


St. Vincent's Center, Haiti

From: elowell236@aol.com (elowell236@aol.com)

To: debhamer2001@yahoo.com

Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 06:58 AM EDT 

Thank you, Deb, for your email and for the prayers from St.James, Glastonbury. They are deeply appreciated AND make a difference!

The downtown Medical Center and Brace Shop are closed. They're quite close to the presidential palace (what's left of it), where gangs are very active. Everything around us has been vandalized, EXCEPT St. Vincent's. I suspect that our reputation for serving the poorest of the poor (and quite possibly, gang members and/or family members through the years) has saved us.

All schools in Port-au-Prince are closed. But, we have about 40 residents (students and adults) sheltering in place on the Santo 17 campus. Additionally, cooks, maids and nearby teachers are walking to work, so another 30-40. Teachers are sending lessons to absent students on WhatsApp. The attached brief video, which Père Duveaux took last Friday, shows that there is still gaiety amid the war. The young man who appears at the very end is our Art Teacher. Père Duveaux is at the School daily; he rides his bike (less conspicuous than a car). We talk with him every day.

We have potable water on campus (my parish made that gift two years ago) and Père Duveaux makes it available to the neighborhood for two-three hours each day. Right now, food is our most pressing need. It's mostly rice and beans; and we have about a three-week supply. Inflation over the past two years has been 100%.

We send funds every month and continue to pay the 122 salaries. (The afore-mentioned art teacher earns a munificent \$3,6000 a year, so our salaries are meagre.) Our employees are often the sole wage-earners for their extended families. We have our own bank account in Haiti and wire funds directly to it. We have not had any problems.

So, yes, we are functioning! Albeit not at the level we would like. We are also looking ahead - when can we re-open? What do we need to do to be prepared?

Several various donors (individuals and churches) have raised the funds for us to purchase solar power, so that we can have more regular electricity and not pay so much for fuel. The contract includes training for installation and maintenance, so that our older deaf students can help and perhaps also gain future employment. While it's not safe to transport the materials to campus now, we are, at least, planning to purchase them.

Prayer keeps us going, so, please, continue!

If you'd like to talk, my phone number is below.

Gratefully,
Elizabeth M.Lowell
SVC Trustee
603-526-2678