



Haiti: progress is being made

Work Team # 4 Trip Report

Jean Mahaffey, Greater Anderson
 Marcia Duncan, Gaffney
 Jessica Chetelat, Furman student
 Sara Mansbach, Greenville

by Sara Mansbach

I am writing from Cange, Haiti, and it's been a busy time training 23 teachers and figuring out next steps. Jean, Marcia, Jesse and I stayed four to a bedroom in a house on a ridge across from the Cange complex which was filled to the gills with a three-week summer music camp. (The camp is held every July, so plan to come if you love music and young people's recitals.) Jane Chalker from Highlands was our landlady. There were startling sunrises and powerful thunderstorms to view on the patio outside our window.

We Have Come So Far

In 2009, the Cange library's key was held only by an important Episcopal priest who so valued books that few others, and never the public, entered. Today two young paraprofessional librarians trained by FOKAL welcome hundreds of patrons a month. We still have only 60 Kreyòl books and just a few modern French children's or school subject matter books, but we are slowly adding them.

In 2009, during my visit to six public schools, I saw not a single children's book anywhere. Today



Our progress depends on your support, and I want to extend special thanks to every club and person who contributed to make our first year such a wonderful success. —Sara

Sara Mansbach

7750 Literacy Resource Chair

864-414-0875

Literacy@Rotary7750.org

Also, Project Adviser for

Partners in Literacy Haiti

www.haitiliteracy.org



every 4-year-old in 21 schools in the Central Plateau has Brian Wildsmith's French alphabet book. During this year 21 preschool teachers have started to learn about picture books and how to

present them to children. We have now given them 33 books for their schools. Every child in preschool will soon take home an alphabet chart.

This year we want to begin working with first grades. Since first graders are excited about learning to read and write, we want to make it very "authentic" for them and give them an engaging purpose: learning about a different culture and learning how to care for others in a thoughtful way through quality children's literature. We feel strongly that children in countries like Haiti need to grow up

loving and having books just like their counterparts in the USA, so we're seeking grants for the money for the books in this



Greenville-Cange First Grade Exchange project involving up to 14 books and 260 participants.

Our Library Committee last night asked that we change our Haitian name to "Zanmi Lekti" (Friends of Reading) to avoid the "stigma" that sometimes comes with lack of literacy in older struggling or non-readers. The group strongly felt our name should be associated with reading as a joyful, positive activity. I am sure our steering committee will probably concur, so you are receiving the news first that we may soon be renamed as "Zanmi Lekti."