

Hope Is Alive

In April, on a visit to Haiti, I was driven from the airport by car to see my family in Port-au-Prince. All along the route, I saw young men, between the ages of 16 and 18, carrying heavy weaponry. I know nothing about guns, but I do know that young people should not be handling such weapons.

After leaving Cité Soleil, a city within the metropolitan Port-au-Prince, we approached an intersection that is known to be dangerous. Our driver advised us to hide anything of value. I hid my book bag, laptop, and phone to ensure that none of my belongings would be seen. While we did have some money with us, it wasn't much—maybe equivalent to around US\$20.

Our car was stopped. An armed youth with his posse approached the driver's side and peered inside. He spotted a bag of chips and a can of soda I had placed in plain sight. It had not occurred to me to hide them as they seemed insignificant. The youth's first query was if anybody was going to eat them. I offered the items and handed them over willingly.

What surprised me was that the young man took a few chips—less than a handful—and passed the bag on to his friend. It then got passed around to the other boys standing behind him. They did the same with the soda. Each kid took a single gulp and passed it on to his friend.



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Kody Emmanuel and
Chris Low sitting at
the memorial mural in
honor of loyal supporter
Anisha Atluri



In retrospect, what impressed me was these young men were just kids. If he had wanted to, the boy who took the chips and soda from me could have consumed them all by himself. But, his first thought was to share his bounty with his friends.

When I talk about the incident, I am asked, "Were you afraid?" I was! Although I was confident I would reach my destination, I was fully aware just about anything could have happened.

Like many of you, I have read stories of the horrible crimes committed by the gangs in Haiti's capital. The gangs and those providing them with political cover need to be held accountable and prosecuted for their misdeeds.

We also have to admit that the violence these young men have unleashed on the state is because the state has long abandoned them. They have no loyalty to Haiti, its values, and its traditions, because no one has invested in them, their education, or their future.

Each of us needs to think about what we can do to allow the people of Haiti to decide the fate of their country.

So, what does Haiti need? FoM's work in Matènwa has a lot to offer and could pioneer a peaceful Haiti where its citizens can fully support themselves. We envision citizens who are educated in their mother tongue, proud of their culture, have a sense of self-worth and confidence, and provide for themselves.

Matènwa has shown the way for how to make that kind of development happen. While we have a clear game plan for how to help steer Haitian education in the right direction, we can only accomplish it with your help.

Our objective is to mobilize and raise \$100,000 before the end of the year. At this time, when gas and food has tripled in price, access to wholesome food is limited. We need to support our breakfast program and expand our capacity to extend our support to other schools that would like to create their own breakfast programs.

This is where you come in. We ask for your support, and any contributions you make—however small—can go a long way to bring back Haiti from the utter chaos. Your help can provide crucial food and education that can form a starting point for the young people of Haiti.

Kody Emmanuel, CEO

A Message from Chris Low

Reading news about Haiti can trigger feelings of helplessness and despair. Just when you think it cannot get any worse, it does. Port-au-Prince and the surrounding provinces have fallen into total anarchy. Since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021, Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who is a suspect in the assassination, has been running a de-facto government. Gangs are becoming increasingly more powerful than the police and moving further out into other cities. When not engaged in turf wars, they are effectively terrorizing the population by ransacking homes, kidnapping and raping women, men, and children, all in the light of day. Unable to release the stranglehold the G9 gangs have on the main roads and fuel distribution, economic activities are grinding to a halt. People are demonstrating in the streets for Henry to step down so that a popular interim government can be established by Haitians who have been proposing a plan to end this crisis. Instead of stepping down, Henry has been asking for international military intervention. Many Haitian and international groups, including FoM, are asking the United

States government to stop propping up Henry. The last time UN Peacekeepers came in they stayed for 3 years, brought cholera, and subsequently 10,000 Haitians died from it.

I wrestle with the current situation in Haiti of ongoing violence, outside intervention, and daily uncertainty. What is the solution? What have we learned from history? How is it that gangs are so well armed even though Haiti does not produce guns or ammunition? What actions do we need to take for the short term and the long term? During tough times like these, the serenity prayer comes to mind: grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

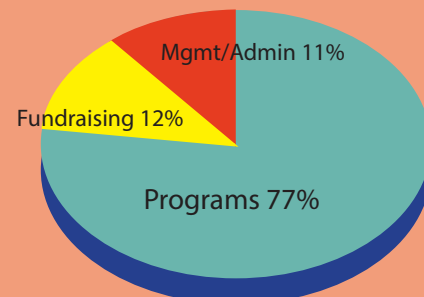
FoM cannot stop the flow of guns, nor the gang wars or the kidnappings in Port-au-Prince. But what we can do is share where **HOPE IS STILL ALIVE** in Lagonav. In this newsletter there are stories of progress and success. The Matènwa community continues to persevere and succeed because of your donation of skills, knowledge, and funding. Please donate today so that MCLC can continue their vital work of educating Haiti's future leaders.

Statement of Activities

REVENUE	
Grants/Contributions	\$801,932
Investment Income	\$18,417
TOTAL	\$820,349

EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$591,162
Mgmt/Admin	\$82,517
Fundraising	\$94,061
TOTAL	\$767,740

Begin FY Assets	\$1,240,750
End FY Assets	\$1,436,657



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



Some of our high school future leaders.

25th Anniversary Gala

On June 4, 2022, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the founding of MCLC at the Venezia Waterfront Ballroom in Dorchester, MA. It was a huge success. We raised \$170,000, which included \$100,000 from a very generous anonymous donor. We were honored to have Michele Montas, a Haitian journalist and former UN Spokesperson, as our guest speaker. We also heard from, MCLC Co-Founder Abner Sauveur, Director Ezner Angervil, CSO Chris Low, and CEO Kody Emmanuel. Board President Anne Gibbons, was our hostess. We applaud all the hardworking volunteers whose team was led by event co-organizers Melanie Collard and Rick Weir. The online auction was run by Christelle Paul, and Matènwa art was sold by Arielle Berrick. DJ Jael Auguste created a lively ambiance with Haitian songs from different periods.

Milestones like a 25th anniversary are important opportunities to reflect back on all the good that has been accomplished and helps us to be reinvigorated and recommitted to our mission moving forward.



Jael Auguste and his mother, Jacinthe Armand, a 25 year supporter.



Guest speaker Michel Montas

Supporter Spotlight: Michael Brun



I had the incredible privilege of visiting Matènwa in person a few years ago. It was such an honor to see the passion, light and love in this community—to see the care the teachers put into the work and the creative spaces that the students had a chance to explore themselves and explore what it is that they want to offer to the world. I think in a country like Haiti, to have that kind of access to learning is really important. So, I hope to see Matènwa continue to thrive for many years to come and for its impact to be seen and felt by countless generations. I think it is incredibly important for the future of Haiti.

FoM's Giving Circles Program

Friends of Matènwa (FoM) launched its Giving Circles initiative this year to encourage members of the FoM community to invite their friends and families to join them in funding a specific class or a particular MCLC program.

Members of the Giving Circles Program will have the opportunity to choose what directly appeals to them. For instance, Giving Circles have already been established to support the graduating classes of 2029 through 2036. There are also Giving Circles to contribute to the expansion and modernization of MCLC's library, agriculture, and STEAM programs.

The FoM Giving Circles Program allows you to give more thoughtfully and intentionally. You can choose to join an existing circle or start one of your own.

To learn more about Giving Circles, join us for a virtual gathering on Wednesday December 14 or January 11, from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. Please contact kody@matenwa.org for more information.

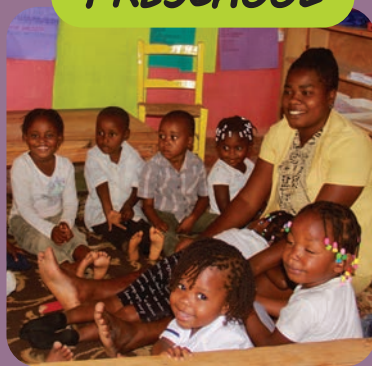
Sustainable Results from YOUR Support!

PROGRESS



The Ministry of Education has finally announced that elementary schools should be taught in Creole and put out a call for the creation of first and second grade textbooks in Creole. This is a huge step forward.

PRESCHOOL



MCLC opened a preschool class for three-year olds. This class has a certified pre-school teacher, who also went to LKM as a child.

PIVOTAL



Direction Committee: (L-R) Feronel Jean, Ednot Obel, Vana Edmond, Delson Engerville, Gino Romain, Abner Sauveur

Thanks to the leadership of the MCLC Direction Committee, MCLC trainers trained school directors on Lagonav at the request of the Lagonav Educational Inspectors. Training included how to use Creole as the language of instruction and what positive discipline is. Afterwards, the head inspector sent a letter to all the schools (in Creole!) reminding them that physical abuse is a punishable offense and will no longer be tolerated in schools. It is pivotal having local educational authorities officially recognize at last what we have known since our beginning—that educational instruction happens best when the children learn in their native tongue.

PRIDE



The school is gradually getting a makeover by visiting artist Junior Joseph. He is painting walls and furniture, increasing the pride of the community.

PRODUCE



We have a new bamboo farm stand in Matènwa! We are excited to see how it will serve the community. Family and school growers will come to the stand with their harvest to sell. A WhatsApp Group will post what fruits and vegetables are being sold on a particular day. The Bamboo Facile organization will return next year to show the community how to plant bamboo and make functional art with it.

PARTNERSHIP



MCLC is building a partnership with Moringa For Love (MFL). Moringa is a genus of plants with multi-purpose uses: all parts of the moringa tree—bark, pods, leaves, nuts, seeds, tubers, roots, and flowers—are edible. Co-founder Patrick Chou promotes the planting, consuming, and sale of moringa in Haiti as a way to combat malnutrition, relieve poverty, and combat deforestation. MFL encouraged the Matènwa community to start planting moringa. Once there is a large quantity of seeds to harvest MCLC will press them to make oil which MFL will buy to use in their beauty products. Proceeds from their sales provide college scholarships for Haitian students.

PROMISE

We have established a Scholarship and Entrepreneurship Program for MCLC graduates who want to go to college or start their own businesses. Four of our students are in the Wesleyan University School of Nursing on Lagonav now. Several have graduated from professional school. This program has funding from Greater Good and the Clermont Foundation, but more funds are needed to meet graduates' needs. This program is dedicated to the late Anisha Atluri (see mural in her honor on page 1) who had envisioned returning to Matènwa to help graduates and especially single mothers build or improve their businesses.

Volunteer Invite

We invite members to support the school's student body with not just monetary donations but also their time, skill set, and expertise in their respective fields. Write to us at: contact@friendsofmatenwa.org if you are interested in volunteering!



For people who are feeling powerless and wondering how they can make a difference, we want to remind you that strengthening and expanding LKM's work in Haiti is one of the smartest investments you can make at this moment.

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Anne Gibbons

One of my heroes is Daniel Berrigan, S.J. who was an American Jesuit priest, anti-war activist, Christian pacifist, playwright, poet, and author who died in 2016. When asked how he could remain hopeful in the face of so much suffering and violence in the world, he responded simply: I stay hopeful by doing hopeful things.

I think of this quote often, especially when trying to stay informed about the current situation in Haiti. It is easy to despair when it seems that each day brings more news of kidnappings, rapes, death and destruction. How tempting to

simply wring our hands and believe there is nothing we can do in the face of such seeming hopelessness.

And yet....thanks to the courage, resourcefulness, persistence and perseverance of the students, staff, and community members in Matènwa **HOPE IS STILL ALIVE**. While most schools on Lagonav are still closed, MCLC remains open and thriving. MCLC remains hopeful by doing hopeful things—continuing the feeding program, educating through academics, gardening, music, the arts, and more.

I was fortunate to visit Matènwa this summer and saw first hand countless reasons to be filled with hope as I observed teacher training and summer school activities. Closer to home I rallied with others in front of the White House to discourage destructive political intervention. As president of the board, I would urge each of us reading this newsletter to **do our own "hopeful things" to ensure not only the survival but the thriving success of the school.**

Please give generously and as regularly as you are able. Sustained support is critical, especially at this time. Spread the word of MCLC to those in your personal and professional circles. **KEEP HOPE ALIVE**, and thank you in advance for your engagement in our work.

Perspectives

Abner Sauveur

Abner Sauveur is inspiring. The clarity and determination in which he leads his community is so impressive, especially in these times of uncertainty and fear. He has managed to not only guide MCLC but also Lagonav's network of 240 schools. Here is what he said when asked about his thoughts.

"First off, I want to thank FoM for how you are constantly thinking about us—monitoring the political climate, always checking in, offering assistance, arranging to bring food (even by helicopter)... We really feel FoM's support."

All the schools on Lagonav were scared to open. They had heard how gang members had ransacked several schools on the mainland and were kidnapping students. The Minister had delayed school opening from September to October 3rd, but as this date was approaching, he made no clear statement of what schools should do.

*MCLC opened on October 3rd in order for the parents to meet with the MCLC staff. We listened to their concerns. Parents came to understand that they were afraid because of all the violent stories they were hearing, but this violence was not actually happening on Lagonav. The presence of the MCLC staff motivated the parents to sign their school contracts. The following day **98% of our students returned to school!***

School authorities trust MCLC. When other school directors saw that we had opened more than half of the 240 schools on Lagonav opened the next week. Schools are not full, but this is because of lavi chè (life is expensive), not because they fear the gangs."

When we are discouraged doing our work in the face of so many challenges we remember people like Abner. His courageous example and tireless work on behalf of his community inspires us all to stay actively engaged and to not give up. **HOPE IS ALIVE**, but we still need your help to continue to empower and lead our communities.



Post-Grad Success Story

My name is Melchidaël Anty. I am 20 years old. I live with my mother Kenia and four siblings. I recently opened up my own beauty salon! I went to school at the Matènwa Community Learning Center (MCLC) ever since I was 3 years old. After my studies I went to a professional school to learn cosmetology in the city of Ansagale. I came home once a month. But if I was hungry, I would come more often to get food. But despite the hunger, I was never discouraged because I really loved the course, and I was very passionate about it.

When I was at MCLC, I would do people's hair or their nails for free. When I was in high school, I saw different modern styles coming in and I thought, "If I learn these styles then people might ask me to style their hair these ways and I could also make money."

I graduated on July 9, 2022 and was the Valedictorian. People from my community came to see me graduate. Everyone was proud of me. I was proud of myself too! I met the challenge. MCLC directors and teachers all sent messages of congratulations.

Before I came back up to Matènwa many people called to say, "I am waiting for you." When returning to Matènwa one client saw me on route and yelled, "Tomorrow morning I am coming to get my nails done." So the very next morning I set up a tarp and opened my business with the materials I had left over from school. I already have had 50 clients!

I hope that in 2023 my business will be even better. I am going to start saving my money to build a salon and buy all the salon materials. If you come to Matènwa, don't forget to pass through "Dayou Salon, Beauty Creator".



Breakfast Program



\$40/month gives a student DAILY BREAKFAST

Our Breakfast Program is key to students' stellar academic performance. Daily breakfast decreases absenteeism, reduces dropout rates, and promotes a happy and healthy learning environment. **By giving MONTHLY, you GUARANTEE one child can count on a meal every single day!**

Literacy Kits



\$75 funds MATERIALS to develop one kit

School materials should be available to all children because hands on learning is proven to be more effective than rote memorization. **\$75 helps us develop and distribute literacy and math activity kits** so that students can explore and remain engaged when learning in the classroom and at home.

Elementary Education



\$100/month covers EDUCATION for ONE

Join a Class Giving Circle. Many Haitian children experience being refused entry into their school whenever their parent cannot pay their monthly tuition on time. **Give a child the security of knowing that they will be able to attend school month after month, year after year,** without traumatic interruptions.

Local Business Training



\$1,000 launches a local START-UP business

Anisha Atluri had a vision to help the people of Matènwa, especially women, improve their capacity to run their own businesses. **Support MCLC's Post-Grad and Entrepreneur Program through the Anisha Atluri Entrepreneurial Fund,** which continues her generosity to budding entrepreneurs.

Creole Libraries



\$2,500 funds 25 new CREOLE TITLES

Our students learn to read through writing personal and class stories. Our goal, each year, is to create and publish new student-authored trilingual Mother Tongue Book titles (@\$100/title) and then reproduce and distribute 5,000 copies for \$15K (@\$3/copy) to partner schools on Lagonav.

Vegetable Gardens



\$6,000 gives WATER to 10 FAMILIES

We address food insecurity by relying on **agriculture-led initiatives to increase access to nutrient rich food.** Our water chateaus for family gardens combat long drought seasons. Local production helps Lagonav gain independence relying less on the mainland's unstable food source.

Matènwa Methodology



\$12,000 TRAINS a partner school for one year

Our Institute of Learning transforms schools using the Matènwa Methodology. Directors and teachers want their schools to become thriving centers of education like MCLC, but lack the resources. Help one school on the island give its students a **quality, non-violent, mother tongue education.**

University Scholarships



\$16,000 covers a graduate's four-year SCHOLARSHIP

Before our **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**, due to lack of resources, students' chances of attending university were slim to none. Presently we are helping 5 university students. These scholarships help **students break poverty-imposed barriers and build brighter futures.**

Volunteer Spotlight

Juliette Low Fleury

When co-founder of Partners in Health (PIH), Dr. Paul Farmer died, Juliette felt an urgency to return to Matènwa for a semester to help her "Papa Abner and Manman Chris" advance their dream. She left Harvard this fall semester 2022 to work with the MCLC Direction Committee to organize their administrative systems.



Juliette with LKM's Primary School Assistant Director Delson Engerville's twins Lanson and Landie

Melanie Collard

My children are half Haitian and we always wanted to be involved with organizations that are truly helping Haitian people. Then we met Chris randomly, walking her dog. Chris is an inspiration to our family; her energy, her selfless dedication to the children and the school, her relentless desire to grow with and for the students, her extraordinary ability to connect and get people involved. For us, Friends of Matènwa is the success story of a NGO created for the people in their natural environment, with respect to all levels of local customs and culture. Friends of Matènwa has provided real education and empowerment to not only the students, but the whole community, changing the lives of so many, forever. For that reason, we are involved in the Giving Circles program and we volunteer whenever Chris needs us. It was a pleasure to be a co-organizer of the 25th Anniversary. I was glad to be able to contribute to this milestone event and meet so many other people who are passionate about helping Haitians.



Melanie with husband James and children Emile and Gabrielle

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