



## Summer 2021



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As you may know, we started the school year late, in November 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic. To keep the students and staff safe, we had to make some arrangements such as dividing the classes into two different schedules—one in the morning, one in the afternoon. The situation had improved by the beginning of March because we had respected all the safety rules such as maintaining social distancing, frequent washing of hands, and others.

Unfortunately, in May the cases of coronavirus began increasing again. People were not being careful, and some still believe to this day that COVID is a myth. The cases increased so fast that the Ministry of Education closed schools in Haiti by June 11th, two and a half months earlier than the regular schedule.

We are constantly praying for things to improve because we are facing many challenges right now. The first challenge that we are facing is the nutrition of the students at the school. Due to the constant political unrest, the prices for proper groceries are extremely high. Even though we use the food produced at the farm, it's not enough to feed our kids at the school. Next, we are facing the lack of fuel, which can paralyze our daily lives. In addition to that, we went through a period of drought where farmers could not benefit from their crops and therefore could not sell. We have tried to keep afloat with our resources and with Bethlehem Ministry's help while maintaining our standards, but it has not been an easy task.



We would like to ask you to help us find more scholarships for the children because they have been immensely helpful in many ways. Having more scholarships will allow us to do the following: give more opportunities to give a better quality of education to children in the city. They will also allow us to increase the staff's salary because what they are currently earning is not a lot. Some teachers earn less than \$200 dollars a month. If we increase the school fees, we might lose more students because we have seen it happen already this year. We currently have 914 students when before we had 1,000 and more. Also, due to the current situation in the country, we have not had visitors, which was also more or less a source of income for us. Furthermore, some people are afraid of sending their kids to school due to the pandemic. Right now, there are no vaccines available and as I've mentioned before, people are not being careful, and they are not respecting the safety measures.



Even when we have faced all these challenges, we have managed to maintain the school standards. We are incredibly happy with the teachers' performance and the rest of the staff, while being on our knees everyday praying constantly that things will get better.

Even though I've been away for 5 months, our on-site leaders have been doing an excellent job keeping the place running efficiently. And by the grace of God and the doctors' authorizations I am hoping to go to Terrier Rouge by the end of July and be present for the beginning of next year's school year which probably will be on September 1st.

We are extremely grateful for all the collaboration and support that you have given us throughout the years and will continue to give us. We pray for all of you daily, so that God may continue to bless you in your work and pray to keep you safe.

Faithfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeanne Brunel", with a small cross symbol below it.

# Bòn Fèt, Pere Bruno!

Throughout the month of July, we are celebrating Pere Bruno's life and accomplishments with Bòn Fèt. Bòn Fèt means happy birthday in Haitian Creole and Pere Bruno's birthday falls on July 27th. Many of you have known Pere Bruno for decades, sat in the pews while listening to the quiet power of his sermons, experienced the beauty of Haiti alongside him on a mission trip, witnessed this great servant of God as he ministered to the poor and hungry during a food distribution. Or perhaps you're new to the work of Bethlehem Ministry, curious about who Pere Bruno is and why he is so beloved in Haiti and here in the States. To help with that we have created a timeline of Pere Bruno's life from his humble beginnings to the living legacy he has created today. We think you'll be as amazed and inspired as we are as you see all he has accomplished in 76 years. And you will understand why we celebrate his ministry and his life each year.



**1945**

Jean Monique Bruno is born to a shoemaker and a dressmaker in the small rural town of Croix-des-Bouquets, not far from Port-au-Prince.



**1972**

Ordained into the priesthood at the Episcopal Cathedral in Port au Prince



**1977**

Founded the vocational school, Ecole Professionnelle St. Esprit, in Cap-Haitien



**1984**

Founded the agricultural school, The Centre d'Agriculture St. Barnabas, in Terrier Rouge, which today attracts students from all across Haiti.



**1988**

Founded St. Luc Episcopal Church and School in Trou du Nord. Roughly 250 children are enrolled here each year.



**1990**

Founded St. Etienne Episcopal Church and School in Limonade



**1998**

Transferred to The Church of the Epiphany in Santo Domingo where he started a program called "Lazarus Basket" to feed the less fortunate



**2001**

Founded St. Barthélémy School in Terrier Rouge. St. Bart's educates and nurtures over 1,000 children each school year.



**2007**

Formed the NGO, Espérance et Vie, to oversee humanitarian aid projects in northeast Haiti. Father Bruno has served as CEO since its inception.



**2009**

Founded the Clinique Espérance et Vie, in Terrier Rouge. More than 12,000 patients are seen each year for general medicine, eye care, dental services, and more!



**2021**

Father Bruno splits his time between the U.S., the Dominican Republic, and Haiti, visiting his daughters and grandchildren. He continues to serve as CEO of Espérance et Vie, overseeing humanitarian relief projects in the wake of cholera outbreaks, flooding, COVID-19, and civil unrest. Although formally retired from the priesthood, to he continues to minister to, educate children and adults. As he often says, "a person never really retires from the ministry." We suspect he wouldn't want it any other way.



If you wish to give a donation in honor of Pere Bruno, we encourage you to share your memories or impressions of your time with him over the years. These messages and birthday wishes will be passed on to Pere Bruno on his birthday, letting him know how very much he is loved and appreciated.

# Jatrofa Projenou



When I look into the faces of these women from the village of Patasson, I see the unrelenting worry that comes with making sure their families are okay—today, next week, next year. Come September, a woman's children won't be going to school unless she finds the money to send them. Her family's harvest of peanuts may come in in time, but she worries, what if it falls short and doesn't fetch enough at market? If her kids can't go to school, she worries they'll never get ahead. And where is she going to find the money for food next week or for the pills her aging parent needs?



You see, it is the women here who manage the finances of the household. The men work hard but it falls to the women to make ends meet—selling in the market, buying what's necessary, saving for upcoming expenses, dealing with unexpected calamities. In a place as poor as Patasson, that's a tough assignment. A woman here is under pressure, a constant stress she bears alone.



But, bring her into a group of her peers and give her a financial asset to manage and things can get better. On May 30th, which was Mother's Day in Haiti, that happened. The women of Patasson came together at Jatrofa Projenou to hear and support one another and to launch a women's business venture. Each was given a goat.



In their remote village with no access to a bank, a goat can be a savings account for a woman and an investment too. Its value increases over time, and when bred with the goats of the other women in the group, a woman increases her financial independence and the group develops an economic asset that benefits the whole community. Like Jatrofa Projenou's reforestation program, which succeeds by addressing the needs of farmers as well as planting trees, our women's program is developing Patasson's economy by addressing the needs of its women.

The worry in those faces? I suspect it'll persist. Worry seems to be what mothers do.

*Rob Fisher*

**DIRECTOR, PARTNER FOR PEOPLE AND PLACE**

## *Clinique Espérance et Vie*

Since Clinique Espérance et Vie's inception in 2009, offering access to eye care has always been a priority. And with good reason. According to the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Haiti has the highest levels of blindness and moderate to severe vision impairment among people 50 and over in all of Latin America and the Caribbean, with 50% of all blind individuals in the region residing in Haiti. The majority of visual impairments are caused by cataracts yet only 8-9% of patients in need of cataract surgery in Haiti receive the sight-correcting operation each year. There are three factors contributing to this—lack of access, lack of funds, and lack of doctors. **Currently, there are only 58 ophthalmologists serving Haiti's population of 10 million!**

We are blessed at Clinique Espérance et Vie to have Dr. Carmelle Lucien, one of the finest ophthalmologists in Haiti, with more than 25 years of experience. Dr. Lucien has an optometrist (one of only 3 in all of Haiti) and a nurse to complete her eye care team. Eye care services are offered three days a week at the clinic, treating roughly 3,000 patients a year. **But we need YOU on Dr. Lucien's eye care team too!**

Due to Haiti's tropical location, medical equipment breaks down more quickly. Currently, the eye-care team is using dated equipment that no longer functions well. They are in desperate need of a new slit lamp, the microscope that allows ophthalmologist to determine eye health and to detect eye disease such as cataracts. A new slit lamp costs about \$3,000, expensive yes, but necessary in the fight against blindness in northern Haiti. **If just 100 people each gave a gift of \$30, better vision would be within our sights!** If you would like to be a part of Dr. Lucien's eye care team, be sure to write "slit lamp" in the memo line of your donation. Thank you!



*Dr. Carmelle Lucien using a slit lamp to evaluate a patient's eyes.*

*Making a Difference in Haiti*