

STARFYSH NEWS

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM STARFYSH.ORG

DECEMBER 2016

STARFYSH IS WORKING TO BRING HOLISTIC, SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION TO THE

ISLAND OF LA GONAVE, HAITI



HURRICANE MATTHEW



The eyes of the world were recently turned on Haiti for a few days again, when Hurricane Matthew ripped across this vulnerable land, leaving a much different devastation than did the earthquake of 2010. The earthquake killed immediately; Matthew's toll on human life will be more subtle and drawn out. The earthquake leveled large buildings. This hurricane left thousands of families with roofless homes. 7.0 earthquakes cause trees, gardens, and livestock to merely quiver. Category 4 hurricanes rip up precious trees, and destroy life-sustaining gardens and livestock. We continue to refer to Haiti's 2010 earthquake as "the earthquake." This hurricane had a name.

We are so thankful that La Gonave was spared the brunt of Hurricane Matthew's fury. There was a gratifying response to our Facebook appeal for prayer during this nervous time. In addition to the high winds, 25-40 inches of rain were predicted, which would have brought great devastation to villages across the island. Only 8 inches fell and we thank God for His protection. We are responding to a few scattered crisis situations (roofs blown away, fishing boats destroyed, etc.), especially on the far west side of the island, but we are thankful that we are not experiencing the terrible devastation we are seeing in other parts of Haiti. Please keep the people of southern Haiti in your prayers. They have suffered great loss and are still feeling the impact of this terrible storm.



CLEAN WATER

Yet another village received the gift of clean water in 2016.

Every single family in the village of Etroits (336 families) are now using biosand filters to purify their water, thanks in large part to a grant from Rotary Global Grants Initiative and a collaboration between Rotary clubs in Lowell, Michigan and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Starfysh. This grant project, which concluded in October, made it possible for a total of 751 homes on the island to have clean water for at least the next ten years. Who can estimate the positive impact this project will have made over that time period: fewer illnesses and deaths, fewer days of missed school and missed productive work. Thanks, Rotarians, for helping us make La Gonave a healthier place to live.



CHALLENGE GRANT RECEIVED

EXCITING NEWS!

We are excited to announce that Starfysh has just received an anonymous \$10,000 matching gift toward our effort to place life-saving water filters in every home on La Gonave. Every gift designated "water" between now and December 31st will be matched dollar for dollar! Whereas it typically costs us \$125 to place a filter in a home, now only \$62.50 gets the job done. Taking full advantage of this opportunity will allow us to provide clean water for 10 years to 160 families.



Celebration ribbons adorn the large Mapou tree in front of Makochon's new school.



Families from the mountain village of Makochon gathered recently to celebrate the opening of their new school.

Just 5 years ago, there had never been a school in this village. Today, 124 pre-school to 6th graders are enrolled. Last Spring, every 6th grader passed their national exams, and advanced on to their secondary level education down in Anse-a-Galets. Word from their 7th grade professors are that they are performing at the top of their classes.

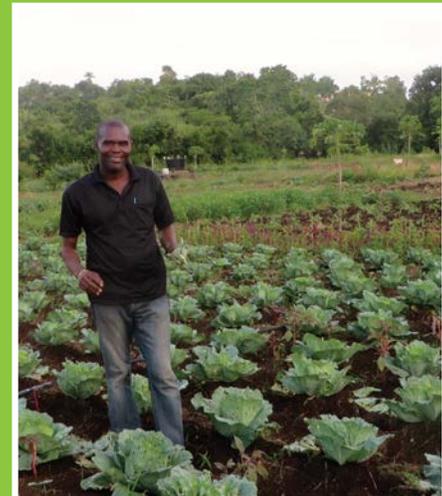
The new school dedication was highlighted by speeches from village leaders, student songs and presentations, and greetings from Starfysh Field Director, Bruce Kulfan, and Steve Edmondson. Following the ceremony, the celebration concluded with a village-wide feast.

Starfysh continues to pour into the school's teachers through ongoing training classes, and into the students through story-writing partnerships established with elementary schools here in the States. We are excited that this model of starting a school by investing in people first and buildings later has been a successful one. We have learned much in the process and will use the things we learned as we move on to help other villages start schools.



Good strides continue to be made toward our vision to see agriculture flourish on La Gonave.

Life Garden, Starfysh's agriculture research and demonstration farm, will soon host its first agriculture conference where farmers and students from all over the island will come and learn how to make the most out of their land. Our shaded tree nursery is sheltering thousands of young tree seedlings. The cement floor of the outdoor classroom will soon be poured. On-site office space is near completion. Thousands of moringa trees are maturing in several groves across the property. Rainwater is being harvested and stored in large cisterns. The entrance to the property has been beautified with signage, benches, palm trees, and flowers. And we are very pleased to announce that Life Garden has just expanded its operations to a second campus, a beautiful, fertile, 4-acre parcel up in the mountains. Who knows what island-wide impact will be realized as a result of the hundreds of thousands of tree seedlings that will be nurtured here?



Life Garden - Mountain Campus



Shade netting protects hundreds of young seedlings at Life Garden.



Future site of Life Garden, Mountain Campus. Pictured from left: Amy Kulfan, Landowner Pastor Nerva, Starfysh Director of Agriculture Paul Donn Jean, and Bruce Kulfan.

DEAR FRIENDS,



We set out on a journey a few years ago with an audacious notion that we could bring transformation to an island. Despite our small and simple beginnings, and the fact that its founder knew little about 3rd world development, God has seen fit to grow Starfysh. Since setting out, we have been building capacity. Capacity in physical-terms, capacity in human-terms. And, might I suggest, capacity in God-terms. Year by year, project by project, God is blessing us with increasing measures of HIS capacity. We are grateful and yet humbled by this increase in effectiveness and impact that God has seen fit to give us.

We've entered an exciting phase in our organization's young history. Whereas in the first several years we were able to make a difference in the lives of individuals and families, we're now starting to see whole villages positively impacted by the things we are doing. In our work to bring lasting change, we are actually starting to see the needle move.

This Starfysh News highlights some of our recent needle-moving reports. As much as we celebrate each success, we're even more excited by the thought that every small project success sets the stage for an even more significant project effort.

Thanks for your partnership in this effort to bring true, lasting transformation to La Gonave.

Blessings,

Steve Edmondson



THE KULFANS

After a time of on-field challenges and adjustments, Field Directors Bruce and Amy Kulfan and their family, are settling in to their role. They report that the first four months of their time on the island have been difficult. In addition to the expected culture/language adjustments, they have been challenged by unexpected truck/ATV breakdowns and, oh yes, a category 4 hurricane. Please pray for Bruce and Amy, and their girls, Brianna and Riley, as they continue to follow God on mission in one of the most challenging places in the world.



Already in their first few months, Field Directors, Bruce and Amy Kulfan and their girls, Riley and Brianna, have weathered a Cat. 4 hurricane. Props Kulfans! May God continue to bless and protect you in your new assignment on La Gonave.



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