

HOPE UNITED

May 2020

Dear Hope United Donors and Friends -

My prayer is that you and your family are well during these uncertain times in which we find ourselves. I am writing to share an update on the current situation in Haiti. Just as in the US, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly disrupted life in Haiti. While the number of reported cases in Haiti is very low, it is widely understood that this is more the result of a lack of testing than an accurate picture of reality. Haiti, a country with one doctor for every 4,300 residents, has almost no medical infrastructure, so the ability to carry out widespread testing is severely limited. The effects of the virus have had the largest impact on the economy, as businesses and schools have faced prolonged closure. Unlike many western nations, Haiti's government has not provided crisis assistance to its citizens, the majority of whom earn less than \$2.40 per day.

While Hope United may not be able to pass out stimulus checks or business loans to the community of La Mer Frappée, we have put every resource available to us into showing the love of Christ and assisting those in critical need during this trial. We continue to operate the clean water facility, which is the only source of free, clean water in the community. We continue to pay our 42 employees. We continue to feed our children by delivering supplies of rice, beans, and oil to each family's home. As additional food relief funds have been donated, our pastoral outreach team has relied on the relationships made through its door-to-door ministry to guide us to the families in the community in the most desperate need. And there *is* desperate need. Our delivery of rice and beans, portioned by the amount each student would have received at school, obviously does not last long when shared by an entire family. For every extra family that we have helped through crisis food relief donations, there are another twenty that we cannot.

I know it is only God's grace and your faithful generosity that have allowed this ministry to grow over the last three years. I also know these are challenging times for all of us. For these reasons, it is with the utmost humility that I ask the question: Can you do more? Can you sponsor a child, which provides us with the regular, budgeted income needed to pay our staff and operate the school feeding program? Can you make a donation to the crisis food relief fund, which provides additional funds to meet the emergency food relief needs of families in the school, church, and community? Every penny from this food relief fund goes directly to the purchase of food supplies distributed in the community. More information about giving through sponsorship or the crisis food relief fund can be found on our website, HopeUnitedHaiti.org.

We are including a picture of one of our students with each of these letters (sponsors received their sponsored student). I was fortunate enough to be on the team that took these pictures shortly before the pandemic. With the exception of a handful of scared or quizzical preschoolers, the vast majority of these children beam with the smile only found on carefree kids, temporarily unconcerned about the struggles they face outside our gates. For these 240 children, you have helped us build a refuge, a place where they feel loved and safe. For our 42 employees, you have created a way for them to earn a living. And for the community of La Mer Frappée, you have enabled us to be the beacon on the hill, sharing the hope of Christ to all who see it. And for that, from all my heart, thank you!

Matt Weber
President, Hope United