



Spring 2013 Updates

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Haiti where, as you will read in this edition of the newsletter, we have been very busy. We were delighted to welcome Ben Stiller and David Zwirner of Artists for Haiti, along with family and friends, in March. Some visitors stay much longer at HELP. We welcomed our first ESL volunteer less than three years ago and, since then, the ESL program has blossomed. Today, three international staff teach a mandatory three-year curriculum that emphasizes creativity and critical thinking – qualities which are displayed in the work of beginning and intermediate students highlighted below.

The continuing accomplishments of our students and graduates are possible only with your support. HELP's record of success is starting to attract supporters like Artists for Haiti, but that record is the product of years of support from hundreds of smaller donors, without whom HELP would not be where we are. These smaller donations do add up and are an important source of income that we count on every year to keep the program running. For example, last year HELP received 150 gifts of \$100 or less that totalled nearly \$10,000. If you are one of those 150 donors and have not yet renewed in 2013, or if you like what you see in the newsletter and would like to become a donor, please consider a recurring gift of \$10 per month. 200 monthly gifts of just \$10 will result in \$24,000 for HELP over the course of the year! [Please consider joining us to reach this goal.](#) You'll be making a difference in the lives of today's HELP students, and those of countless generations to come.

Thank you,

Conor

Artists for Haiti Co-founders Stiller & Zwirner Visit HELP



(L) HELP Executive Director Conor Bohan speaks to (l-r) David, Johanna, Lucas, and Monica Zwirner; (R) Ben Stiller and Endeavor's Brian White with HELP staff.

In March 2013, HELP had the privilege of welcoming actor Ben Stiller and gallerist David Zwirner, co-founders of Artists for Haiti, to the HELP Student Center. Mr. Stiller, who visited with his brother-in-law and a family friend on March 15th,



Fun & Games for ESL

HELP is grateful to Donald and Carolyn Honer, grandparents of ESL Program Manager Micol Issa, who generously donated more than 20 brand new board games and card games to the program.

toured the Center, met with junior and senior students, and sat in on an English class. Mr. Zwirner visited on March 18th with his wife and children. The family received a tour of HELP's facilities, observed a leadership class, and met several staff and students.

Founded by Mr. Stiller and Mr. Zwirner in January 2011, Artists for Haiti supports education and health initiatives enabling the country to recover and rebuild from the devastating 2010 earthquake. In September 2011, Artists for Haiti organized an art auction at Christie's, New York, featuring donated works from some of the world's most prominent artists. The event resulted in a Christie's charity sale record, for which the auction house waived its commission fees. Artists for Haiti is granting 100% of the proceeds to a range of organizations doing exemplary work in Haiti, including Architecture for Humanity, Cine Institute, Digicel Foundation Haiti, J/P HRO, Partners in Health, The Stiller Foundation, and others.

Artists for Haiti has generously agreed to fund scholarships for three HELP students for the duration of their university studies, and to provide additional program support for HELP. We extend our sincerest thanks to Mr. Stiller and Mr. Zwirner for their visit, for their belief in HELP, and for their commitment to supporting education, health, and development in Haiti!

Poetry and Superheroes

HELP STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH CREATIVELY



Students present ESL projects to their classmates

All HELP students participate in a three-year English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum taught by native speakers. The program starts with an introduction to grammar, speaking, and writing, and progresses to an introduction to literature.

The specific games – including Scrabble, Uno, Boggle, Scattergories, Yahtzee, and more – were carefully chosen with students' English development in mind.

They help with vocabulary, speaking, spelling, and sentence building, all while having fun! Most recently, Level Two students played the quick-thinking game, Bananagrams (similar to speed Scrabble). The students enjoyed the creativity, friendly competition, and new vocabulary that they learned from classmates.



Spotlight on HELP and Haiti

In January, French journalists Véronique Soulé of *Liberation* and Nathalie Brafman of *Le Monde* published articles in their respective newspapers discussing HELP's role in increasing access to higher education in Haiti.

Soulé's [article](#) profiles HELP student Michele-Ange Dagrain (computer science, '13), describing her difficult childhood, her dedication to her studies, and her hopes for the future.

Brafman's [piece](#) looks more broadly at the higher education system in Haiti, and the ways in which it is still struggling to recover from the 2010 earthquake. Brafman highlights the perennial issue of Haiti's "brain drain," and HELP's role in trying to reverse this trend.

In the final two years, ESL instruction is integrated with the leadership curriculum, which incorporates civic education and community service projects to train students to be engaged, active citizens.

This year has been a busy and productive one for the ESL program, with students generating some creative and insightful work. We are discovering some literary talent among our students, and are excited to share examples from two assignments that especially sparked students' interest.

Preposition Poems: As part of a unit on poetry and prepositions, English 1 students were asked to write a poem with a preposition at the beginning of each line, then memorize and recite it to the class. Here are two examples:

FREEDOM

*Above trees,
Between two mountains,
Through nature,
Near the river,
Among people,
Around Haïti,
Into my heart,
I feel the wind of peace and love,
I see freedom is coming.*

— Santa Noella Cadet (agronomy, '17)



MY BEST FRIEND

*In Haiti
on a hilly street, I met him.
Down the road, I saw an angel.
At Muncheez, I finally found him.
Next to me, he came to sit down.
In my heart, I said wow!! We became good friends.
Below us there are only the clouds.
Around us, nothing can take away our friendship,
we were so happy.
On January 12th, 2010, I lost him.*

— Rebecca Jacques Leblanc (business management, '16)



Create-Your-Own Superheroes: To practice descriptions and verb tenses, English 2 students were asked to invent a Haitian superhero that fights to provide solutions to pressing issues. Bertin-Junior Ramy (agronomy, '17) came up with Ecophile, who protects Haiti's natural environment against deforestation and pollution.



Ecophile was born on May 1, 1882 in Greenland. His mother's name was Piney Apple. She cultivated a special fruit and after she passed away in 1892 people gave her name to this fruit that today we call "pineapple." It was almost the same thing for his father: his name was Brocc Holly and he cultivated a vegetable that today we call "broccoli."

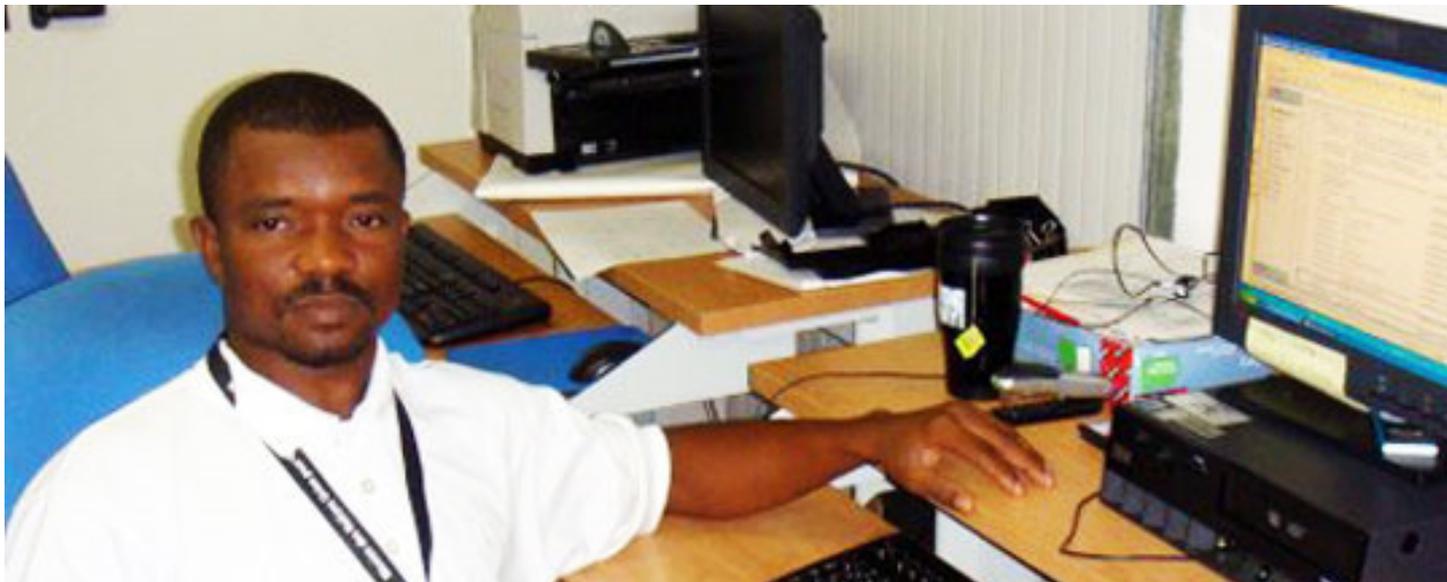
Ecophile's name comes from the Greek word that means "friend of the environment." He has some great powers that he inherited from his parents. From his big mouth, he's able to throw fire and water. He hardly ever throws fire but always water in order to water the plants to help them grow. He

also throws water to clean all the streets. Ecophile fights for a healthy environment, he fights against pollution, against deforestation, and against people who put garbage in the streets.

It's easy to identify Ecophile: he wears a green one-piece suit with a white belt. On his suit there is a picture of a tree, the symbol of a stable environment that has a lot of trees everywhere.

— Bertin–Junior Ramy

Interview with Outgoing Alumni President: Salomon Asmath



Salomon at work

When he earned his electrician's degree in 2002, Salomon Asmath became HELP's first-ever graduate. After HELP, Salomon worked as a production engineer at an apparel factory in Port-au-Prince. He then spent a year as an operations manager at a handicraft program, followed by a year as a stock manager. In June 2008, Salomon became a data entry clerk for MINUSTAH's police division, where he stayed for three years. Today, he is a manager at Energy Central, a solar panel installation company. Salomon lives in a suburb of Port-au-Prince with his wife and child.

Fittingly, Salomon was also the first President of the HELP Alumni Association, serving from the group's founding in 2008 until March 2013. As he retires from the position, HELP would like to recognize Salomon's dedicated leadership, hard work in building a strong alumni network, and enthusiastic commitment to the organization's mission over the past five years.

HELP recently spoke with Salomon:

HELP: Could you talk a little bit about your background?

Salomon Asmath (SA): *I grew up in a single parent household, living with my father. After his death, I lived with his brother, who had a son my age. We were in the same grade but not the same school. I attended a public primary school in Cite Soleil. I then went to a private boarding school that provides scholarships for bright students who can't afford school fees or tuition.*

HELP: How did you come to HELP?

SA: *When I was a junior at that school, in 1997, Conor Bohan was my English teacher and soccer coach. I took the baccalaureate exam in 1998 and wanted to continue my education. I knew that Conor had started assisting top students at university, so I got back in touch to see if he might be able to help me, too. And the rest is history.*

HELP: Can you tell us about your current professional life?

SA: *I work for a company that installs solar panels, as well as inverters and batteries, so that the solar energy can provide power during outages in the main electrical grid – something that happens frequently in Haiti. After my time as a data clerk, I'm very pleased to be back in the technical field, the field I studied. My typical day involves coordinating installation teams at various job sites and managing our inventory – basically ensuring that everything and everyone operates efficiently.*

HELP: How has your time at HELP made a difference for you?

SA: *I believe that education is the key to success. The training that HELP enabled me to receive is a great asset in the job market. HELP also reinforced something that I learned early in life – the importance of sharing with others. I like to help other people because I've received help in my own life.*

HELP: What are your plans for the future?

SA: *I'd like to become an entrepreneur, to one day own my own company, and to create jobs for my country.*