

STARFYSH NEWS

NEWS FROM STARFYSH.ORG

WINTER 2023



STARFYSH IS WORKING TO BRING HOLISTIC, SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION TO THE ISLAND OF LA GONAVE, HAITI

End-of-Year President's Report

Dear Friends,

It's no secret that these are very dark days in Haiti's history as a free nation. Food is scarce. Roads are controlled by gangs posing threats at every turn. Robberies, murders, and kidnappings for ransom remain commonplace. Seaports are backed up with unreleased containers. Airline options for traveling in and out have been cut dramatically, as well as air travel options within the country. "We're just tired, you know?" a friend confided. I knew. I could tell.

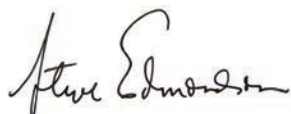
This is our backdrop. I just returned from visiting our work in Haiti (my only way of getting out to the island was on a United Nations Humanitarian Air Service helicopter) and I will tell you that, although Starfysh's work is among the rural poor, away from the mayhem on the mainland, our work is definitely impacted. Food prices have skyrocketed which means higher costs of meals at our schools. Corruption and backlogging at the seaports are holding up our shipping in of needed supplies. I think the most heart wrenching thing for me is the hunger. People are literally starving to death. The overall level of food insecurity for the entire island of La Gonave (some 100,000 people) is categorized as "emergency" level. Any worsening will drop them into the "famine" category.

Well-meaning people in my life will sometimes ask why, when it's so hard, do we continue to do this. Good question. My good answer: because we feel God has placed us here "for such a time as this." And until He releases us from this calling we must stay put, loving on and ministering to the precious people of La Gonave who had no choice in where they were born. The way I look at it, I had no choice in where I was born either. "The boundary lines," the psalmist puts it, "have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance." True that! To fully acknowledge that fact is to steward our "delightful inheritances" well.

The pictures on the following pages are fresh. I took them personally just weeks ago in order to show you the real-life impact that you who are "stewarding your inheritances well" are having: kids in school and eating every day, abundant gardens, trees bearing fruit. Our vision is that the little, out-of-the-way island of La Gonave would be a light on a hill in Haiti. That she would gain a national reputation of how God can bless, despite impossible circumstances. With your help, we will continue to lean in to this vision.

So my ask is bold. Will you dig deep this year and invest with me in this vision? We are leaning hard in to 2024, and expecting great things as we advance our work on the island. We believe 2024 is going to be our most impactful year yet.

Thank you for your support and partnership, past and future! We can't do it without you!



Steve Edmondson

President, Starfysh

2022-23 Financials

Income	\$412,114.90
Administration & Fundraising	\$25,663.36
% Admin./Fundraising	6.2%

Starfysh's fully disclosed financial information can be viewed at:

- [IRS.gov \(EIN-1976856\)](https://www.irs.gov)
- [guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org)

Summer Teachers Conference

Despite challenges in our Stateside staff being able to physically attend, our annual teacher training conference was held in August. Sixty two teachers from our six schools traveled from various villages across the island down to Anse-a-Galets for five days of instructional learning, encouragement, and camaraderie. The week was highlighted by breakout sessions in Life Garden. Our annual teachers conference is always well received, teachers telling us that this is a big highlight of their year.



Starfysh's Schools

SCHOOL	VILLAGE LOCATION	# STUDENTS	DIRECTOR
College Noel Elmira	Anse-a-Galets	150	Genel No
Ecole des Affranchis	Sous Saline	89	Foglas Dessins
Merveilleuse Lumière de Makochon	Makochon	120	Joppe Juillet
Ecole d'Application Pédagogique	Nan Mango	160	Yrphise Bien Aime
Ecole Pikamebe	Pikamebe	135	Gerard Petit Frère
Ecole Source du Savoier	Trouligene	120	Jean Doubt Oceaux
Lekol Angle (English as 2nd Language)	Anse-a-Galets	36	Charles Eveny

New School for Pikamebe

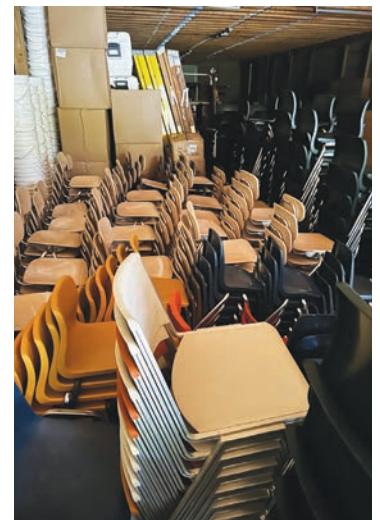
One of the highlights of 2023 was the completion of a new 2-building, 8-classroom school in the remote village of Pikamebe, located on the far west side of the island. Pikamebe's remote location and difficult mountain roads added complexity and time to completion but we were finally able to hand the keys over to school director, Pastor Gerard, in March. Built by Haitian hands!

Goals to improve our educational serve in 2024 are not to build or even add more schools but to improve the student classrooms in our existing schools. Books, maps, posters, furniture (desks, chairs, tables, etc.), new blackboards, fresh paint, etc., etc. If you have classroom supplies you would like to donate please contact us!



Supplies Staged for Shipment

Closed ports in Haiti have caused a back up in valuable supplies here at our warehouse in Michigan where we have many hundreds of classroom desks, tables, and chairs waiting to be shipped down to our schools. Not to mention a pick-up truck and supplies for our agriculture projects. We currently have three 40-foot containers' worth of supplies waiting to ship. When things stabilize and ports open back up in 2024, we will definitely need help packing containers. Reach out to us if you want to help.





Proud papaya farmer



(Top Right) Farmer's Conference, June 2023



(Above) Life Garden Tours

Agriculture

Malnutrition and hunger remain critical problems in Haiti. Half of Haiti's entire population suffers from hunger categorized as either "crisis" or "emergency." And, while we do feed kids in school, and have occasionally responded in kindness and concern to situations of immediate and severe hunger when we see it, Starfish's "long view" response is to resource families in increasing the productivity of their farms and gardens.

2023 proved to be a very productive year in our Life Garden initiatives. 135 pounds of vegetable seeds and 53,700 tree and vegetable seedlings were distributed to farmers across the island. Then with the good rains of this year's growing season, La Gonave's gardens came to life and produced better than most years. Life Garden's shade nursery footprint was expanded to 7,000 square feet, tripling our seedling production capacity, and our staff are already working feverishly to fill it. A new one-acre moringa grove was planted in the Spring and is already harvest ready, with trees now 10-12 feet tall. Three farmer conferences were conducted by our agronomist staff (May, June, September). Life Garden - WISH campus continues to mature out: trees, flowers, and grasses nurtured in our nursery and planted in our Life Garden sites continue to mature and are bearing fruits. Stands of bamboo provide nice shade. Coconut palms growing tall, some already bearing coconuts. We have become a popular field trip for local groups who tour the property and take home living souvenirs!

Convinced that, dollar-for-dollar, our investment in the family farm will have infinitely more nutritional impact than serving up plates of rice and beans, our 2024 agricultural goal is to double production and distribution of tree seedlings and vegetable seeds and ramp up moringa production as well.



Moringa, just six months from seed!



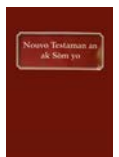
2-year old breadfruit tree



Shade nursery tripled to 7,000 square feet this year!

Bible Resources

Creole-language resources that teach Biblical truths are hard to come by. Creole Bibles are available but, at \$25 + shipping, are very expensive. A paperback Creole New Testament (\$4 + shipping) is much more affordable and we have been putting a lot of these in people's hands. We have recently discovered a great resource for both children and adults, 101 Favorite Stories of the Bible, a heavy hardbound book with pictures accompanying each story. We can get these for \$9 + shipping. Want to help with this facet of our ministry? Just attach a note with your gift.



Latrines

It is not surprising that there is a direct, causal relationship between the prevalence of open defecation and the incidence of waterborne illness, a leading cause of illness and death in Haiti. Countrywide only 28 percent of families have access to toilets, fewer than that in rural areas like La Gonave where it has been estimated that only 10 percent of homes have latrines.

Through a community health education model we spread the message to villages across the island of the health benefits of using toilets. The deal we work out with families, then, is that if they will dig a latrine pit to spec we will provide them with the concrete to place a cap and stool over it. They then enclose it with whatever materials they have on hand. This has been highly embraced and successful! In the past year: 126 household latrines have been built, an average of two per week. Our target for 2024 is 500 new household latrines, an average of more than one new latrine every day for the year. The five villages who have accomplished 100% latrine use are seeing virtually no incidence of diarrheal illness! Our long-term vision is that all 12,000 homes on La Gonave would have their own family latrine.

We are off to a good start! We currently have an entire village whose 400 families have embraced our message and taken up the challenge to dig pits. Their goal is for 100% of their homes to have latrines. Their goal.



\$30 covers the cost of cement to build one family latrine.



Clean Water

The good news is that 196 families received bio-sand water filters in 2023. The downside is that this has exhausted our supply of filters until such time as we can get more delivered, a challenge during port closures.



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To learn more about our work, our organization, or to support our projects with a donation, visit our website.

www.starfysh.org

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