Also pressed into service were three lay people who helped in ways too numerous to list. We also enjoyed the very essential support of translators and drivers without whom these clinics would not have happened.

Imagine the scene when our two large white vans pulled into the school where the clinic was to be set up. There were hundreds of people waiting under shady trees and verandas each day. Haitian communities have a strong communication network that operates quickly and efficiently to spread the word when events like this are to take place. It truly rivals anything our electronic social media might be able to achieve. Word had spread. We were greeted by infants, school children, parents and grand parents. A registration system was established that was just this side of chaos but eventually patients were directed to the appropriate provider and we were off and running.

We also experienced the warm hospitality for which Haitians are known. The village provided a mid-day meal for our team prepared by women in their own homes. I was so touched by their generosity and thoughtfulness.

It is estimated that we saw 300 people on each of our four clinic days. We did as much teaching as time would allow, dispensed medication and advice, and were touched by each and every person who sat before us on a small wooden chair or bench and trusted us with their health.

—Jean Mensendick

Connect with Project Cure at <https://projectcure.org>

2016 Financials

Income

General	\$24845.55
Mathone	\$6830.00
Nordette	\$18441.00
Haiti Youth Orchestra	\$23237.74
Trip Income	\$5275.00
Interest	\$53.44

Total
\$78,682.73

Expenses

Administrative Expenses	\$4,309.96
Programs & Grants: Nordette	\$34,302.49
Programs & Grants: Mathone	\$20,000.00
Programs: Travel	\$6,624.53
Haiti Youth Orchestra	\$4,228.35
Other	\$7,627.19

Total
\$77,092.52

Total Income/Expenses
\$1,590.21

Meet the Board

Rich Harris



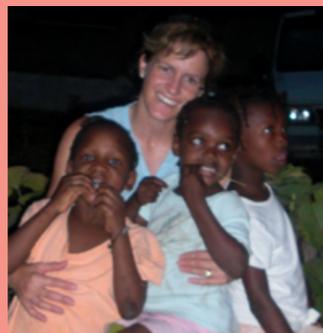
Jeff Simpson



Barb Moritzky



Lisa Harris



Bryan Hickel



Stuart Mills



Jean Mensendick



Jesse Schumacher



Jodi Archbold



"Never underestimate the ability of a small group of committed individuals to change the world.

—Margaret Mead



View [A Year in Moments](#) e-Annual Report

A young girl with dark skin and hair is the central focus of the image. She is wearing a pink and white checkered short-sleeved shirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. In her hands, she holds a book with a white cover and red text. The background is a textured, light blue wall. In the upper right corner, another person's hand is visible, holding a pink and white checkered ribbon.

Connect with us and with Haiti
at theroadtohope.org

Please note: Donor dollars were not used for the creation, printing or distribution of this Annual Report.