



President letter to supporters.

November 16, 2010

On behalf of the Board Members and our partners in the Dominican Republic, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for your continued support of life-changing programs in the Soto and Maria Auxiliadora communities. We are very excited about these new initiatives and wanted to share the good news with you! Most importantly, we believe that these programs reflect our values and goals as an organization. We value long-term, relational partnerships that result in sustainable programs that are initiated and coordinated by residents in the Soto and Maria Auxiliadora communities. Ultimately our hope is that these programs will lift children and families out of poverty, helping them to live with security, autonomy, and dignity.

TEARS School

The TEARS School in Maria Auxiliadora (near La Vega) continues to provide elementary education, preschool to Grade 5, for impoverished Dominican and Haitian children living in the barrio. This year, a Grade 5 class of girls was added into the program, in order to provide a safe environment for pre-adolescent girls who are at risk of abuse, early pregnancy and leaving school. The school focuses on literacy and excellence in education, thus providing a strong foundation for future education. Canadian donations of ~\$5,000/month currently cover 75% of the operating costs of the school and additional donations of \$2,000/month would ensure coverage for salaries and school supplies over the 2010/2011 school year.

Soto School

Although Soto Church is just a one room building, it has provided space and the services of three volunteer teachers to run the Soto School for Haitian children



from kindergarten to 4th grade. Last year the school had 36 children and in the fall of 2010 they enrolled 57 children. These children would normally have no access to schooling, but rather would be in the street and face a future of discrimination and unemployment. The objective is to teach the children the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics within a supportive environment.

Funds have been provided to purchase some basic school supplies and operating costs. Additional donations estimated at \$5,000 would enable the Soto School to purchase books, tables and other needed school supplies, as well as assist with funding the teachers.

Soto Water Project

Presently, the Soto community (located in the central region of the Dominican Republic) depends on shallow wells for their water supply and the nearby latrines often contaminate the water. This water project involves producing potable water from a deeper well located far enough away from contaminated ground water. The water would be sold to the community in 5 gallon jugs, much like what is being done successfully in the Maria Auxiliadora community. The project involves: purchasing the land, putting up a few small buildings for the equipment, bringing in electricity to the site, installing a well pump and piping to these buildings, purchasing, installing and operating the purification system including appropriate purified-water storage tanks, and setting up a water jug inventory and related disposables. The overall project will be broken into distinct phases, the first of which is to purchase the land at a cost of \$10,000. Timelines for implementation will depend on funding. At this time supporters have raised \$5,500 towards purchase of the land. The overall project is estimated to cost up to \$60,000.

These programs represent a long-term investment in the lives of children and families, helping them to live with dignity and have hope for the future. Your support continues to be so important to help them achieve their goals for their community. Donations can be made by cheque or online by going to the Donate page and clicking on CanadaHelps.org.

Thank you for your support of these partnership initiatives!

With appreciation,

Margot Underwood
President
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