



SUMMER 2023



# HOPE AND JOY FROM PROFILES IN SUCCESS

**T**he Apostle Paul reminds us that we worship a God of hope and that there is great joy from embodying that hope. Our recent trip to Terrier Rouge was a time of great joy because we were able to see hope embodied through the ministries that Bethlehem Ministry supports. We saw firsthand how the programs are flourishing and continuing to change lives for the better. ***Here are the success stories of just two of the individuals that we met:***

At the JP store we visited with Frislyne, who is employed as an agronomist and co-director of JP Haiti. Frislyne carefully explained the various products and even cut a branch from a Jatropa plant for us to see firsthand. We understand why Rob Fisher, the executive director of JP's U.S. counterpart organization, has nicknamed Frislyne Madame "Miel" (Bee) because she's always busy moving from one activity to another to make sure things run well! In addition to co-directing JP Haiti, Frislyne is the mother of several children that attend St. Barthélémy. Her children, like all students at the school, receive healthcare at Clinique Espérance et Vie and a nutritious lunch every day, in addition to a great education. Frislyne's commitment to the community both as an agronomist and mother are critical to Haiti's future. At Bethlehem Ministry, we are honored to play a role in supporting her efforts.

Also during our trip, we went for an evening walk around Terrier Rouge with Lucanes as our guide. Lucanes is an engaging young man who graduated from St. Barthélémy recently. He is now attending college in Cap Haitian, pursuing a degree in computer science, and hopes to study abroad some day. Lucanes is an amazing success story in a country where less than 20% of the population finishes high school. He and his family have overcome hardships with the prayers and help of the Terrier Rouge community and especially of Espérance et Vie (the NGO umbrella organization that provides humanitarian assistance, in addition to running the school and clinic). Not only was Lucanes educated at St. Barthélémy, but he lives with his mother and siblings in a house built for them by the NGO following the death of his father. Without *both* the educational and housing assistance it is unlikely that Lucanes would have finished high school, let alone be attending college.

The stories of these two individuals are just a fraction of the success stories that exist because of the Bethlehem Ministry community of donors. ***Your continued help is needed in order for these programs to keep making life changing differences for the community of Terrier Rouge.*** Your donation can help ensure that children are educated and cared for, medical needs are met, housing and humanitarian aid is provided, people have economic opportunities, hillsides are reforested and more! Let us continue to embody hope and experience the joy that comes from living out God's hope through our commitment to these ministries in Terrier Rouge.



Rennae, Frislyne, Sarah and Leigh at the JP store with JP products purchased to bring back, including soap, lotion, oil and honey.



Lucanes and Leigh after a walk around Terrier Rouge



Madame "Miel" (Bee) busy educating farmers about trees and crops!



With gratitude for your continued support!

Leigh Jones and Rennae Henry

*Making a Difference in Haiti*

# FLAG DAY IN HAITI

The entire school participated in a festive and joyful Flag Day parade through the streets of Terrier Rouge on May 18, 2023. Flag Day in Haiti is as important as Independence Day and celebrates the adoption of the nation's flag. Leading the parade was the flag itself, along with a student portraying

Jean Jacques Dessalines, the father of the nation. This was followed by not one, *but two*, drill teams, and of course by the school's celebrated marching band. The rest of the students marched in sections based on their ages, with even young students marching the entire route. Residents of Terrier Rouge turned out in full to cheer on the parade and performances!



*More on our website:*  
[bethlehemministry.org](http://bethlehemministry.org)

## STAFFING UPDATE

**Bethlehem Ministry is pleased to announce** that it has appointed Rennae Henry as Executive Director. Rennae previously served in the roles of Interim Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer and before that was a director and officer for many years. She recently completed the Rice University Nonprofit Finance Certificate program, has accounting and law degrees and practiced corporate and finance law for 15 years. Rennae is excited about this role and having the opportunity to help advance an organization she believes in wholeheartedly! Bethlehem Ministry is immensely grateful to Kristen Pace for her commitment to Haiti and past service as Executive Director. Kristen is pursuing a variety of activities, but loves Haiti and thankfully will still be playing a role with us, albeit a bit more behind the scenes. Don't be surprised to see correspondence from her hit your mailbox from time to time.



## BREAKING DEVELOPMENT

**We are hiring!** We are excited to offer a part-time remote position with flexible hours, helping lead our donor engagement and communication efforts. Scan the QR code or email [info@bethlehemministry.org](mailto:info@bethlehemministry.org) for more information.

# CHARITABLE GIVING FOCUS

## QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS FROM IRAS

**I**f you have an IRA and are at least the age of 70 1/2, you should know the potential benefits of a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) in maximizing the impact of your charitable gift and minimizing your taxes. A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from a taxable IRA (an individual retirement account) to an operating 501(c)(3) organization.

To understand the primary benefits of QCDs, you should be familiar with Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). Starting at age 73, investors with IRAs are obligated to take RMDs every year. A person's exact RMD amount is determined by an IRS calculation. As the name suggests, RMDs are required — regardless of whether or not you actually need the funds in a given year. The downside to RMDs — particularly for investors who don't need the funds — is that they increase the investor's total taxable income. Depending on your financial situation, an RMD could push you into a higher tax bracket.

That's where QCDs bring great benefits. *With QCDs, you can donate up to \$100,000 to charity and satisfy your RMD without increasing your total taxable income.* So, if you don't actually need income from your IRA in a given year, and you're already planning on making charitable contributions, you can make a QCD instead of a cash withdrawal from your IRA to fulfill your RMD obligation without increasing your tax liability. This leads to greater long-term tax benefits for you, as well as a greater impact for the charity or charities you're donating to!

Keeping your adjusted gross income (AGI) as low as you can is generally a good idea since AGI has wide ranging tax implications on Social Security, itemized deduction phaseouts, medical expenses, Medicare Part B and IRMAA surcharges, and more. Ultimately, taking a QCD leads to a lower AGI without requiring you to itemize deductions on your tax return.

One final consideration is that QCDs can actually reduce your RMD in future years by lowering your IRA balance, which is a variable in the IRS calculation for determining RMDs. And the great news is that while QCDs help minimize taxes associated with RMDs, one doesn't need to wait until age 73 to take advantage of gifting directly from an individual retirement account. An individual is qualified to start donating as early as age 70 1/2.



**For more information, scan the QR code** or go to [elwoodgoetz.com/blog/qualified-charitable-distributions](http://elwoodgoetz.com/blog/qualified-charitable-distributions). If you would like to talk more about how you may be able to use this or other charitable giving strategies, please contact Board member Melissa Barron at Elwood & Goetz: [melissa@elwoodgoetz.com](mailto:melissa@elwoodgoetz.com) or 706.548.1025.

*This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied on for, tax, legal or accounting advice. You should consult your own tax, legal and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.*



**Cover:** Look closely at our cover photo . . . these students REALLY want to show you something. They are excitedly pointing at their school crest on their polo shirts. These kids understand how special their education is and take pride in being students at St. Barthélémy. Their school spirit is off the charts and it is infectious!

CONTACT US

[bethlehemministry.org](http://bethlehemministry.org)  
[info@bethlehemministry.org](mailto:info@bethlehemministry.org)



(844) 424-8410

PO Box 48387, Athens GA 30604

### WAYS TO DONATE TO BETHLEHEM MINISTRY

- **MAIL A CHECK:** PO Box 48387, Athens, Ga 30604
- **FOR CREDIT CARD OR BANK DRAFT:**  
Go to our [website](http://elwoodgoetz.com) or scan the QR code ▶





## *Ways You Can Help*

### **DONATE**

- Monetary donations
- Stock donations
- In-kind donations (please contact us first to make sure the item is one we can use)
  - + Musical instruments for marching band
  - + Medical equipment
  - + Dental equipment
  - + Eyeglass frames
  - + Soccer balls/Basketballs and other basic (portable!) sports equipment

### **SPREAD THE WORD**

- Arrange for Bethlehem Ministry to make a presentation to a group you are a member of (or we can supply you with materials to make a presentation yourself!)
- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and like and share our posts

**VOLUNTEER** – we regularly have tasks that we need volunteers for or need to draw on expertise – please let us know if you are willing to help with:

- Translate French (or Haitian creole!) to English
- Donor correspondence
- Digital and hardcopy communications
- Help with a fundraising event
- Medical, Medical Laboratory, Dental, Pharmaceutical or Ophthalmologic Expertise
- Create reusable sanitary pad kits (we can provide you with a sample and instructions for sewing them)
- History – if you have photos or stories from trips, we would love to get those. We also need help digitizing our collection of old photos
- Don't happen to have those particular skills, but would like to help? Please let us know!

### **PRAY**

- Include the programs and Haiti in your prayers
- Ask your church, church prayer ministry and other church groups to do the same
- A lovely prayer for Haiti, written by a supporter and board member, Megan Currie, is on the reverse



## *A Prayer for Haiti*

God of Hope and Life,

We come to you with Haiti on our hearts.

We pray for all of Haiti, but specifically for Terrier Rouge.

We pray for the beautiful people within it,  
the ones we have encountered and the ones we've yet to meet.

We say aloud the needs of Haitians knowing You hear us, God: We pray  
for their safety, for their health, for their peace, for reconciliation, for  
rest, for sustainability, for empowerment, and for hope.

We pray for the community that they've invited us into with open arms.

We pray for the good and holy work Bethlehem Ministry is doing. We  
pray that You would bless the efforts and possibilities of this ministry.

We pray that Haitians remain on our minds and in our hearts every day.

Amen.

By Megan Currie