

# 20 YEARS OF LOVING AND GIVING – MESI ANPIL (THANK YOU VERY MUCH)!

In November 1996, Jim and Mary Ann Hubert and Dennis and Sue Petruzzi traveled to Haiti unsure of what they would experience or what the response to that experience might be. What they saw was devastating poverty as well as the strength and faith of the Haitian people. Having been a part of the St. Patrick's faith community for many years, they knew that our parish, which had already embraced the gospel message of compassion and justice for those less fortunate, could be at the heart of the response. And so in early 1997, with the blessing of then pastor Fr. Thomas Quinn, the Haiti Ministry was formed under the umbrella of the Human Needs Committee. The 20 year response of the parish has often moved us to tears of joy.



*Children in the Outreach to Haiti Scholarship Program*

Initially parish support took the form of financial contributions and collections of medical supplies, tooth paste and brushes and other needed goods. Religious education classes provided scholarship funds to students. Many parishioners have participated in what is now an annual fundraiser. The annual International Bazaar has showcased the creative work of Haitian artisans and purchased pieces adorn many homes in Farmington.

Several years ago, the parish initiated an annual, and generously supported, offertory collection to assist in the work of the ministry. Every dollar and every item collected has gone directly to support education, medical and nutrition programs administered by Outreach to Haiti ([www.outreachtohaiti.org](http://www.outreachtohaiti.org)) in the impoverished Christ Roi neighborhood of Port-au-Prince.

Financial support quickly evolved into substantial personal commitments. Other parishioners began to travel to Haiti and naturally became involved in the ministry. Most notably was the dental team lead by parishioners Dr. Ralph and Mary Lou Bozza and Dr. Dennis and Linda Gianoli who began conducting a much needed annual clinic. In addition to these skilled hands, other members of the parish visited Haiti each bringing the unique and personal gift of their presence to the Haitian people.



*Bob Slater and Marion Slater, Bev and Gene Montessor helping with the dental clinic*

Over 40 current and past members of the parish have made the journey. Some, like Ministry Team members Tom and Lynn Campbell and

Bob and Marion Slater, have been accompanied by their grown children on immersion trips making it a family experience.



*Dr. Ralph Bozza*

Travelers have come from a cross section of other St. Patrick's ministries including Parish Council, Liturgy, Social Justice, Pro-Life, Homefront and the Knights of Columbus. Visitors have also included alumnae of the Youth Group, Justice Club for Kids and Peer Ministry, some of whom have remained involved as volunteers in the mission. It has truly been a parish wide effort.



*Maggie Sposato entertaining school children*



*Triplets saved by the Outreach to Haiti Malnutrition Program*

We have been privileged to have seen lives saved and changed in Christ Roi. These include a set of triplets brought back to health from severe malnutrition and students, from families who could not have sent them to school, become medical doctors, engineers and mechanics. Programs and services that did not exist in 1997 are operational now. These include post-secondary scholarships, nutrition for malnourished infants and expectant mothers, home visits by health agents, vaccination programs, internships for graduates, a computer lab, and a new program that provides training and start-up capital for women starting small businesses.

Over the years, the Haiti Ministry has been faithfully supported by our pastors and resident priests who have encouraged the ministry to grow by assisting in the promotion of our fundraising events. Along with our clergy, it has been you, St. Patrick parishioners, who by your participation in our bake sales, raffles, craft sales, dinners and annual collections have kept the ministry alive. Your commitment to the poor has made such a positive difference in their lives -- Thank you! A huge thank you, also, to Father Thomas Barry for his ongoing concern and care for those in need.



*Monica Saintherve, medical student in the Outreach to Haiti Education Program, having delivered her first baby.*

With Grateful Hearts – the St. Patrick's Haiti Ministry Committee

Ralph and Mary Lou Bozza      Tom and Lynn Campbell      Jim and Mary Ann Hubert

Dennis and Sue Petruzzi      Bob and Marion Slater

**ATTN: An immersion trip will be offered from October 18th to October 25<sup>th</sup>. For information please contact Sue Petruzzi - [s.petruzzi@comcast.net](mailto:s.petruzzi@comcast.net) or 860-673-1514**