



# FLM HAITI

## FUNCTIONAL LITERACY MINISTRY OF HAITI EDUCATIONAL & MEDICAL MISSION

NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2018

### Three years of TRIUMPH— Pittsburgh church plants seeds of hope, opportunity

By Renee P. Aldrich

In March, Triumph Church of Pittsburgh made its third mission trip to Haiti. And what a difference three years make.

In 2016, when the Triumph team first traveled to the Thomassin area of Haiti, it worked in education, teaching the upper grades at a local school. During the health lessons, two students engaged in a lively debate in Creole. Finally, after 5 minutes, one of the students finished his thoughts, stunning the teachers with his perfect English. Later, the same two students—Kervantz Sylus and Petersen Pamphile—showed themselves to be natural, charismatic leaders as they helped the mission team with translations and even led fellow students in learning a popular American dance.



Kervantz Sylus leading a dance during Triumph Church's visit in 2016.

When the team returned in 2017, these same students were impressive in their leadership as they helped teach and translate in a class on the human body and sexual education.

When the team journeyed backed this spring, its third trip, the two students, now graduated, were hired as translators. They shed their school uniforms for professional attire to help Triumph engage its week of missions. What the mission team members had been able to pour into the two young men, the two were now able to pour it back into their community. The two young men shined as young



Petersen Pamphile helps with translation in a recent class.

professionals before their colleagues and community. They embodied the achievement, hope and perseverance that the Triumph team sows as it seeks to promote growth and sustainability in Haiti.

But as the young men have grown, so has the Triumph mission. This year, the church members transported 28 duffel bags, carrying school and medical supplies, toothbrushes, hygiene kits, clothing, computer accessories, rice and beans and 400 pairs of glasses.

Once again, the team partnered with Functional Literacy Ministry-Haiti (FLM-Haiti), which for more than 30 years has been providing health and education services to vulnerable communities in Haiti. The team of 12 included physicians, pastors, nurses, and other volunteers who came from four church across six states. The team spent eight days working with Haitian students, teachers, families, and members of the clergy.

Physicians Rhonda Johnson and Ruby Holloway, and registered nurse Tracy Stubblefield, attended to approximately 500 Haitians, many of them children.

The team also provided education and health services to the Successful Institute, an English language academy, a local school in Boutillier, and Excelsior Technical Institute and MIPADEP, two schools run by FLM-Haiti. Sewing clinics were held for two days. The “sewing ladies” enjoyed making dresses.

Since Triumph started the mission, said Eric Cofield, one of the organizers, there has been a tremendous transition from that first experience. “During that first trip, I didn’t know what to expect—none of us did. We left Pittsburgh with all the exuberance our Christian spirit allowed us, so excited to be serving in the field for God. After months of preparation, we arrive and found ourselves overwhelmed

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For more information, please visit [flmhaiti.org](http://flmhaiti.org) or call 412-784-0342

# Seminar strengthens Haiti board for more autonomy

By Jamar Thrasher

In Thomassin, a Haitian suburb, where the daily temperature tends to tip above 80 degrees, about 20 Haitian men and women, all affiliated with the management of operations of FLM's programs in Haiti, fill a classroom. Seated at desks that form tight rows, their pens glide on notepads. They are capturing the ideas of Jim Strang, who is teaching the course.



Jim Strang, FLM Board

Standing in front of the room, Strang, a towering man, reads off the title of the book he is holding, "Who Moved My Cheese?"

The book offers business solutions that address the various philosophical and business responses to change. The book's premise teaches that people should be open to change.

Strang, who speaks to the class with the assistance of a French and Creole translator, emphasizes the book's premise: change is inevitable, do not fear change.

Strang is a board member with the Pittsburgh-based FLM and has visited Haiti to conduct trainings with the nonprofit's sister board in Haiti, the Alliance d' Action Chretienne, or AAC, which oversees the on-the-ground tasks in Haiti. (These programs include: 72 Adult Literacy Centers, the preschool through grade 13 school MIPADEF, Excelisor Technical School, Kay D'Esperans Guest House, and the House of David Community Health Center.) For example, AAC board members Jean-Bernard Saintime and Julienne Pierre, run the FLM-Haiti owned school and guest house respectively.

There are 12 AAC board members and 13 FLM-Haiti board members. For decades, the two groups have operated almost simultaneously, and share the same executive director, FLM-Haiti founder Bishop Leon Pamphile.

The goal has always been for the groups to have close collaboration. But now, to encourage more efficiency, Strang, with the support of FLM, is providing training to enable AAC to operate with more autonomy.

To help foster the transition, Strang's lessons focus on introducing the AAC to management soft skills such as independence, confidence, and knowledge.

Independence is a focal point of Haitian life. The Haitian revolution and its ideas of freedom and equality continue to resonant across the culture. FLM prides itself on respecting the fact that the Haitians come from a rich history of ingenuity and leadership.



Evens Frejuste, AAC Board

Strang, also cites Jim Collin's "Good to Great" book, which he calls "one of the best management books ever." Strang highlights a key concept by Collins: find something you love, find something you are good at doing, and find something that can earn a living. When a person (or organization) finds something that satisfies that trifecta, they are golden, Strang says.

At the end of the class, Evens Frejuste, who serves as the Deputy Executive Director on the AAC board, commented on why the classes were so important.

"This work helps us to help ourselves," says Frejuste. "We want to be better at making that happen."

Other Haitian board members said they also loved the organization so much so that they promised to initiate and be part of the change necessary for continued impact. ●



## Mission: Empowerment

From June 28 to July 12, 15 volunteers—teachers, professors, evangelists—served on an education mission in Haiti.

The team focused on "empowering children to learn" and there were sessions on everything from teacher expectations and student achievement to adapting plans for children with special needs.

### Here's the IMPACT by the numbers:

- The training attracted **107** Haitian teachers
- They came from **18** different schools in the mountains south of Port-au-Prince
- **7** different classes were taught
- **40** youth attended Vacation Bible School
- **40** young athletes (grades 7-12) participated in a four-day Soccer Camp, learning and practicing new skills

**Exciting plans for next year:** To initiate a program that allows selected Haitian teachers to partner with U.S. mentors to help develop lesson plans and strategies to aid their Haitian colleagues with the specific Haitian curriculum provided by the government. ●



# A mother's love: Mildred Taylor shows her spirit of dedication

By Sue Robinson

**W**hat does it take to go on a mission trip to Haiti with FLM?

Meet Mother (Mildred) Taylor. She is a great example.

She is the mother of 13 children and she loves life. She grew up in Boston and for many years she worked as a secretary at Brigham and Women's Hospital in the Labor and Delivery unit. She was inspired and encouraged to visit Haiti by her friend, Maggie Hill, who has gone to Haiti with FLM since it was founded in 1983.

"Maggie raved about Haiti," said Mother Taylor, and she would always say, " 'Haiti is the place for mission. You should go sometime. They could use you.' Finally, I had the chance to go."

Her first trip to Haiti was in 2005. She worked with the FLM Medical Team that set up makeshift clinics in schools and churches and traveled from village to village in the mountains south of Port-au-Prince. She recalls taking the patients' weight in preparation for them to see the doctor. If there was a baby, she would first weigh the mother and then the mother holding the baby to get its weight. She also distributed rice cereal for the mothers to give to babies who were malnourished. Mother Taylor returned to Haiti and her clinic duties again in 2006 and 2007.

Two years later, in 2009, Mother Taylor revisited Haiti but this time she was on the FLM Education Team, which was running a Vacation Bible School program. She volunteered to do games with the boys and girls. She organized several outdoor games—and the one the children liked best was dodge ball. She just didn't direct the game from the sidelines, she participated, too. At the time, Mother Taylor was a spry 75. The highlight for her in 2009 was attending the dedication of the new FLM Medical Clinic, the House of David Community Health Center.

Now fast forward to July 2018. Mother Taylor returned to Haiti for the fifth time. She was the official "bell ringer," for the Teacher Training Seminar. The ringing bell signaled the teachers and students that it is time to change classes. She kept everything running smoothly. Mother Taylor had the same loving heart and bright smile as she had all the other years she was in Haiti. She enjoyed interacting with the everyone.

Why did Mother Taylor return to Haiti after a nine-year interlude? "I wanted to celebrate my 90th birthday in Haiti. I love Haiti and I wanted to see everybody again, especially Machenson, my translator after all those years."

Machenson was able to visit with Mother Taylor. Big hugs were exchanged. "It was so good to see him!" she said.

How did Mother Taylor prepare to travel to Haiti?

"I wanted to keep up with everybody on the team so I worked out in the gym for 1½ years. My granddaughter told me I had to if I was going to go to Haiti. I asked her if she wanted to go, and she said 'Yeah!' And praise God she did come! Now my granddaughter can carry on my legacy." ●



Mother Taylor (in white pants) with her friend, Maggie Hill, from Boston.

## Three questions for Dr. Dionne Catule

By Allegra Battle

**D**r. Dionne Catule is quiet and petite, but her work is having a huge impact in Haiti. She is the health director of FLM's House of David Community Health Center. The center serves the communities of Thomassin, Laboule, Boutillier, and Kenscoff.

According to the World Health Organization in 2016, in Haiti there are only 25 doctors per 100,000 people; an astounding statistic, given the immense health challenges in the nation.

Throughout the week, it is not uncommon for more than 100 patients to be served at the House of David. Catule's work is critical in providing care in communities struggling with high rates of poverty and disease.

**Q:** How important is the medical work that FLM provides?

**DC:** FLM has developed great things for this community. We address rates of high blood pressure. We also provide free medicine and we hold community health symposiums to help mothers, children, and families live better.

**Q:** Is there hope for Haiti, in terms of getting health care to its people?

**DC:** If there are people in communities, there is hope. There are some resources that we need more of like doctors, and nurses but we must use and work together with all of the resources that we have to increase hope and the quality of life in Haiti.

**Q:** What do you like most about being a doctor in Haiti?

**DC:** What makes me joyful to be a doctor is that I am able to give care with compassion. It makes me feel good when I can get good results. ●

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**5 p.m.**

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Donation \$60

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## Three years of TRIUMPH—Pittsburgh church plants seeds of hope, opportunity

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After months of preparation, we arrive and found ourselves overwhelmed by everything, from complications at Customs, to coming face-to-face with the enormity of the lack in this country.”

The Triumph International Missions Team is guided this statement: We are committed to providing hope, help and healing to the impoverished, broken and sick by advancing the Kingdom of God abroad. We will empower people in every sphere of life to glorify God in body and spirit.

It is this mission that compelled the team members to provide for their travel, food, and housing. They were fortunate to have support for materials, supplies, and medicines donated from countless family and church members, friends, and local companies.

In preparation for the second year of mission work, the group did extensive research to gain more knowledge of underdeveloped nations and missionary work.

“We felt strongly that we could be more effective if we made sure we were engaging in a partnership,” said Johnson, “and the way to affect this was to seek the input from those we wanted to help.”

The teachers asked specifically for English classes, lessons in increasing teacher efficiency, and even for lessons in human sexuality for the students.

The members of the clergy in the group, conducted seminars for Haitian clergy. Each morning, from 9 a.m.-noon, there were sessions on the book of Ephesians. In addition, the Triumph team pastors preached at churches in Thomassin, Boutillier, and Port-au-Prince at the invitation of Bishop Leon Pamphile, the founder of FLM-Haiti.

On the mission trip this year, the team began to see fruits to its work.

A true sign of how far they’d come in making inroads and forming valuable relationships was reflected during this third year when their students invited team members to their soccer games.

“This was truly amazing,” Cofield said, “generally we stayed at the school, at the clinic or at the FLM guesthouse,” but he appreciated getting the chance to take a closer look at the community life of the people they partner with. ●

*Mission members from more than four churches attended and they traveled from six states (PA, GA, NY, AZ, NV, TX). Triumph Church members included Pastor Craig Giles, Dr. Rhonda Johnson, Eric Cofield, Dorothy Heggins, Ben Perry, and Jocelyn Johnson. Pastor Lee Haney, Sr. of St. Paul’s Baptist Church of Donora, PA and Pastor Michael Stitt of Saints Memorial Baptist Church of Bryn Mawr, PA also participated. Other team members included Tracy Stubblefield, Dr. Ruby Holloway and Raven Simone-Morris and David Hunter.*



**Sewing clinic**