



## Let's Keep the Dream Alive

As with all years, there is good news and bad news. Boatloads of innocent children and adults started fleeing from *Arcahaie* to *Lagonav* Island when a top gang leader declared his plans to massacre them in order to make their town his base. The first boats were met with locals bringing them coffee, water, and bread. But by the end of October there were an estimated 7,000 people of all ages seeking shelter and safety on *Lagonav* island.

The island does not produce enough food for its own residents, and fewer people are willing to risk their lives to get supplies from the mainland, so food prices are rising again.

Even though we are located in the mountains, nearly 100 people, mostly relatives and friends, have come to *Matènwa* to find relief. MCLC has been part of meetings organized by island officials to try to address the needs of these new arrivals.

We know that we cannot help everyone on this island, but we do know that **what we bring in with this fundraising letter will help the hundreds of children in *Matènwa* continue to thrive. Guaranteeing that our students grow up experiencing how a healthy, democratic, non-violent, nurturing community functions is vitally important for a sustainable future.** Let's keep this dream alive and continue to support all the dedicated MCLC staff working tirelessly to provide a very important sense of normalcy.

Please enjoy this recap of the year in pictures. I hope you take pride in all the good things you made possible for our community and the 21 school communities that we are presently training in the *Matènwa* Way!

Sending you Peace and Love,



### MCLC ADMINISTRATION

(L-R): High School Director Ednot Obèl, Treasurer Feronèl Jean, Institute of Learning Director Vana Edmond, FoM/LKM Liaison William Jacques, Primary School Director Samila Edmond, Co-Founder and LKMPD Director Abner Sauveur, Assistant High School Director and Computer Teacher Michelda Oceas, Assistant Director Bidjori Sauveur.



### FoM BOARD

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### FoM ADMINISTRATION

Chris Low, Executive Director  
Pepito Laventure, Finance Coordinator  
Bianca Louis, Development Coordinator  
Brian Stevens, Operations/Donor Engagement

## A MESSAGE FROM ANNE GIBBONS, FoM BOARD PRESIDENT

As you may know by now, *Lagonav* has been inundated with thousands of Haitians escaping gang violence. Boatloads of desperate men, women, and children are seeking refuge on the small island. When I heard the news I left a WhatsApp message for my friend Freda Catheus who lives on *Lagonav* and is a staff member with Beyond Borders and a member of the *Matènwa* Community Learning Center's advisory board.

Her response to me was stunning: "I am housing six additional people in my house since Saturday. They came with **nothing but the shirts on their backs**. I am going out today to look for bread and water. **I am so happy that I have the opportunity to help them. We are Haitians. They are my brothers and sisters. My faith tells me that to help those without homes and food is to be helping God.**"

If Freda can be happy because she has the opportunity to help others in these most dire and desperate situations, how much happier should each of us be to have the opportunity to support the work of all those in Haiti, especially in *Matènwa*? As you read this update and learn of the needs as well as the accomplishments of students, teachers, and staff, I hope you will find your own opportunity to help and experience a bit of the heartfelt happiness that Freda feels in being able to make a difference.



Anne Gibbons, Friends of *Matènwa* Board President  
Freda Catheus Beyond Borders



## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

The *Matènwa* Community Learning Center celebrated the International Day of Peace in September with our 330 students and dozens of teachers parading down the street with slogans like these:



Peace in School



Let's Avoid War So That Peace Can Reign



Peace in Our Communities



It's in peace we will progress. With peace our country will develop.

Other slogans were:

Live the International Day of Peace, Peaceful Classrooms, Peace at Work, Let's Make Peace With Ourselves So That We Can Have Peaceful Communities

After the parade, the crowd gathered inside to enjoy student-created poems, skits, and songs about building peace. Because of the turmoil that surrounds Port-au-Prince, school did not officially open until October so this was the perfect opportunity to spend the month of September focused on "What is peace?"

## MORE THAN 100 SCHOOLS TRAINED IN THE MATÈNWA WAY

The MCLC's Institute of Learning is transforming education by empowering teachers and school leaders. Through a two-year program, the institute provides comprehensive training, starting with a three-day immersion visit where entire teaching teams observe the Institute's

methods in action. Following this, one teacher alongside each director attends monthly training, complemented by on-site coaching from an academic trainer and a garden technician. More than 100 *Lagonav* schools have completed the program. Our partnership with

Haiti's Ministry of Education is also advancing positive discipline and family engagement in 230 schools. In addition to this, more than 40 school directors from the mainland have brought their teaching teams for a week-long intensive training.

## MATÈNWA SUMMER CAMP 2024

We had more children and adults than ever before coming from other communities —between 250 and 300 each day — to experience the *Matènwa Way*. Abner has always wanted to have a marching band. He finally got his wish!

Each summer students, teachers, and people from *Matènwa* and neighboring communities are invited to share their talents by leading a week-long, child-centered activity. More than a dozen classes are offered, changing weekly, with popular classes repeated so that more children can attend. There is

crocheting, hair braiding, recording in *Matènwa's* music studio, band lessons and dance classes, computer classes, board games, sports, bead-making, chair-making, macramé bracelet-making, and various other craft classes.

I'm so thankful for the generosity and solidarity of everyone who has invested in *Matènwa*. It meant even more to students this year that they could go to camp and escape — even for just a moment — the anxiety of life in a seemingly unending crisis.



### WHY I JOINED FoM'S VISIONARY CIRCLE:

The experiment of hope, justice, and generosity that Abner and Chris initiated in the mid-1990s has blossomed to an amazing degree. I am so thankful to them and want to continue to be a part of that strong effort. They saw a need and acted on it with passion, quickness, and commitment to hard work and change for effective, democratic, caring teaching for Haitian children. **They are a beacon of light and progress for Lagonav and now for all of Haiti.** This has to continue...so, in solidarity and support, I joined and made a five-year pledge for the children of Haiti.  
~ Carole Enright

*You can join the Visionary Circle to help ensure MCLC's sustainability with a pledge of \$1,000 or more a year for five years. Contact Brian Stevens for more information: (305) 450-2561; [brian@matenwa.org](mailto:brian@matenwa.org).*

## JOIN THE MCLC BREAKFAST CLUB!

You can guarantee a healthy breakfast for one student every school day with a monthly gift of \$40.



We all know that a nutritious breakfast gets us off to a good start. The same goes for our students too. Breakfast is essential for every child to be able to learn, grow, and thrive.

Jessie Auger and Naomi Mulvilhill have been giving to the Breakfast Club for over 15 years. "It means the world to us to know that a child is going to leave home in the morning knowing that not only will

their mind and imagination be fueled at the *Matènwa School*, but their belly will be full too. It means the world to us to be able to do something meaningful for a child in Haiti at a time of turmoil like this."



You too can be a member of the *Matènwa Breakfast Club* providing one student breakfast at school for only \$40 a month. Scan the QR code or visit [www.matenwa.org](http://www.matenwa.org) and click donate to join. Thank you!



Chris with Sue Fiallo, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Leadership

## CONSIDER BEING A SCHOOL PARTNER

For a number of years TASIS Dorado, a college preparatory school, in Puerto Rico has partnered with MCLC to provide resources so MCLC can continue its important work. "Our students have written stories to be translated and published, held a breakfast to support the MCLC breakfast program, hosted an art auction to celebrate the creativity of all our people, and connected us through the *Trees for Life*. TASIS has also sponsored casual dress days, all to create awareness and raise funds. We are proud to support the amazing educational work at MCLC. We will continue to raise the consciousness of our community to the issues faced by Haiti and the resilience of this beautiful school and its amazing leaders." - Sue Fiallo



## WE LOST THREE MEMBERS OF THE MATÈNWA FAMILY THIS YEAR:



**Sabisondy Elysée** was a member of *Matènwa's* 2024 graduating class. Recently Sabi became ill and his family made the voyage to the mainland with him, to one of the few hospitals still functioning on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. Sabi died there. He was 25. High School Director Ednot Obel described Sabi this way: "Sabi loved to play soccer and he was an excellent player. Sabi was a very kind person. He loved to laugh with people and tell jokes with his teachers, fellow students, and anyone he met."



**Louvens Siméus** was a former MCLC student and the nephew of MCLC's General Secretary and Assistant Primary School Director, Delson Engerville. As a child, Louvens was diagnosed with a heart condition, and his doctor cautioned him not to overexert himself, but Loulou, as he was known, loved soccer and he just couldn't give it up. At 24 years-old he collapsed and died while playing on the community field this summer.



**Jean Benson Exima**, a longtime MCLC teacher, immigrated to the United States last December and settled in North Carolina. In September Jean Benson was on his way to work the nightshift with six other Haitians when they collided with another vehicle. All seven died. Jean Benson messaged Chris this summer, nostalgic for MCLC. "I am in the United States for now," he said, "but I still carry MCLC in my heart. The day I return to Haiti the first place I will go is MCLC, my heart."

*Life is so difficult for so many Haitians right now - whether they are living through Haiti's unending political crisis, or facing the racism and hate directed at Haitians in Springfield, Ohio by politicians in the U.S. Thank you for standing with them during such hard times.*

## FoM IN SOLIDARITY WITH HAITIANS IN SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

Our *Matènwa* mission statement says in part, "We seek to empower the local community in their ability to reflect and determine their own solutions ..." Brian Stevens - FoM's Donor Engagement Consultant - grew-up near Springfield and is spending a portion of his time working with grassroots leaders there like Viles Dorsainvil & Rose-Thamar Joseph. With FoM's support, Brian is helping to link Rose-Thamar and Viles with other Haitian community organizations and to build their capacity to fundraise for their new Haitian Community Help and Support Center.

A show of solidarity in difficult times makes a real difference in a community's efforts at self-determination. Your solidarity has not only made it possible for *Matènwa* to transform into a self-determined community, but has also supported its work in a hundred other communities across *Lagonav*. We hope you take pride in what you are helping to make possible both in Haiti and in the United States.



To learn more about the center's work visit: <https://www.haitiansupportcenterspringfield.org/>





## START-UP GRANTS FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL MCLC GRADS

MCLC preschool teacher Vastie Jean at a chair making workshop conducted by MCLC graduate Michelot Succès.

At MCLC, students learn skills that they can use to start their own businesses and create their own futures. Michelot Succès started at MCLC as a first grader. After graduating in 2023 he began his own chair-making business. Success stories like Michelot's are possible because of generous Friends of *Matènwa* supporters who provide start-up grants to our entrepreneurial graduates. These graduates can then provide for themselves and they feel a sense of dignity through their work. They also want to give back to their school, so this year Michelot offered a class in chair making during summer camp, giving more people the same opportunity to grow up in a creative, loving environment where they can thrive.

## CELEBRATING HAITI'S FARMERS ON MAY 1ST: AGRICULTURE AND LABOR DAY!

Balaguel Joseph, a longtime agricultural technician at MCLC, shared how students and families marked the day. "Every May 1st we celebrate all of Haiti's farmers. This year we organized a festival to highlight many of the things we grow and make in *Matènwa*. Farmers prepared local cuisine that included: mango and carrot juice, cassava bread with peanut butter, cassava boiled with plantains and fish, grilled peanuts, popcorn, muffins, and congo beans with cassava.

We sang beautiful songs about nature, gave away tree saplings and planted some fruit trees. Everyone felt happy and hopeful. It was a beautiful day with a lot of discussions on the fruits that have disappeared (lemons, limes, palms, etc) and what we could do to bring them back."



## NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY CREATES ONLINE TEACHER TRAINING

In 2016, Sister Sharon Slear, founding dean of the Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) School of Education, and of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) brought teacher-trainers to *Matènwa*. SSND made annual visits to train MCLC educators how to teach math using math manipulatives and how to recognize students with learning disabilities. Visits continued until the pandemic hit. Then the assassination of Haiti's president in 2021 plunged the country into further chaos. In-person visits stopped—but not teacher training. They pivoted to creating online teacher-training videos in mathematics, led by NDMU Associate Professor of Education Lisa Pallett. Today, any educator who speaks Creole can access more than 200 videos on YouTube of supplementary hands-on activities that complement Haiti's math curriculum for grades one through three. We are deeply grateful for SSND's continued commitment. You can see the entire math video curriculum here: <https://www.youtube.com/@matenwaresousedikatif>



Lisa Pallett giving in-person training at MCLC in 2020.

## GRATITUDE TO FoM'S BOARD MEMBERS

Thank you to **Brendan Reilly** and **Krystel Armand Kanzki** for their years of service on the FoM board. They helped make a lasting difference for our students, teachers, and parents at MCLC.

We are proud to introduce you to three new board members who joined this year:



**Charles Gregory Berrouet:** "FoM's focus on self-reliance and developing youth through education and self-sustaining community approaches are what appeal to me the most. The passion of its founders and its culture of ethics and transparency all resonated strongly with me. Unfortunately, only a small fraction of FoM's donors are Haitian. I want to raise awareness within the Haitian diaspora so that more Haitians get involved in giving back to their motherland."



**Vladimir LaBorde:** "FoM provides critical academic resources and tools to a community that is now, more than ever, in need of its support. The dedication and appreciation of the leadership of MCLC and its force of nature, Chris Low, is truly humbling. It's an honor to be on the FoM board."



**Victoria Pasquet:** "As someone who grew up in Haiti, I have always been passionate about improving the lives of children through education and community support. Joining this board allows me to merge my background in teaching, volunteer work, and nonprofit leadership to support meaningful change. I am committed to using my experience to empower the children of Haiti."



*Taking the boat to Miragoâne.*



*Arriving at University Fondwa.*



*First day of classes at University Fondwa!*

## AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

We had a huge scare in January when **Abner Sauveur** lost sight in his right eye due to high blood pressure and high cholesterol. He came to Boston for treatment. The damage is permanent, doctors told him, but he is on medication now and feels great! While in Boston he was able to reunite with several of you. Here he is with some of our devoted supporters at First Parish Lincoln.



## THE KINDERGARTENERS



## LEARNING TO CODE



*High schoolers learn to code with the Scratch app, thanks to funds and guidance from Jim Verhulst.*

## 11 MCLC GRADS ARE OFF TO COLLEGE!

This fall, 11 MCLC graduates passed the entrance exam to attend the University of Fondwa in southern Haiti! These five young women and six young men will study business administration, agronomy, and veterinary medicine. Our teachers are

overjoyed, our students are excited, and their parents are filled with pride. **Your support empowers these students, honors our teachers, and builds hope for Haiti's future.** We thank you.

# Invest in OUR DREAMS!

## Breakfast Club



**\$40/month**

Happy, healthy kids learn better. By giving monthly, you can guarantee one child can count on a meal every single day!

## Student Materials



**\$75/month**

Your gift helps distribute literacy and math activity kits to one class, engaging students in the classroom and at home.

## Teacher Training



**\$100/month**

We train educators to implement nonviolent, native language, participatory methodology. Your donation helps spread the *Matènwa Way*.

## University Scholarships



**\$150/month**

Today 16 MCLC grads are at college studying nursing, agronomy, business administration, and veterinary medicine. You can help ensure they complete their studies.

## Creole Libraries



**\$500/title**

Our students learn to read through writing stories. Your gift helps publish student authored Mother Tongue Books for MCLC and partner schools on *Lagonav*.

## Vegetable Gardens



**\$600/family**

Vegetable gardens increase access to nutrient rich food. Water cisterns for family gardens combat long drought seasons. Your donation can help sustain a family.

## Science Lab Materials



**\$750/year**

Science teaches how to think analytically which is important to finding solutions to problems facing our communities. Your gift promotes hands-on exploration for students.

## Computer Lab



**\$1000/computer**

Our equipment is in desperate need of an upgrade. Your contribution towards new MAC computers permits students to become technologically literate.

**TRANSFORM LIVES** by giving:

- ☐ Monthly Student Breakfast..... \$40
- ☐ Monthly Student Materials..... \$75
- ☐ Monthly Teacher Training..... \$100
- ☐ Monthly Scholarship Support..... \$150
- ☐ Mother Tongue Book Title ..... \$500
- ☐ Family Vegetable Garden..... \$600
- ☐ Science Lab Materials..... \$750
- ☐ Computer Lab Equipment..... \$1,000
- ☐ Where most needed..... \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ A bequest. (Please contact Chris Low at [chris@matenwa.org](mailto:chris@matenwa.org))

My Gift is: ☐ Monthly ☐ Once



(tear here)

**PLEASE DONATE**

online at: [www.matenwa.org](http://www.matenwa.org)

by mail to: Friends of Matènwa, 91 Aberdeen Ave,  
Cambridge, MA 02138

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## A BIG THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTER GROUPS

### COLLABORATORS, FOUNDATIONS AND GRANTORS

Ansara Family Fund  
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Beyond Borders  
Community of Wesleyan Schools of Haiti  
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Give Likely Foundation Inc  
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GreaterGood.Org  
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JPMorgan Chase's Good Works Employee Giving Program?  
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PM Consulting Group/ USAID  
Sereda Family Fund  
Synapse Energy Economics, Inc.  
The Cowles Charitable Trust  
Trees That Feed Foundation  
Wesleyan University  
World Vision

### SCHOOLS

Malden High School Haitian Club  
Colegio Puertorriqueño de Niñas  
TASIS Dorado Inc  
Westford Academy-Hands 2 Haiti

### CHURCHES

First Parish Lincoln  
Radnor Monthly Meeting Religious Society of Friends  
Second Union Church of San Juan  
St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church  
The First Parish Church of Watertown

### VISIONARY, LEADERSHIP, AND SUSTAINERS CIRCLE MEMBERS

Krystel Armand Kanzki  
Christine Barnden  
Jeri Bayer  
Carole Berotte Joseph  
Connie Biewald  
Larry Blum  
James Celestin  
Meryl Cohen  
Anna Grimaldi Colomer  
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Daniel Tetrault  
Letitia Graydon Upton  
Ricardo Weir  
Moana P. Whipple  
Leah Williams  
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### BREAKFAST CLUB MEMBERS

Ingrid Acosta  
Kevin Aravind  
Jane Arsham  
Carol Benson  
Carlee Blamphin  
Larry Blum  
Brittany Boles  
Luiz Cerqueira  
Jacquelyn Clymore  
Zette CS  
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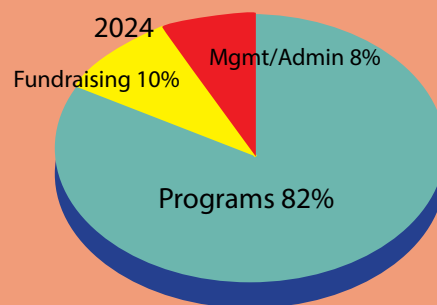
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Kelley Jean White  
Jennifer Wickham  
Margarita M Wilson  
Veda Ann Wright  
Rachel Wyon

## Statement of Activities

REVENUE	2023	2024
Grants/Contributions	\$892,364	\$933,1525
Investment Income	\$23,441	\$31,574
Other	\$150,000	\$16,082
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,065,805</b>	<b>\$980,807</b>

EXPENSES	2023	2024
Program Services	\$757,892	\$754,018
Mgmt/Admin	\$89,460	\$69,304
Fundraising	\$96,521	\$98,756
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$943,873</b>	<b>\$919,078</b>

Begin FY Assets	\$1,436,658	\$1,528,468
End FY Assets	\$1,528,468	\$1,329,515



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](http://matenwa.org/irs-990)