

Dr. Donald DeVito

Haitian Center for Inclusive Education



We are happy to report a successful first year of the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education. Over sixty children with and without special needs have received a quality education in an inclusive and innovative setting. Instruction has included academics, life skills, basic and adapted vocational skills all with certified Haitian teachers who have also received additional training in special education from our team. You can see all of our developments, video and pictures on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/hcie17/>



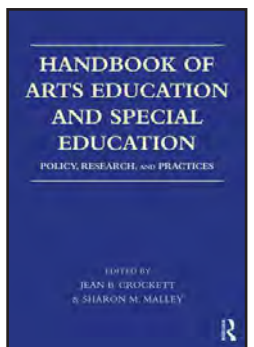
In the words of Gertrude Bien Aime, founder of the Notre Maison Orphanage for children with disabilities and co-founder of the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education:

“In 2017 we opened the Center for Inclusive Education with mostly the kids of the Notre Maison Orphanage and children in the community that participate at the school. The parents are very happy with our program and especially happy to see that we include children with disabilities in our school. This is something new to them and they are also very satisfied with the education we offer to the children. We are beginning with the registration for the 2nd year and we are already crowded. I think 1st we offer a good education; 2nd we offer a decent price that parents can afford. The intention of opening the Center was to offer a good education and also to provide the poor children, with and without disabilities, to get a good education.”

HCIE Team Members:

Included in the HCIE board that oversees the school are colleagues who have traveled to both Notre Maison Orphanage and the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education. Here is information on some of our school board members.

Dr. Donald DeVito: You can see my information on the Harvest International website. I am happy to announce that the path that led from my first visit to Haiti to meet Gertrude Bien Aime at the Notre Maison Orphanage (where one of my Florida students was adopted from) included meeting the dedicated professionals below and numerous developments that led to the founding of the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education and being involved with Harvest International. In fact, that story was just published with our HCIE school board as co-authors in the chapter of a book:



DeVito, D., Bien Aime, G., Ehrlie, H. (2017). An International Perspective on Arts Education and Special Education: Views from the Field. Handbook of Arts Education and Special Education. J.B. Crockett, & S.M. Malley (Eds.) New York: Routledge.



I will try to include this chapter in a future newsletter or if you are interested email me at Harvestinclusion@gmail.com for more information.

Gertrude Bien Aime: “I have been coordinating the Notre Maison Orphanage for years and before that I was a nun at Mother Theresa congregation. For the last 25 years I have kept this orphanage going and the children with disabilities fed and cared for through faith and outside visitors who come to stay at our orphanage. I left the convent in 1993 with American (Ruth Zimmermann). We opened the Notre Maison orphanage for the children with disabilities We take in the children from the abandonment room of the general hospital or on the street. In

2001 Ruth got sick, since then I am running the house with helpers. I do not know from one month to the next what we will have available. I do all that I can to take care of 52 children, and I get so much joy in serving them. People who stay at the facility who are doing projects in Haiti stay at the orphanage which is how we support ourselves, buy food for everyone and provide care for the children, and I get so much joy in serving them.”

The children are now going to school five days a week at the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education! A goal that Gertrude has had that is now a reality thanks to the support we are receiving through Harvest International.



Jamie Schumacher has over 25 years of experience in education and has taught 6th grade through 12 grade. Most of her years in the classroom were spent co-teaching with special-education teachers, and from them she learned many techniques to use to meet the needs of all learners. She earned her master’s degree in counseling in 1998 and worked for many years as middle-school counselor. The skills she learned as a counselor made her a stronger teacher when she returned to the classroom setting! She currently lives in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and serves as School Administrator at the Haiti Center for Inclusive Education.

Hannah Ehrli, ED.D. is a National Board Certified teacher of over eighteen years in Exceptional Education. She has served Exceptional Learners as a teacher, consultant and advocate. She is currently teaching and founded a unique Preschool program for students with Autism, while also teaching High School students as teacher aides. She received her Doctorate degree in Education at the University of Central Florida (2015) and was awarded the highest educational University honor, the Order of the Pegasus. She has worked extensively in Eastern Europe (Serbia) and Haiti, as well as an international speaker on Best Practices for Education of Special Needs children and the rights of Women and Girls.

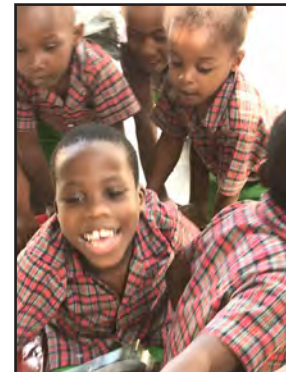


Currently she serves on the Board of the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education in Port Au Prince, Haiti, as well a Board Member for the Division of International Special Education Services (DISES) as the Early Childhood Educational Representative. She also serves as a foundational member of the Family Council for the Division of Early Childhood (DEC). She previously served as the Co-Chair for the Florida State Advisory Council for Exceptional Children and continues as a subcommittee chair on Preschool Education for the State of Florida. She also serves as an Ambassador for Clinton’s Global Initiative University and is an adjunct professor at the University of Central Florida.

In 2012 she received the National Teacher of the Year for the Council for Exceptional Children and was awarded a Millennium Maker from the United Nations Office of Academic Impact and Global Interactions Inc. in 2015. Thank you for assisting us in our groundbreaking first year!

We ask that you continue to support the Harvest International initiatives in this newsletter. The collaborative progress with the Haitian professionals being developed in Port-au-Prince has been inspiring.

God bless to everyone who has supported and participated in our endeavors and on to year 2!



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More students are attending HCFIE, we're up to about 65 kids now. I saw firsthand this week why we need to have an inclusive school. For many of our students this year, it is the first time they've been around people with disabilities. A couple of times, when one of our special-needs students walked by, the boys backed away as if frightened. Another day during recess, some of the boys didn't want to let one of our girls with Down's Syndrome play on the playground equipment with them. I insisted that she could, but they didn't look happy about it. Then, when she got down, they wiped off the seat she had been sitting on. It just about broke my heart to see 7-8 year olds acting this way because they had learned this attitude from somewhere. We have our work cut out for us, but at least the Center is a place where kids (and their parents) can learn to think differently about people with handicaps.



One little guy, Alvarez, has many emotional needs. He causes more trouble than anyone I know, and he has the reputation at home and at school for being the one causing trouble. I'm not sure I've ever heard him get any positive praise. So, last Friday after chapel I asked Alvarez whether he would "help" me memorize the Bible verse so that I could recite in this week at chapel. Every day we sat together up on the roof of the orphanage and worked on the verse. Friday in chapel, he "helped" me recite it, and he got positive praise! The smile on his face was priceless.

Another student who struggles, Kethia, sat next to me during Chapel. I had my hymnal and Bible with me, and as I was singing, I noticed her moving closer and closer to me—she wanted to read, too. Then, while the group was praying, Kethia took my Bible and started reading from it. She helped me find the memory verse for this week in the Bible, and when I asked her whether we should recite it together next week, she smiled and said yes!

- Jamie Schumacher (stay connect by following Jamie's blog - <http://whippet88.blogspot.com/>)

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The Haitian Center for Inclusive Education is thrilled to announce we have received a grant from the International Society for Music Education to develop inclusive community development through the arts in Port au Prince, Haiti. ISME is the premiere organization for music education with thousands of members in over 100 countries.

The name of the grant is:

ISME-NAMM Foundation Community Music Development Grant (Community Music)

The details:

Recipient: Donald DeVito and Gertrude Bien Aime

Title: “Vini Ansanm” Come Together: Haitian Inclusive Community Music Development

Project location: Haiti

Over the next two years the Haitian Center for Inclusive Education team will be developing community events that include opportunities for social engagement, music performance and education for the local community. Community music events will include local the children of the Notre Maison Orphanage with disabilities who attend the school each day. The funds will also help to pay for a full time music teacher at the school. The culminating goal is to generate a stronger sense of community for children with disabilities in the Port au Prince region.

More information can be found at www.isme.org. Specific grant details and photos will be coming in the next newsletter.

God bless,

Dr. Donald DeVito