



FLM HAITI

**FUNCTIONAL LITERACY MINISTRY OF HAITI
EDUCATIONAL & MEDICAL MISSION**

NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2021

Sue Robinson's Journeys

**More than 30 Trips to Haiti: Duffle Bags,
Medical Supplies, Lots of Love**

By B. Denise Hawkins

Winter is drifting into a welcomed spring. For the past two decades that's about the time that Sue Robinson, vice president of the FLM Haiti Board of Directors, would be transforming part of the first floor of her Washington, Pennsylvania, home into a supply station. Sprawled-out duffle bags, brimming with donated school and medical supplies, bound for Haiti took up most of that space.

About this time of year, Robinson would also be making last-minute calls to confirm that her group of faithful, K-12 teachers from the States was ready to head into the small, sparse classrooms at the MIPEDP School. Open minds, a bundle of energy, and a weeks' worth of lessons, games, and chalk, much of it packed in oversized zip-lock bags, are among the essentials Robinson tells them to bring along. Waiting for her volunteers would be Haitian educators eager to learn, share, and welcome them with praise songs and hugs.

Grounded

But so far, this year, she didn't need to pack or prep. Robinson, like many people, is grounded. The global COVID-19 pandemic and political strife in her beloved Haiti has halted travel to Haiti and her home base, Kay D' Esperans (House of Hope) Guesthouse, in the Haitian community of Thomassin. Since 2001, Haiti has been her destination – sometimes traveling up to two or three times a year on short-term mission trips to teach science and art at the MIPADEP school, oversee new building projects, provide support in the wake of the 2010 earthquake, counsel local Haitian women, welcome guests to the House of Hope, or lend a hand at the always packed and bustling House of David Community Health Center that's named in honor of her late husband, the Rev. David Robinson, who launched its construction in 2001.

"Since I started going to Haiti, I must have made more than 30 trips," says Robinson who was reluctant, at first, to even visit and give Haiti a first look. These days, she relies on a patchwork of stamped passports to recall years of mission work and saying yes, to making a difference in the lives of Haitians.



Sue Robinson (center, in pink jacket) at the FLM guesthouse with friends

Blessing Amid a Pandemic and Strife

Quiet, socially distant, and uneventful are the kinds of days that Robinson has known since the year-long pandemic hijacked everyone's normal. But on a recent day in March, Robinson is remembering her most recent trip to Haiti. It was in late February 2020, just as civil unrest in the country was brewing, yet again. Nearly all, but FLM's MIPEDP school had closed, and local businesses shuttered. Robinson learned that the worsening situation erupting across the city was taking an outsized toll on women and children. "That's when we were asked to come and provide stress management and to help ease some of the anxiety the children and women were experiencing," says Robinson, whose small FLM team used the wide, wrap-around, guesthouse porch to talk, to listen, to comfort, and to "teach them all kinds of stress management skills. We saw 20 women a day, 10 in the morning and 10 in the afternoon."

By now, it was the first week of March 2020. Amid escalating street protests, the country's health officials reported Haiti's first case of COVID-19. And within days, the World Health Organization declared the virus a global pandemic. Looking back, "It was really a critical time for the country," says Robinson whose mission had to be cut short. "As soon as I got home, I sent an urgent message to our translators and friends about COVID-19 and what we were learning about how contagious the virus was and the need for them to take precautions and be safe as possible. I asked them to please pass the word to everyone they knew."

(Continued on page 2)

For more information, please visit flmhaiti.org or call 412-784-0342

Sue Robinson's Journeys (Continued from from page 1)

Letters and Lifelines from Haiti

A year spent separated from “the people I’ve fallen in love with in Haiti has been very tough and one of the hardest things about living through this pandemic,” Robinson admits. Until she can safely return to volunteer in the country, the letters and photos she receives from her teachers and their students in Thomassin, are what keeps her connected. And each one—simply written, heartfelt, and hopeful—says Robinson, brighten her days. But as the coordinator of FLM Haiti’s Classroom Sponsorship Program, Robinson is eager to share those letters and photos with donors willing to provide much needed funds for hot meals of rice and beans, daily vitamins, first-aid kits school supplies for deserving students and hardworking teachers. ●



Preschool 3 at FLM Haiti’s school, one of the classrooms that shares letters with sponsors.

January 2021
Dear Sponsor,
I greet you in the precious name of Jesus. I am glad to join you this month in sharing with you the news of my class.
We say thank you to God because He allowed us to have a good end of the year. We had a few days off and we happily returned to school. The children are happy and they adapt very well with the class. The parents make a lot of effort for the materials, but if they had more toys at school the children would do better. We ask God to protect us in spite of the country’s problems so that the year will pass well.
We thank you already for the willingness you have to help the school. May God bless you. I wish you healthy and happy 2021.
Thank you.
Dieumene Beaubrun Joseph
Preschool 3

Making A Difference: Community IMPACT 2021

600 STUDENTS	being educated in our primary and secondary school
38 TEACHERS	providing them lessons toward a better life
10 INSTRUCTORS	with Excelsior Technical Institute, providing construction and cyber skills for the rebuilding of Haiti
14 MEDICAL STAFF	with the clinic—physicians, nurses, lab assistants, a pharmacist and a custodian—help to advance community health
6 STAFFERS	in the nursery, caring for the next generation
289 PATIENTS	adults and children—treated in January—staying well to care for their families

Maggie's Legacy

FLM Boston Continues in Tradition of its Founder

By Jamar Thrasher

In January 1971, Boston teacher Maggie Hill took a leave of absence and came to study at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. During the year she was there, she took a class on Christian education, where she met Bishop Leon Pamphile. And, as he tells it, Hill quickly "became a member of my family."



Maggie Hill

Of course, being a member of Pamphile's family means learning about Haiti. The bishop shared with Hill the challenging socioeconomic conditions there and the vision he had to make a difference. Not long after, Hill visited the island nation with Pamphile and his wife, Rozelle, and met Haitian families and attended church activities. It was the spark of how she initiated missionary activities in Haiti.

When Pamphile established FLM Haiti in January 1983, Hill, already enamored with the people and missionary work there, decided to invest in the ministry. She created what became known

as the FLM Boston, a satellite chapter of FLM Haiti.

FLM Boston serves as a Christian missionary organization, working in partnership with the Haitian people to provide health care, education, trade skills, and employment to Haitians.

In a 2018 interview, Hill, emphasized her love for teaching and serving Haiti: "I didn't study to be a missionary. I started to come to Haiti with Leon. He was my brother." In addition, the friendliness of the Haitians kept drawing her back, she said.

Before Hill passed away in 2020, she was an effervescent founding member and longtime chair of the chapter. She often found herself recruiting members from Jubilee Christian Church, where she worshipped in the Boston area.

"I was recruited at Jubilee," recalls Pastor Katani Sumner, vice president of FLM Boston, who praised Deacon Maggie Hill for her resilience and love of Haiti. Sumner, like many current members of FLM Boston met Hill through her consistent and strong love for God, most often through prayer meetings or through worship

Because of Hill's love for Haiti over the past 20 years, the Boston chapter blossomed. Over the past decade, Hill and her team consistently increased membership and every two years held banquets, which raised \$10,000 to support FLM's work.

Without Hill, the chapter leadership decided to temporarily suspend operations until the fall of 2020. Today, it is planning a full range of fund raising and other activities.

"We had to grieve the loss of our dear sister Maggie," said Suze DeJarnette, the current FLM Boston president, who governs a board of four others. "Each day is tough, but her spirit and legacy live on." ●



Suze DeJarnette

Coming Up

"Heart for Art," a virtual art show and sale to benefit FLM Haiti will feature the work of photographer and mixed media visual artist **Kenneth Neely and his sons, Jordan and Kenneth Davie**. The show and sale will run June 1–30, 2021. Proceeds of the virtual event (20 percent of all sales) will support FLM's education and health programs.

To view the artwork, visit: <https://www.kneelyimages.com/Artwork/Art/>

Or go to **Instagram @kennethneely**, or to the **Facebook page Artist Kenneth Neely**.

Once viewers decide on an artwork, please let the artist Neely know your purchase is intended to benefit FLM Haiti in order to insure proper accounting for the nonprofit. The artist will then confirm payment method and shipping. ●



Save the Date!

The FLM Haiti annual banquet is Friday evening, October 22, 2021, 6:30 p.m. at the Double Tree Hotel Monroeville. It will offer onsite and virtual engagement. More information soon.

Thank you to all donors. Your gifts make the difference!

FLM Haiti
1064 Premier Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PITTSBURGH, PA
PERMIT NO. 315

Time to Walk, Bike and Run

Let's move. Spring is coming and so is FLM Haiti's annual 5K Walk.

"Hope on the Move" will be a virtual and live event this year. It takes place on Saturday, May 15, 2021. Join FLM Haiti at Pittsburgh's Highland Park, the Memorial Grove shelter, where physical distancing protocols and safety measures will be observed, as participants walk, bike, or run, a distance of about 6,000 steps or close to 3 miles.

Or, walk, bike or run along with us in your own neighborhood by joining FLM on Zoom and/or Facebook Live. If you can't join on the day of the event, you can walk anytime until May 31, 2021, then turn in your donations.

Day of the event, a fun and lively warm-up will be led by Roland Ford, an exercise and fitness coach. He will help kick off the event with a series of exercises, dances and steps.

The warm-up begins at 9:30 a.m. (EST) and the walk begins at 10 a.m.

The registration fee is \$25 per person, and T-shirts are available for \$10 per person.

The H-O-P-E for Haiti 5K Walk benefits Haitians through health care, opportunity, partnership and education. The funds raised supports a technical center to provide trade skills, and employment to improve the quality of life in the Haiti communities that FLM serves. It also supports 70 adult literacy centers in more than 11 communities that provide reading, writing, and basic math skills to more than 2,000 individuals each year. More than 20,000 adults have been served.

It's time to get fit while helping others.

FLM Haiti's *Virtual & Live*
HOPE 2021
ON THE MOVE
5K For Haiti
WALK • BIKE • RUN
Date: SATURDAY MAY 15TH 2021
*Can't Make It Then? You have until May 31st to walk and turn in your donation! **

Location:
Highland Park Memorial Grove or Your Home

Join by Zoom & Facebook Live

Registration:
www.flmhaiti.org/walk
Only \$25.00

Warm up at 9:30 am EST
Walk starts at 10 am EST

Official T-Shirts Available!

Get fit while helping others.
FLM Haiti is a Pittsburgh-based charity that empowers Haitians to help themselves through education, healthcare, and hope.

1064 Premier Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
Call 412-784-0342
haitiflm@gmail.com
<http://www.flmhaiti.org>

FLM HAITI

CORNERSTONE

Cornerstone TV Network is a sponsor.

For more information and to register visit www.flmhaiti.org or call 412-784-0342.