



Winter2012 Updates

Dear Friends,

Much of HELP's efforts over the past few years have focused on what happens outside the college classroom. In countries with a history of repressive governments, involvement in state affairs is discouraged at every level. Parents tell their children never to discuss politics outside the house and even go so far as to send budding political activists far away to protect them from harm. What those of us raised in more open societies were taught is more along the lines of former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis's conviction that "the most important political office is that of the citizen." As Haiti continues its uneven transition to democracy, HELP may be the only place where our students are encouraged to exercise the responsibilities and rights of their citizenship.

Even as we start this process, which Meaghan and several students describe below, we are starting to see results. HELP student volunteers are encouraging other students to volunteer, and students studying abroad return ready to convince their peers that they "can do great things" if they commit themselves. HELP alumnus Jean Maurice talks about how HELP taught him that excellence could not be confined to the classroom, and even freshmen are getting the message, marveling that HELP teaches them to become "complete citizens."

As we approach the end of 2012, we are grateful for all the citizens of HELP. Your vision for a better future for Haiti, and the sacrifices you make to achieve it, are the foundation of our success.

Happy holidays and best wishes for the new year,

Conor

Meet the Freshmen!



In September, HELP opened its doors to 44 eager freshmen with the usual "first day of school" jitters. This generation of students has never known either a prosperous Haiti or the terror of the Tontons Macoutes. They grew up with a different normal, marked by political instability and natural disasters; coups,

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TODAY



We are very pleased to announce the launch of the HELP Online Store – just in time for the holidays


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Check out the wide selection of apparel, bags, mugs, and other fun stuff! And 15% of the purchase price of each item goes to HELP!

takeovers, and fraught elections seemed to alternate with hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. These interruptions have long-term impacts: a whole season of crops fail, schools close indefinitely, and families are forced to move and separate. We believe that this only makes our students' achievements all the more impressive, and we are pleased to introduce several members of the freshman class of 2012-2013.



Santa-Noella Cadet (agronomy '17) is one of nine children from rural Carice, in northeastern Haiti. Her father died when she was six and her mother worked as a cleaning woman, struggling to make ends meet. Although, or perhaps because, she had not finished school herself, Santa-Noella's mother knew the value of education and worked hard to ensure that all her children went to school. For Santa-Noella, this meant leaving home for a boarding school

where children with good grades but no financial means could receive an education. She was always among the top three students in her class, which opened doors - she was able to earn a scholarship in secondary school and to move back in with her family. Today, her hard work continues to pay off as she embarks on her university career with HELP.

Santa-Noella wants to see an increase in local production of Haitian food staples like plantains and rice, which are now largely imported. She feels that HELP is the right place to prepare for her career. "HELP teaches us to become complete citizens," she says. "Not only does it allow us to continue our studies, it also helps us become leaders with a sense of responsibility for our community."



Aquime Chery (agronomy '17) is the second of three children from Torbeck, a farming community outside the southern city of Les Cayes. His parents are tenant farmers, meaning they do not own any land and provide a percentage of the harvest to their landowners as rent. But as Aquime points out, there are many risks involved in farming: "If there was bad weather, at the end of the season it was as if they hadn't worked at all." Aquime was lucky

enough to attend tuition-free primary and secondary schools, which are rare in Haiti. His favorite subject has always been biology and, in spite of the hardships growing up, he is committed to farming and to the land, making agronomy a natural choice. "Watching my dad in the fields gave me a love for the profession," he says. "I would hear the older people talk about how much better Haiti used to

Feel free to drop us a line (at info@uhelp.net) if there are any additional items you'd like to see in the store, and happy shopping!

Freshmen Staff

Joining our incoming students this fall, HELP also welcomed several new staff members:

Jean-Cherubin Fevrier (Student Advisor) comes to us from the Youth Federation of the Evangelical Baptist Union in Haiti. He has also worked as a teacher and has a BA in development studies.

Elizabeth Gerard (Volunteer ESL Instructor) is from northern Maine but came to Haiti from France, where she was a teaching assistant in a public high school last year. She has a BA in international relations from the University of Maine.

Natalie Holly's (Volunteer Leadership Instructor) great-great grandfather moved to Haiti in 1861 as an Episcopalian missionary and was soon named the first Episcopal Bishop of Haiti. Natalie's grandparents emigrated to New York but Natalie revived the family tradition when she returned to Haiti to work with HELP. She has an MA in theatre and has been integrating poetry and drama into her leadership classes.

Amber Walsh (ACM Manager & Deputy Country Director) is a longtime friend of HELP. Amber did her Peace Corps service in Haiti, earned her MBA at Yale, and returned to Haiti after the earthquake with Save the Children.

be with lots of trees and water and agriculture, but I didn't see these things. I want to change the situation so that Haitian agriculture can return to how it was."



At a young age, Jenny-Flore Charles (psychology '17) lost both parents within two years and was taken in by her 80-year-old paralyzed uncle in the northern town of Grand Riviere. Thankfully, her uncle was able to arrange a scholarship so that Jenny could continue school, but this meant a two-hour commute each way. Jenny's experiences have made psychology her first choice as a field of study. She would like to work with young people who feel they have no

options. "I would like to help them see the world in another way," she says. In her community, she saw that many of her peers did not finish school. "Many of the girls became pregnant and many of the boys turned to drugs. I think this is because they don't really see a future for themselves." Jenny thinks that, by working in schools and with communities, she will be able to engage and inspire the next generation. After all, it was not so long ago that she was in their shoes, and now she's beginning university, with a bright future ahead of her.

We are delighted to benefit from her deep knowledge of, and commitment to, Haiti.

Marie-Michele Montout (Student Advisor) is finishing up her education degree as a HELP student while starting up as a HELP employee. As a student intern, Marie-Michele greatly expanded HELP's nationwide recruiting campaign, which she will continue to manage in addition to her advising duties.

Students Experience Summer Abroad

EXPANDING HORIZONS AT DARTMOUTH AND CORNELL



Since Daphnée Charles (agro-economics '12) and Ronel Lefranc (agro-environment '13) journeyed to Dartmouth College in the wake of the January 2010 earthquake, HELP has seen the significant impact that studying abroad has on our students. Dartmouth has accepted HELP students every summer since 2010, and this year HELP students participated in a new summer program at Cornell University, made possible by the Ming Tian Fund for Haiti's Tomorrow.

So, as winter comes hurtling towards us and we look back with fondness on the summer that was, we thought we'd share the exciting experiences of three of our students who studied abroad this past summer.

Marc-Evens Cadet (rural engineering '13) was the first HELP student to attend Cornell University, where he worked on his undergraduate thesis, which analyzes the properties of river sediments and their effectiveness as the basis of building materials. Under the guidance of Professor Ken Hover, Marc-Evens had the chance to conduct many experiments in Cornell's engineering lab. He writes: *It was my first time spending that much time working in a lab, and it was very interesting. I realized that experiments are one of the most important parts of any project – before doing something in the real world, we have to experience it in a controlled environment to see how it works. My experience at Cornell also gave me a better understanding of what it means to work efficiently, and I look forward to the opportunity to share these practices with my peers and colleagues in Haiti.*

Though Marc-Evens was impressed by the amount of work he had in the lab, he still found time to have some fun. "The best personal experience I had outside the lab was my trip to Niagara Falls," he says. "It was so magical. Even though it was raining, I had a very good time."



At Dartmouth this summer, Emmanuela Delsoin (medicine '16) took classes in biology and the sociology of international development, did lab work, and shadowed doctors at Dartmouth's teaching hospital. Reflecting on her time there, Emmanuela says:

I learned a lot about physiology and how to write a strong lab report. I also learned a lot about international development, including different theories behind global economics and humanitarian aid. And these experiences have already been useful. For example, for a group project in one of my classes this semester, I took responsibility for the data analysis and presentation. I was able to make a great contribution to my group thanks to the new knowledge I acquired from Dartmouth. My shadowing experience at Dartmouth also taught me new ways to interact with patients, which I am putting to use in my clinical rotations. Overall, my time at Dartmouth has helped me learn to be not only a talker but also a doer. I hope to use this attitude to encourage my classmates and to show them that we can do great things if we commit ourselves.



Daphnée Charles's first trip to Dartmouth in 2010 was marked by an aversion to American rice, amazement at the way that U.S. academic institutions collect and analyze data, and a 90% on her final paper. Upon returning to Haiti, Daphnée quickly put her Dartmouth experiences into action, organizing a student union at her university to open the first-ever copy center on campus, while also completing her degree in agro-economics. This past summer, Daphnée was offered a scholarship to attend Dartmouth's Tuck Business Bridge Program, an intensive introduction to accounting, marketing, finance, and leadership. Daphnée writes:

Luckily, my employer allowed me to spend six great weeks in Hanover. I loved it! It was quite challenging to attend very intensive classes in a third language, but my previous experience at Dartmouth helped a lot in terms of keeping up with course readings and lectures. I did so well that several professors encouraged me to consider earning a full MBA.

I especially enjoyed collaborating with my six-person team throughout the program. Our final project was to present an evaluation of a solar panel company to senior executives. We had challenges working together, and our group was even close to dissolving a couple of days before the final presentation, but the outcome was an extraordinary success. We learned to make concessions, to respect each other's opinions, and to present a product that reflected our joint ideas. This experience will definitely help me in my current job, where I work with community leaders from different backgrounds, different educational levels, and different social classes.

As Daphnée, Emmanuela, and Marc-Evens settle back into school and work in Haiti, they are sharing what they learned with colleagues and classmates: new approaches, methods, and solutions to everything from group dynamics to engineering research to patient care. In the meantime, the study abroad application process for next summer is already underway, preparing more HELP students to travel internationally and to bring a part of the world back to Haiti.

Alumni interview: Jean Maurice Dumas

A HELP GRAD RETURNS HOME AFTER EARNING HIS MASTER'S



Fédorah Pierre-Louis, HELP's Career Services & Alumni Affairs Coordinator, catches up with Jean Maurice Dumas (computer science '07), who fills us in on the exciting things he's been up to recently.

Fédorah Pierre-Louis (HELP): Tell us a little bit about your background.

Jean Maurice Dumas: I was born in Cité Soleil, the oldest of four children. My father worked at a state-owned mill as a carpenter, but he lost his job after the government was overthrown in 1991. To take care of the family, he worked odd jobs and my mother sold food in the streets.

I took my studies seriously from a very early age. I knew that, given my situation, it was the only way for me to realize my dreams. Because I lived in Cité Soleil, I knew very hard times. These difficulties mainly originated from confrontations between armed gangs in the area. Sometimes there were entire weeks when I could not go to school because it was too dangerous to leave the house. When my mother fell ill, our already precarious economic situation collapsed altogether. I started teaching private lessons to students from more well-off families to earn a little money. But these obstacles only strengthened my conviction and my determination to work harder and to stay at the top of my class.

HELP: How did you come to HELP?

Dumas: I received my high school diploma in 2002, and the following year I learned about HELP from Salomon Asmath, a friend of mine who was a HELP student and who was also from Cité Soleil. Given my strong academic record, Salomon persuaded me to apply to HELP, and the next year I enrolled at the Information Science Institute of Haiti (ESIH), studying computer science. In addition to my courses at ESIH, I took English classes at HELP and assisted with various administrative

tasks, from cleaning the Student Center to organizing student records. At HELP, I learned that everything worth doing must be done well.

HELP: What happened after graduation?

Dumas: After earning my bachelor's degree in 2007, I was hired as a computer technician at HELP, where I worked for three years. This was a very enriching position, as it allowed me to gain professional experience and a greater understanding of the technical and organizational responsibilities of an IT expert. In 2010, I received a scholarship from the French Embassy to pursue my Master's degree in communication and information systems design at Université Paul Sabatier in Toulouse.

HELP: What was it like going to France?

Dumas: My studies in France allowed me to develop skills in designing and developing information systems, networking, and telecommunications. The first year was very difficult because I had to complete prerequisites for many subjects. But I worked very hard and always kept in mind HELP's motto: Ability + Will + Opportunity = Success. I got an internship at the prestigious [National Scientific Research Center](#), where I worked for six months. The second year of my program was even more demanding, with a major project in the first semester and another internship in the second semester. For that internship, I helped to develop a system for clients, such as banks, telephone companies, etc., that allowed them to pay bills, generate electronic invoices, report problems in the system, and track real-time statistics related to their accounts.

HELP: So, now that you're back in Haiti, what's next?

Dumas: Yes, I just returned to Haiti in September, and ESIH has asked me to assist in training undergraduates. I welcome this opportunity to make a contribution to the education of the next generation; the country needs new skills and competent people. In the long term, I'd like to start a network engineering company, as there is a great need for these services if Haiti is to move forward.

HELP: Any final thoughts?

Dumas: For decades, Haiti has experienced major problems across all aspects of national life. I've encountered a lot of these problems myself: a weak educational system, no electricity, no water, and insecurity in all its forms. I had to overcome all these constraints in order to achieve my goals. Much remains to be done and the road is long and difficult, but I want to align myself on the side of HELP and other organizations working to change these systems and to educate the daughters and sons of Haiti.

Leadership at HELP: “Change for the common good”

BY: MEAGHAN BALZER, LEADERSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER



At HELP, all students take part in a four-year leadership curriculum based on a service-centered, social change model, and on the five principles of HELP: respect, rigor, courage, sacrifice, and service. With “change for the common good” as our slogan, our goal is to tie professionalism to social responsibility, with the understanding that leadership is manifested through active engagement in creating a more just society, be it in a hospital, in a classroom, on the street, in the farmer’s field, or in the family. HELP’s curriculum helps students to develop the leader that is within each of them, and gives them the tools to inspire effective leadership in others.

HELP students engage in the principles and values of the leadership program across three domains: the individual, the group, and the society. We hope that our students graduate with compassion for others, an understanding of effective teamwork, and the experience of working for change in some of Haiti’s most challenging environments. Service projects are an especially important way for students to engage in HELP’s mission, and to develop collaborative action that benefits all. Last year, our students identified five areas that need improvement in their disenfranchised communities: food production, education, quality of life, gender-based violence, and waste management. I’m pleased to share the reflections of some of our students on their various service projects.

ACTIVE Service Project

By Anne-Martine Augustin (engineering ‘14)

Action Toward Initiatives and Volunteering for Education (ACTIVE) is based on the goal of encouraging other young Haitians to get involved in volunteerism in their communities. We came up with this idea because we believe that young people want to make a difference in Haiti, and just need someone to help them focus and coordinate their service. We also know that there are receptive hosts – people and organizations who need volunteers but do not know where to find reliable assistance. Our objective is to help volunteers and hosts unite for mutual benefit. For our first project, we worked with a free elementary school to recruit and organize volunteers to rebuild their library, which was destroyed in the earthquake.

This year, we have grown from six original members to a team of 12. Our objective for this school year is to connect volunteers and hosts in some of the most common fields of study at HELP such as agronomy, engineering, medicine and dental services, education, and technology.

Hydroponic Garden Project

By Emmanuel Richmond (management '13), Agronome–Paul Saint–Paul (agro–economics '13), and Jean–Smith Dorméus (management '13)

The term “hydroponic” refers to any system that functions based on the nutrients that come from water. It is a system that is ecologically friendly, and can be used to grow plants in places where there is not enough soil. This is why it is a particularly useful system for Haiti, a place where healthy soil is a problem, particularly in tent cities and slums in many urban areas.

Our group identified “food and hunger” as an area that needs improvement in our community, and we decided to hit two birds with one stone: addressing an environmental issue alongside an issue of food necessity. One of our greatest challenges was in coordinating all the pieces of the project – we had to research and understand hydroponics, fundraise for materials, and put our heads together to find the skills needed to build the system. This all took much longer than we initially thought, but we learned a great deal along the way. Now that the initial phase of the project is finished, we are working on planting vegetables, maintaining the system, and learning more about hydroponic systems from professional growers. We are also working to involve more students, and have many new members this year. Eventually, we would also like to give workshops about hydroponics both for HELP students and for members of the wider community.

SAKALA Project

By Samuel–Polidor Accius (industrial engineering '14)

SAKALA, which was started by a former HELP student, is an organization in Cité Soleil (often referred to as “the poorest neighborhood in the Western hemisphere”) that gives children a place to play sports and receive academic tutoring. It was created to give another view of Cité Soleil, to make people see this place differently.

We started last year by organizing a soccer game with the SAKALA team. It was such a good activity and we were pleased to do it, but we did not only go to play soccer with the kids – the purpose of this game was to make our first contact with the organization and to show the children that we support them. After the game, we started going every Sunday to tutor students who were preparing for the national secondary school exit exams. This summer, we were glad to learn that most of them passed the official exams, which was a great improvement over the previous year.

This year, we are continuing to work with SAKALA, which would like to one day have a library. With the combined skills of our members studying engineering, we are confident that we will be able to design a comfortable place that encourages literacy. We also plan to organize a book drive to fill the library with interesting and useful books. We will also continue to play sports with the children, and we hope to continue to raise their success rates in their state exams.