

FRIENDS OF MATÈNWÀ

November 2020

Newsletter



YOUR GIFT IN ACTION:

Zero COVID-related deaths or hospitalizations

120,000+ meals distributed in La Gonave

104 new Mother Tongue Books published

115+ Haitians employed by MCLC and our school partners

Thousands of students educated under the Matènwa Method

1300+ school and family gardens planted and maintained

40 schools and 120 professionals trained to implement the Matènwa method

No children put in the restavèk (child servants) system

Zero reported cases of domestic abuse and violence

a BRIGHTER
FUTURE
is within

R-E-A-C-H

Dear Friends, Where Are We Now?

a letter from our Executive Director,
Chris Low

It's been 25 years since I first stepped foot in Matènwa.

Back then the land was so dusty, children believed rocks grew. Each year, they saw more and more of them. Adults said **the mountains were showing their bones**. The community believed strongly that education was the way out of poverty. So much so that parents were cutting down their last fruit tree to pay for school fees and maybe a uniform for just one of their children. They'd say, "Children are the riches of the poor." These same children would show up on my front porch and stare while I ate my one cooked meal for the day. I, too, felt the pangs of hunger, offering all I had whenever the children showed up... and they showed up often.

I lost 20 pounds that year. My neighbor started to worry. **"Sak vid pa ka kanpe". "An empty sack can't stand,"** he'd caution. "Help us; don't become us," he'd urge. My co-founder Abner Sauveur's message was clear. A few months later I wrote my first fund-raising letter, seeking help from YOU, my friends and colleagues.

Now, 25 years later, due to your gifts and the tenacity and vision of local leaders, the Matènwa community is transformed into a place of hope and inspiration. Where once were dusty lands with drought-choked crops, there is now compost soil with fruit trees and organic vegetables. Many young girls did not go to school, now all school-aged children do. There was a bird-less sky, now the Vervain Hummingbird and Narrow-Billed Tody are making a return. In days past, many walked around with untreated infections. Now, there's a school nurse who treats patients of all ages at affordable prices. Two decades ago children cried out as they were beaten by their parents. Today, parents, teachers, and older siblings practice conflict resolution through dialogue.

What began as a small kindergarten to second grade school is now a complete pre-K through high school, proudly boasting three years of graduating classes.

Many rural communities are still in the desperate situation Matènwa was in 25 years ago. Teachers from these communities are asking for training so that they too can transform their communities through education. In response, Matènwa's leaders have trained dozens of schools. The biggest

changes we can all see are the most important ones: **a sense of empowerment, reduced violence, more dialogue, more education, more tree planting and vegetable gardens, and more girls in school.**

Secure these children and their communities by investing in:

- 40 schools that have completed Matènwa training and need to provide basic supplies for their students to continue implementing the Matènwa method.
- Two years of training and support for new schools waiting for a chance to adopt the Matènwa method.

Mobilize the Matènwa community's movement toward sustainability by supporting:

- Graduates who need scholarships for college; a comparatively small investment of \$16,000 for the whole 4 years.
- Graduates looking for entrepreneurial start up grants of \$500 .

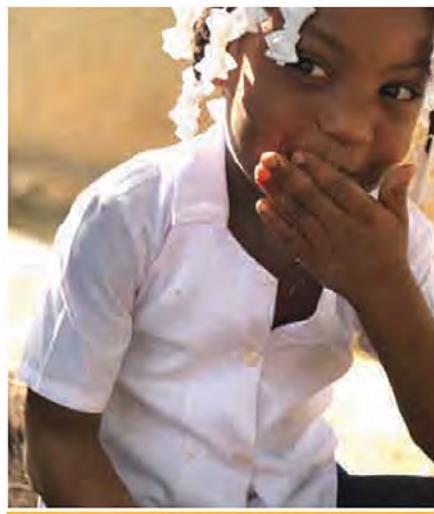
Continue to empower the Matènwa Community Learning Center, the motor and model from which all this good work is emerging.

Invest In JUST ONE of the many children who can't afford to invest in themselves.

Chris



Your gift supports wonderful things...



\$20/month gives 1 student DAILY BREAKFAST!

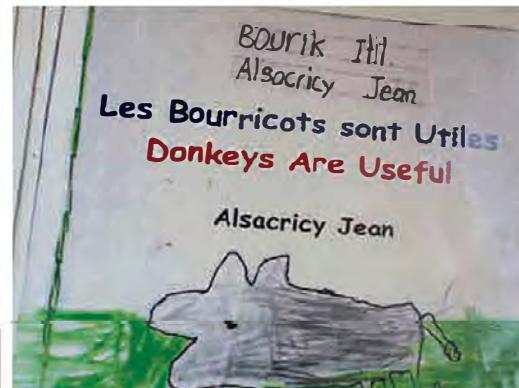


\$50/month covers 1 student's TUITION



\$240/month sponsors 1 teacher's SALARY

Due to your response to our emergency COVID-relief efforts, the Matènwa Community Learning Center distributed masks, sanitation kits, informational booklets, and dry goods like legumes and grains to thousands on La Gonave. Students received distance learning kits, homework packets, and books during school closure. When school re-opened, directors developed and implemented safety protocols and procedures. Most importantly, the people of Matènwa stayed well, reporting no deaths and zero cases.



\$500 trains 1 family in VEGETABLE gardening



We partnered with Trees that Feed to distribute ONE HUNDRED fruit trees to Matènwa Community Learning Center's students. This collaboration supports Trees that Feed's mission to plant ONE MILLION fruit trees on the Caribbean islands within a year. We support this push towards agroforestry because it is an important piece of developing self-sustaining communities. Trees That Feed Foundation and the Caribbean Tree Planting Project held a summer growing competition that requires participants to plant and maintain a tree and document the process weekly. Abner, MCLC's co-founder, and Shoodlile, an MCLC high school student, were both winners!

104 published mother tongue books written by students for students



\$1000 creates 1 terrace for a COMMUNITY garden



\$500 covers start-up costs for one graduate's business plan

People in rural communities don't have immediate access to necessities. In Matènwa, most travel an hour and half into the port town for access to goods. To become independent and self-sustaining, the Matènwa community has to invest in itself. Small businesses can stimulate the local economy, create jobs, and encourage local producers. If local business existed, the community would keep investing in itself and its people. Our students spend the entire secondary education perfecting skills like woodworking and gardening. By the time they graduate, they are fully equipped with the skills to provide services to their neighbors and gain financial freedom; they just don't

have the resources. A small start-up grant of \$500-\$1000 can help start a business immediately. Help us raise \$3000 to support five of our aspiring entrepreneurs.

\$2000 gives one school enough supplies to continue with the Matènwa Method. Help us support 40 schools!



Teachers across La Gonave see the Matènwa Community Learning Center and feel hopeful that they, too, can transform their schools into thriving centers of education. The desire to make change is there, but the resources are not available. Matènwa's BIG vision is to give all children of rural Haiti access to non-violent, child-centered **mother tongue education**. The first goal is to cover the four school districts across La Gonave. **\$20,000 covers training and supervision over two years for new schools to adopt the Matènwa method.** Please consider making a gift so that children in dire situations can have access to a more promising future.



\$4000 is a one-year university scholarship for one graduate

A comparatively small investment of \$16,000 is a full scholarship covering tuition as well as room and board for FOUR years. It's only \$8000 for students with family on the mainland who can forego room and board. The Matènwa Community Learning Center wants to support its graduates by raising \$16,000 to offer boosts to some of its top graduates. It's amazing how much of a difference your gift can make!



Dare to dream of...

a Haiti whose rural children have access to *a brighter future*"



...FAREWELL

One never knows what will happen or how to forecast the next 5, 10, 15 or 20 years. Eleven years ago, as Chris Low and I filled out our incorporating paperwork and settled on Friends of Matènwa's mission statement, it was not possible for us to imagine how far our newly formed organization might come. Now, as I step down from my role as President, I see what a tremendous and wonderful long way that has been!

It's been rewarding to walk the paths of Matènwa, sit in its classrooms, attend flag raising and breakfast, witness the vibrancy of a debate or a bit of community theatre. It's been thrilling to watch adults engage in active problem solving and not in the desperation of a fatalistic shrug. It is this belief in and preparation for better tomorrows that Friends of Matènwa supports.

I am so delighted, indeed I feel blessed, that, as the time has come for me to step down, Matènwa has become Haiti's nationally recognized rural community success story! Friends of Matènwa is endowed with terrific, competent, and committed

new leadership and Board members. I am delighted to introduce Donna Haig Friedman and Jocelyn McCalla as our incoming Co-Presidents. Together they bring a wealth of knowledge about non-profit governance, public policy, education, and life in rural Haiti. For 16 years, Donna led the University of Massachusetts Center for Social Policy, focusing its research and evaluation work primarily on U.S. social welfare policies. Jocelyn's lifelong work has centered on campaigning for the rights of Haitian immigrant and refugees and for human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Haiti. Both have spent time in Matènwa, staying in villagers' homes, visiting classrooms and meeting with MCLC leaders. I am fully confident that they will move our work forward more skillfully than it has ever before moved. We could not be in better hands!

I urge you to stay involved, to support our Matènwa colleagues, to invest in what will make a difference for the families of Matènwa, to reach out to others in building understanding, to dare to dream of and work for a Haiti whose rural children have access to a bright future. ~ Barbara

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What's Next? ...

Remember Fania? The Matènwa Community Learning Center's first-ever valedictorian with big dreams of continuing on to medical school? She had been a star student and a stellar example of what mother tongue, child-centered education could do for children in rural Haiti. She was empowered by the opportunities that came from her own community and, above all, was eager to become its first doctor. But the last two years have been a challenging waiting game for Fania. Unable to afford tuition or room and board and unable to take university entrance exams due to Haiti's socio-political struggles and resulting insecurity, Fania found herself stagnant. With no job and no alternative, would she ever get to medical school? Would she be able to pass an entrance exam after such a long academic hiatus? She became overwhelmed with self-doubt, a feeling all too common for students in her graduating class. Luckily, one of our committed grantors, the Clermont Foundation, believed in Fania's future and offered her a full scholarship for the next **SEVEN** years! This winter she begins her studies at UniTech. Her journey to becoming a doctor continues! But what about the other eleven students that graduated with Fania, the nine the year after, and the thirteen the year after that?



Please invest in what's next for our graduates. Your gift towards scholarship funds creates hope and an avenue beyond secondary education.

GOAL: \$16,000

In Remembrance of *Anisha Atluri*

We celebrate the life of a true change maker, Anisha Atluri, who was one of our most dedicated volunteers. She had unfaltering GOOD will and enough passion to cover the whole world. Her infectious smile and her contagious spirit stays with us and the people of Matènwa. Her impact is one we will never forget.



Supporter Spotlight: Rick Weir

Rick Weir's relationship with Matènwa dates back to the late 80s after he met Chris Low as a fellow teacher in the Cambridge, Massachusetts school district. He was present in the beginning, before there was a school. He continues to be amazed each year as FoM creates more and more change in Haiti. Rick has traveled to Haiti multiple times facilitating numerous workshops, teaching math skills, art, and science. Each year for FoM, he organizes fundraisers, rallies fellow volunteers, and donates. Rick continues to support Friends of Matènwa because he believes in the work that the organization does and the way it has transformed the small rural community over the years. In a conversation with Rick, he expressed deep admiration for the work that Chris Low and the organization continues to do. He calls himself a proud supporter of the Matènwa community.

Financial Highlights

Fiscal Year 2020 (July 2019 - June 2020)

Statement of Activities

REVENUE

grants and contracts	\$576,104
contributions	\$365,259
investment income	\$6,475
other	\$10,938
TOTAL	\$958,776

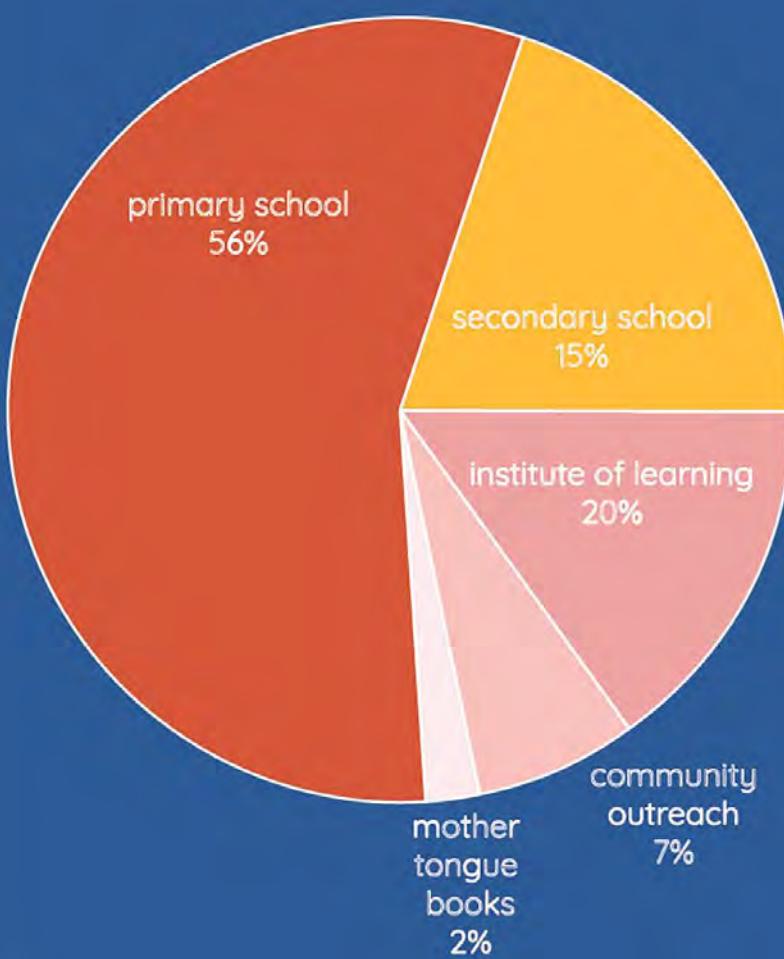
EXPENSES

program services	\$659,165
management/administration	\$70,779
fundraising	\$94,513
TOTAL	\$824,457

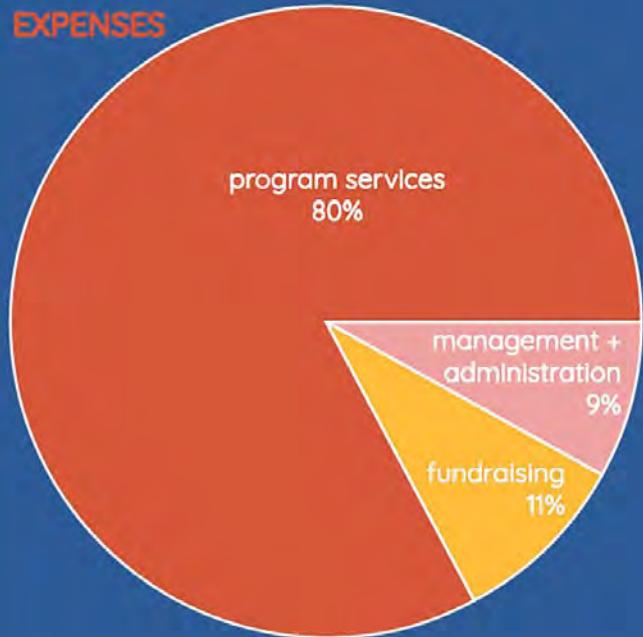
beginning of year assets	\$971,280
end of year assets	\$1,108,826

The information presented above is drawn from Friends of Matènwa's financial statements, which were audited by Smith, Sullivan, and Brown. Our Form 990 is available online at matenwa.org/irs-990.

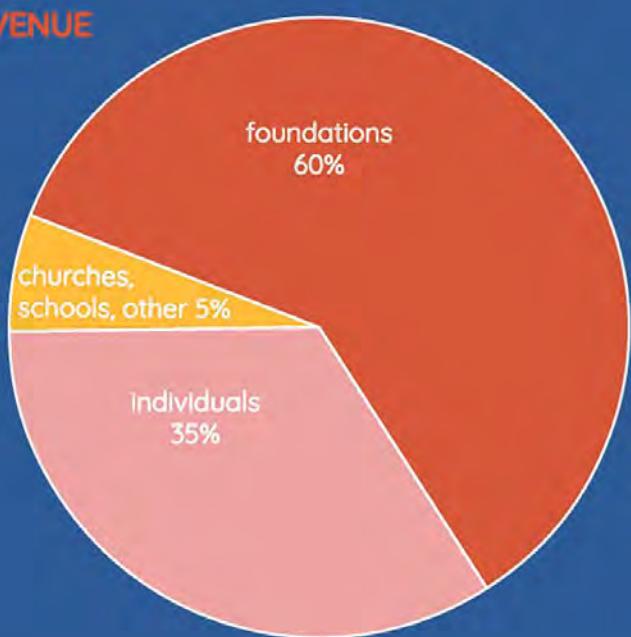
PROGRAM EXPENSES BY AREA



EXPENSES



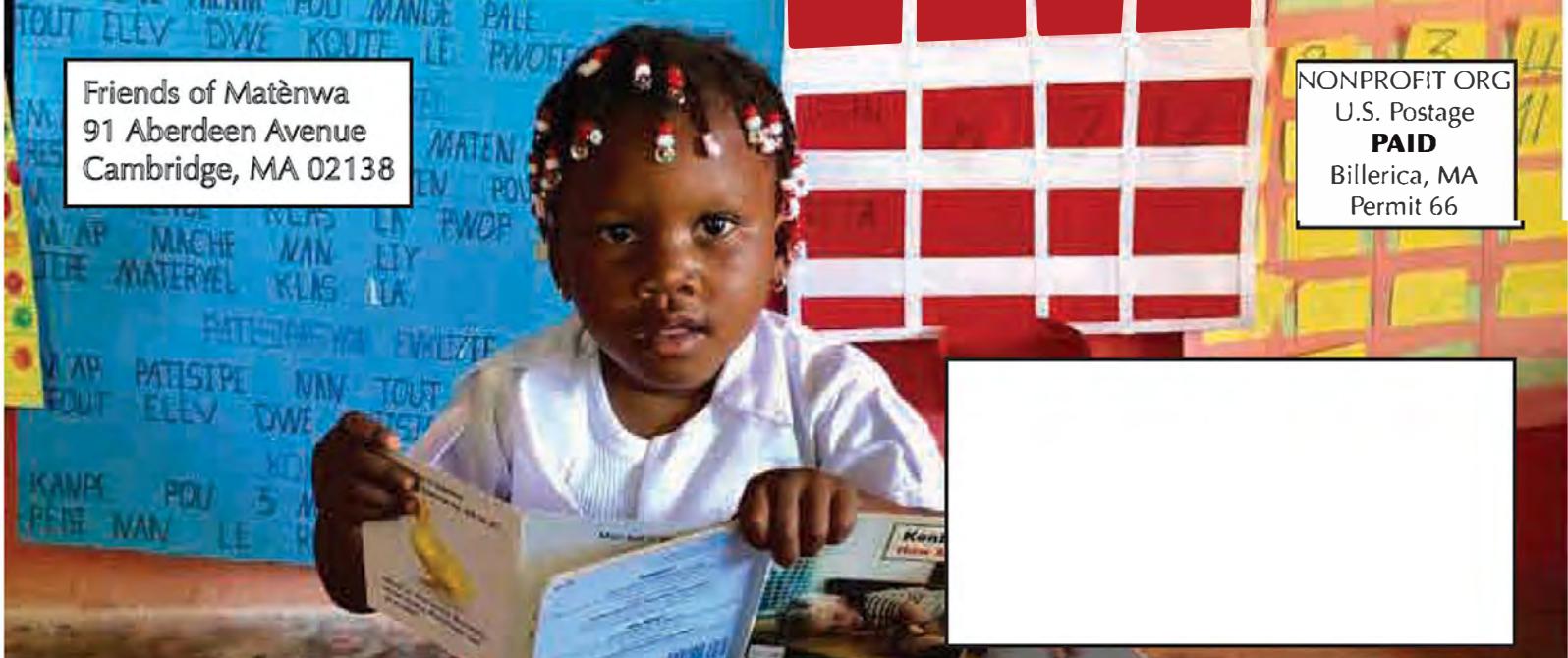
REVENUE



Thank you to all of our grantors and partners. THANK YOU to all 698 of our donors and change makers for *believing*. Your partnership with the Matènwa Community Learning Center puts possibilities within reach for thousands of children in Haiti.

Friends of Matènwa
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Keep tuned for updates on our first ever E-Gala in Spring 2021!



Support Haitian artists and the women of Matènwa by getting your stocking stuffers and holiday ornaments from matenwa.org. From metal works to beaded tapestries, there are many beautiful options for your friends and family.

thank you
thank you

Please donate online at www.matenwa.org
or mail your tax-exempt contributions to:

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