

The Haitian Education Support Team, HEST

The Haitian Education Support Team, HEST, is an all-volunteer board that works in partnership with the Catholic Bureau of Education, BDE, in the Diocese of Hinche, Haiti. The HEST is made up of individuals who are associated with parishes in the Diocese of Richmond with active Haiti twinning ministries that participate in supporting education in Haiti. Members meet monthly to determine how our ministry can support both the parishes in the Diocese of Richmond and the students, teachers and communities of the Central Plateau and the Diocese of Hinche. Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm usually at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Richmond. Some regular agenda items include Fundraising and Development including our annual Golf Tournament, Shalom Fund scholarships, Newsletters, Activities of the BDE in Hinche, Updates on Educational changes in Haiti, and Diocese of Richmond parish twinning.

A main focus of the HEST is to raise funds to support the work of the Catholic Bureau of Education, BDE in Hinche in their mission of improving the lives of the people of Haiti through access to quality Catholic Education. The HEST provides financial support totaling around \$30,000 a year to fund the operation of the BDE. The funds provided by the HEST are a result of the HEST fundraising programs and provide more than 85% of the budget for the BDE in Hinche yearly. The HEST relies on the support of individuals and parishes who understand the value of a quality Catholic education and the need for strong consistent leadership of the Bureau of Education to continue its financial support of the BDE and their great work. Although the HEST receives great administrative support from the Diocese of Richmond through the Office of Social Ministries, there is no financial support for the HEST or the BDE from the Diocese of Richmond, all funds provided to support the work of the BDE come from the fundraising efforts of the HEST board members.

History of the Haitian Education Support Team, HEST (formerly HEF)

The Haitian Education Support Team, currently a ministry of the Haiti Commission of the Diocese of Richmond Office of Social Ministries, was established in June 2002 as the Haitian Education Fund of the Office of Justice and Peace. In 1998 members of the Dioceses of Richmond Haiti twinning ministries began to discuss the possibility of a project in honor of the Jubilee Year of 2000 that would benefit education in the Diocese of Hinche. In 1999, the Bureau of Education, BDE, for the Diocese of Hinche developed a proposal for comprehensive support of schools, teachers, teacher training and school administration. Discussion of this proposal among members of the Richmond Diocese revealed strong support for on-going education initiatives in honor of the Jubilee Year of 2000 that would meet some of the critical needs identified by the Diocese of Hinche.

It became apparent that a new organization was needed within the Richmond Diocese to form and implement these Jubilee Education initiatives. The initial charter for this new organization, which was named the Haitian Education Fund, was developed and presented to the Bishop of Richmond. Bishop Sullivan approved this charter in January 2001 and after subsequent review and discussion with the Bishop of Hinche, the charter was amended and re-approved by the Bishop of Richmond in May of 2001. The Board of the

Haitian Education Fund was formed and the Fund came to life in June 2002. The Haitian Education Fund, HEF, became a component of the Office of Justice and Peace (OJP) of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond. Over the years some reorganization occurred in the Richmond Diocese and the HEF became known as the Haitian Education Support Team, HEST. The HEST continues its long partnership with the BDE Hinche and its mission to promote and sustain the education of teachers and children of Haiti.

The Bureau of Catholic Education, BDE, in Hinche

The Bureau of Education in Hinche, BDE, has a staff of four full-time supervisors, the Director, Mr. Richard Joseph, the Coordinator, Msgr. Jethro Noel, the Director of Pedagogy, Sister Maurice Marie Mamoune, and Advisors, Msgr. Leveque Bien-Aime and Sister Euamine Alcide. In addition there is a secretary, and two other support personnel who assist with security and maintenance. The BDE currently supervises the operation of more than 160 Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Hinche. The majority of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Hinche about 140, are primary schools, the remaining are secondary schools. The Diocese of Richmond has parishes involved in twinning relationships with 48 of these schools, 46 primary and 2 secondary schools. The HEST works to provide Richmond parishes with reports received from the BDE about the performance of the schools they are twinned with in Haiti. In the summer of 2016 during a visit from the BDE director Mr. Richard Joseph the HEST organized Haiti Education Summits in each of the three vicariates to explain these reports and recent changes in education to the Richmond twins and facilitate better communication between the schools and the Richmond twins.

Richard Joseph, the director and Msgr. Jethro Noel the Coordinator are responsible for the overall operations of the Bureau of Education including regular meetings with the state department of education, the MENFP, and the Catholic Bishops Education Commission, the CEEC to ensure that the schools in the Diocese of Hinche meet the required standards set forth by the government and the Catholic Church. Richard Joseph also works to find materials and financial support for training and resources to meet the needs of the teachers, students and principals in all schools.

Sister Mamoune is responsible for the planning and implementation of training for teachers, the organization of the pretest to prepare students for the state exams, and the coordination of curriculum for all schools in the Diocese of Hinche. She and the advisors work to provide the schools with the resources necessary to assist the teachers in lesson planning and provide the resources required to ensure students are properly prepared to succeed in school.

The supervisors work with the teachers and principals to strengthen the knowledge in subject matter for teachers without formal training or certification and sharpen the methods used in the classroom to improve the quality of education. The supervisors visit schools throughout the year visiting various classrooms to observe teaching methods and provide feedback and follow-up on training provided. The supervisors complete a performance observation of the lesson and record the progress teachers make in preparing lesson plans, using materials and to support the lesson, providing opportunities for

students to participate in the lesson by asking questions and working in small groups on exercises that support the skills taught in the lesson.

In addition the supervisors are available to provide assistance to the principals of the school with the completion of annual reports, techniques and resources to track and monitor class progress, and support for administrative task at the school. The supervisors also provide specialized training for teachers of a specific subject like Math or Science when they recognize that students are performing poorly on exams as a result of the lack of subject matter knowledge that teacher possess. Training for teachers is recommended by the supervisors and may take place either in the school during a weekend for shorter refresher courses or at a central location during school breaks and summer vacation for longer more detailed material.

The Shalom Fund Endowment

The endowment of the HEF/HEST, The Shalom Fund, honors Father Ronald J. Sequin, a priest of the Diocese of Richmond who served as a campus minister, a pastor, and one of the first priests of the diocese to visit Haiti. When he died on April 23, 1992, Father Ron asked that a fund be established in his memory, which would help expand and improve access to education for children in the Central Plateau region of Haiti. The Shalom Fund was started and later incorporated into the HEF as the endowment. In the initial stages of the HEF the endowment perpetuated the memory of Father Ron by underwriting efforts to improve access to elementary schools and teacher supervision and training. Today the Shalom Fund provides approximately 15 scholarships for students in the Diocese of Hinche to attend secondary school in one of the BDE selected Catholic secondary schools located in the diocese.

In 2016 the Shalom Fund provided 15 scholarships for students to attend St. Martin de Pores in Hinche, Holy Family in Cerca Carvajal, Sacred Heart in Papaye, St. Gabriel in Lascahobas and Msgr. Jean Baptiste in Thomonde as well as the Vocational school in Papaye. All decisions related to the selection of scholarship recipients are made in Haiti. The pastors recommend students for open scholarship slots and the selections of the applicants is made by the staff of the BDE in Hinche. The scholarship will cover the student's tuition and fees through the completion of secondary school if the student meets the academic requirements of the program. Because scholarships provide funding for the scholarship recipient through the completion of their secondary or vocational school education there are very limited new scholarship slots open each year and this number varies based on the number of students who graduated and the balance of the endowment fund available for distribution.

The Shalom Fund is an endowment and as such the funds used for scholarships are a set 4.5% of the value of the fund with a restriction that the corpus of the fund remains intact at all times to ensure on-going resources for educational opportunities in Haiti. The HEST continues to work to raise funds to expand this endowment resource and relies on the donations of parishes and individuals to support this ministry.

Recent Special Initiatives and Projects of the BDE Hinche

PECH, Program Educative Catholic Haiti, for the Diocese of Hinche.

The Catholic Schools Student Government Program, PECH, [Program Educative Catholic (Hinche)] is a project of the bishops' commission on education and has been started in all 170 schools in the Diocese of Hinche. The program establishes Student Governments, Parent Teacher Associations and Community Education Boards that work with the schools, students, and parents to improve education and take responsibility for the needs of the students and community.

Kellogg Teacher Training Program for the Diocese of Hinche.

The great work of the BDE and the strength of the staff were a valuable asset that allowed the Diocese of Hinche to be selected for the teacher training program that included approximately 350 teachers from schools throughout the Diocese of Hinche to receive training to become licensed teachers. This program, financed by the Kellogg Foundation, Raskob Foundation and others and administrated by Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program and CRS, was a multimillion-dollar project provided at no cost to the teachers, the schools or the Richmond parish twins. Richard continues to advocate for the needs of the students, teachers and community members of the Central Plateau and has just secured a partnership that will provide an early grade literacy program to many schools in the Diocese without cost to the people of the Diocese of Hinche or Richmond.

Kellogg/USAID Early Grade Literacy Program for the Diocese of Hinche.

The W.K. Foundation awarded a \$3.245 million grant to ACE Haiti to implement an early-grade literary project in 80 schools in Haiti's Central Plateau. The work will take place over three years, combining teacher training and continuous support with high quality, structured, culturally-relevant instructional materials for students in both Haitian Creole and French. W.K. Kellogg-supported schools will also include a rigorous research design to test the impact of volunteer-staffed summer reading camps to improve literacy outcomes for students. The schools include 40 Catholic schools, 30 Partners in Health schools, and 10 public schools.

Computer Labs for Schools

Computer labs have been set up in several schools at the request of the BDE and the school directors. Special training for teachers and students has been provided with assistance from Dr. Manoj Thomas, a technology professor from VCU, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Model School Network

Richard Joseph is currently working with the Kellogg Foundation, the Department of Education for the Government of Haiti, MENFP, Partners in Health, and Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education, ACE on the establishment of a Model School Network in the Diocese of Hinche. The project which has been in the planning stages for a few years would establish a program that incorporates the strengths of multiple partners to establish a system for top quality education that includes nutrition, health care, teacher training and educational materials.

Recent Special Initiatives and Projects of the Haitian Education Support Team

HEST Annual Golf Tournament

The major fundraising event of the Haitian Education Support Team for the past five years has been the annual golf tournament in Virginia Beach. The golf tournament organized by a subcommittee of the Haitian Education Support Team was a wonderful opportunity to spend the a beautiful day with good friends, a beautiful course and the opportunity to support the great work of the Bureau of Education in Haiti at the same time. Over the years parishes have supported the HEST golf tournament because they see the value in the work of the HEST to support teacher training and to promote communication regarding education between parishes here and our twins in Haiti.

Purchase of a new vehicle for the BDE Hinche in 2018

The Haitian Education Support Team has been working to raise funds to purchase a new vehicle for the BDE Hinche staff to ensure they can continue to do the vital work of ensuring quality Catholic Education in Haiti. With the support of many individuals and parishes throughout the Diocese of Richmond and beyond, the special contribution of a generous couple in the Virginia Beach area and the participation of the Diocese of Hinche we have reached our goal. Thank you to everyone who provided prayers and support.

Board Trip to Welcome Bishop Desinord

Two members of the Haitian Education Support Team traveled to Haiti to welcome Bishop Desinord Jean. During the trip Kathy Gross and Irene Saul met with the new bishop and discussed the partnership of the HEST and the BDE and Bishop Desinord's goals and plans for the Diocese of Hinche.

Dissemination of BDE Reports to Twin Parishes

Following the Haiti Education Summits, members of the HEST traveled to parishes to share more detailed reports about the schools they twin with that have been provided by the BDE. The HEST members provided copies of the reports with an explanation of the various reports and were available to answer any education related questions from the Haiti Committees.

Regional Haiti Education Summits

During Richard Joseph's visit to Virginia in 2016, the HEST held Regional Education Summits in each of the three vicariates. Information was provided on the work of the BDE, changes in Education, Teacher Certification Requirements, Student Leadership and much more. Richard Joseph gave a presentation on the current projects of the BDE and was available to answer questions from the crowd.

Inclusion of Teachers from La Gonave for Kellogg Teacher Training

The funding provided for the Teacher Training Program for the Diocese of Hinche by the Kellogg Foundation described in the BDE section was only for teachers in the Diocese of Hinche. The HEST worked with the BDE and other partners to provide an opportunity for the teachers fro La Gonave who are in schools that twin with parishes in Staunton and

Harrisonburg to be included in the training. The HEST arranged for the teachers to receive a reduction in the cost of their meals and lodging and the BDE provided the training and material free of cost to make it possible for the teachers to be included with little cost.

Board Trip with Computer Lab Installations

At the request of the BDE in Hinche the HEST put together a pilot program to assist twin partners in installing computer labs in schools in the Hinche Diocese. Members of the HEST traveled to Haiti and during the week assisted with the installation and training of teachers and students.

Additional Teacher Training

The HEST/HEF funded training for 51 teachers from 2005 through 2007 in 3-year program that was held at the Emmaus Center, the Diocese of Hinche Training Center, at a cost of over \$77,000. All funding for this training was provided by the HEST/HEF. In addition in the summer of 2012 the HEST arranged for the training of 70 teachers from Los Palis, Cabestor, Carrisade and Marmont. This training was paid for by the Richmond twin parishes and facilitated by the BDE.

Purchase of BDE Motorcycles for Supervisors

The HEST/HEF purchased three motorcycles for the BDE supervisors to use as transportation to the schools throughout the Diocese of Hinche in 2011. The funds for this purchase were raised through a matching grant provided by the Raskob Foundation and fundraising efforts of the HEST/HEF.