

Grace!

FALL 2003

AT WORK IN HAITI & THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Wisdom...

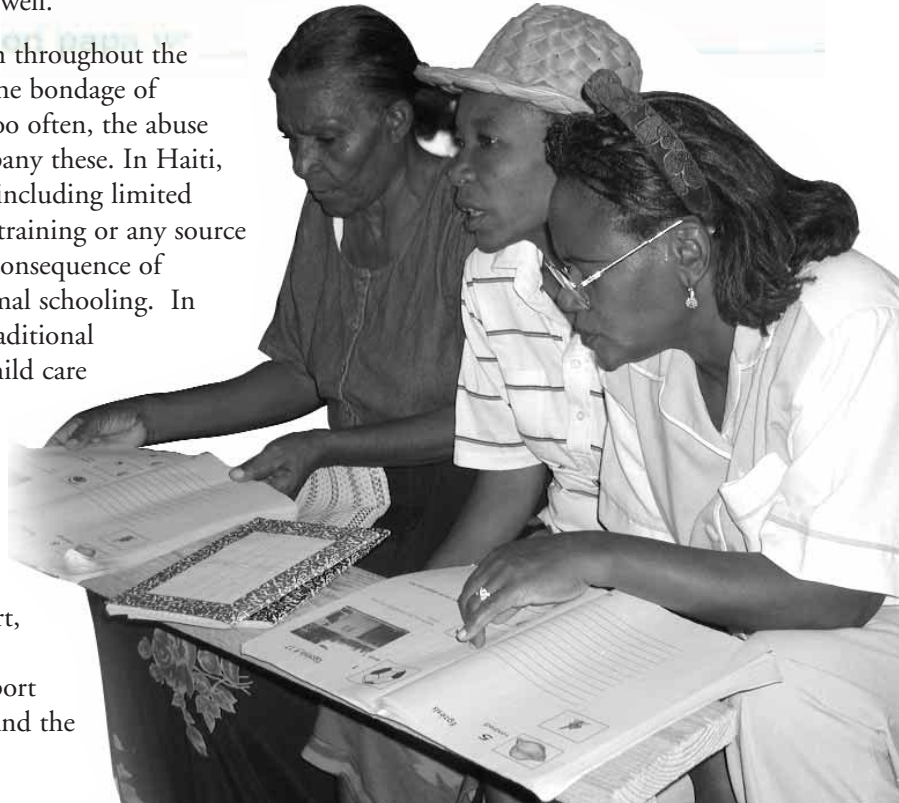
ICC Promotes Health through Literacy Training

Illiteracy, poverty and poor health are inextricably linked together in the country of Haiti. In the crowded slums around Grace Children's Hospital over 47% of adults cannot read or write - they are illiterate. Illiteracy rates are even more staggering in the rural sections of Northern Haiti. Illiteracy is part of the problem that entrenches men and women in destitution. It denies them the opportunity to get better paying jobs, afford safe, clean homes, and purchase decent clothing and daily food.

Many Haitians lack the means to be educated or to educate their children. The cost of tuition, uniforms and books is quite high, especially in a country where the average annual income is less than \$300 US per year. In addition, children are often needed at home to look after younger siblings so their parents can work. For families living in the rural countryside, schools are often too far away to attend.

It is a well-known fact that in the developing world there exists a strong correlation between the education level of women and the health of their children. Until 1979, it was generally believed that this correlation was due to the higher economic status of literate mothers, but more recent studies have suggested that education can have a direct positive impact on child health. Therefore, as an organization committed to the promotion of health for children, ICC intentionally seeks to meet the needs of women as well.

Tragically, millions of women throughout the world suffer and toil under the bondage of poverty, ignorance and, far too often, the abuse and humiliation that accompany these. In Haiti, women face incredible odds including limited access to employment, skills training or any source of steady income, often the consequence of illiteracy and inadequate formal schooling. In addition, women have the traditional responsibility of providing child care and tending the home, while at the same time, bearing responsibility for work in some sort of commercial activity (i.e. selling food or merchandise in the market place). In short, women bear the brunt of responsibility for family support without adequate provision and the means to do so. ►



Adult Literacy Rates (age 15 and over that can read and write)

Haiti 52.9%



Dominican Republic
84.7%



United States 97%

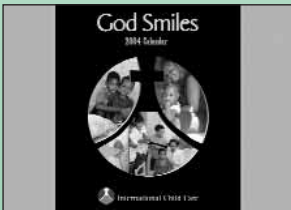


Canada 97%



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"...not being able to read is like being blind, but learning to read has brought light into our dark world."

- Adult Literacy Student

Recognizing that illiteracy condemns many to unemployment, hunger, sickness and fear, ICC began an adult literacy outreach in 1991 to supplement health activities in the poor slums surrounding Grace Children's Hospital and the Integrated Community Health Program (ICHP) areas in northern Haiti.

By providing literacy training as an extension of ICC's health work, lives are being transformed and empowered in ways that infuse a new sense of hope, self-esteem and ultimately sustainable means for women to better support themselves and their families.

When women are equipped with knowledge, they are empowered with both the head and the heart tools to generate positive change for themselves, their children and their communities. International Child Care's strategic dedication to literacy education is fundamental to the promotion of health for the children of Haiti. ■

REFLECTIONS

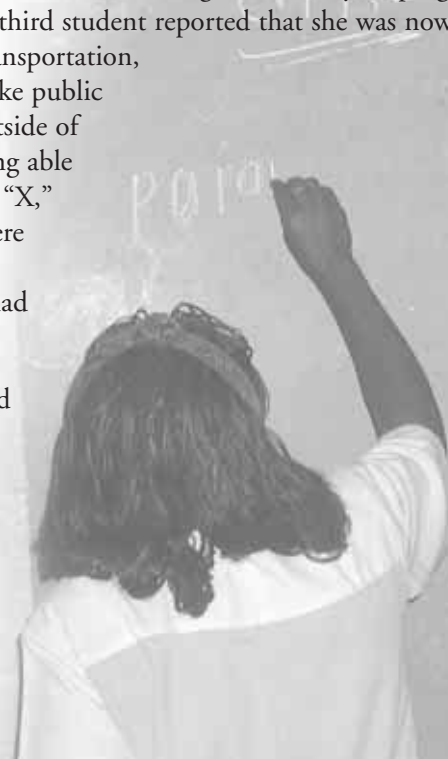
On a recent trip to Haiti I had the opportunity to attend an ICC adult literacy class in Cité Castro, a shantytown near Grace Children's Hospital. The class was held in a windowless 10' x 10' room filled with rickety wooden benches and a brown, worn chalk board hanging on the wall. Although it was over 90 degrees in the classroom that evening, all 20 of the students in attendance, ranging from age 20 to 64, quickly took their seats, eager to learn.

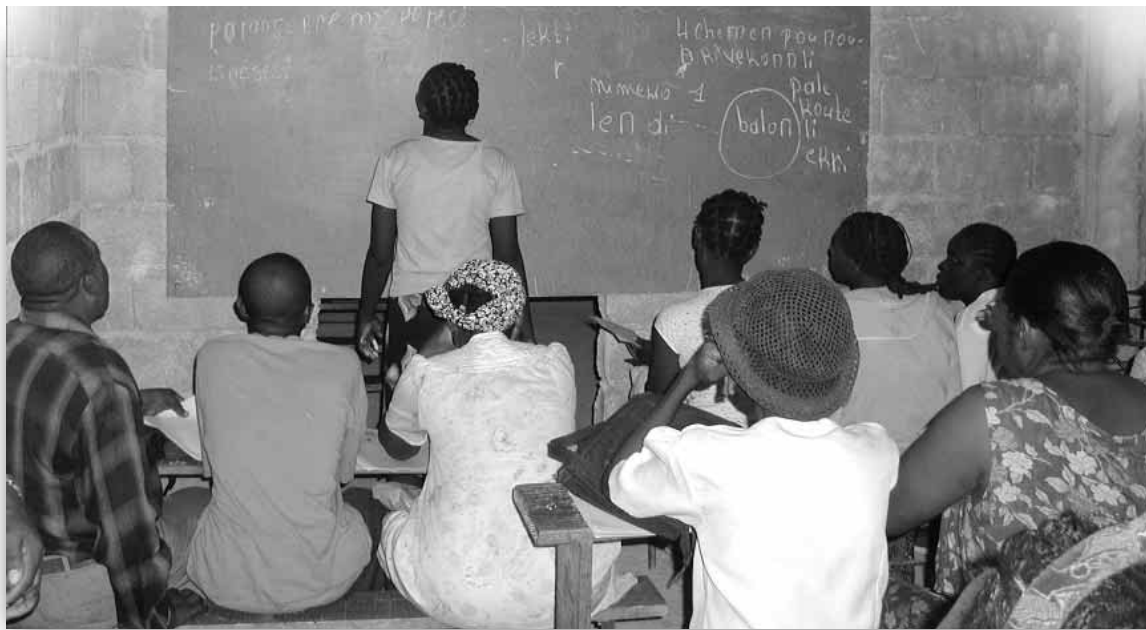
After opening with a song, Normil Thervious, the ICC trained teacher, had the students turn to page 67 in their workbooks and begin reading aloud together. It was heartening to watch the younger students assist the older students turn to the correct page. Next, the students practiced picture association and spelling, listening attentively as Normil taught them about the four ways to learn: listen, talk, read and write. In addition to literacy training, several other themes were presented during the class. Normil spoke to the class about respect of self, neighbors and the world. Protecting the environment was also a theme of the lesson.

At the end of the class I had the opportunity to ask the students how ICC's adult literacy program had impacted their lives. They were all very eager to share. One student shared that learning to read helped her manage her business as a vendor, selling produce, allowing her to better provide for her family. Literacy training had protected another student from being swindled by helping her keep track of expenditures she bought on credit. A third student reported that she was now able to know which Tap Tap, Haiti's mode of public transportation, she needed to take to get to her desired destination. Like public buses in North America, the route is printed on the outside of the vehicle. Many students in the class shared that being able to write their own signature, instead of just marking an "X," had meant a lot to them. Overall, all of the students were in agreement that they had been empowered through ICC's adult literacy training and that learning to read had improved the well-being of their families.

When the sunlight disappeared and it was too dark to read in the small, hot classroom, the students lit candles so they could continue to learn in the crowded, dark room. As one student shared... "not being able to read is like being blind, but learning to read has brought light into our dark world."

Rachel Mills
Development and Donor Relations Coordinator
International Child Care





**Wisdom is of
more value
than
foolishness,
just as light is
better than
darkness.**

(Ecclesiastes 2:13 NLT)

Adult Literacy Training offered in Urban Slums

As part of Grace Children's Hospital, International Child Care's Urban Community Health programs reach out into the slum areas around the hospital to provide an extensive array of health services to those who have so few resources. ICC partners with the community to promote health and wellness through education, health promotion, child health clinics, immunization programs, birth attendant training and adult literacy training.

International Child Care offers adult literacy training in 13 Urban Community Health project sites. Two adult literacy classes are offered in each Citè, or shantytown, twice per year. One teacher instructs both a Kreyol and French class simultaneously, as both are official languages in Haiti. Each class consists of 25 students. If there are fewer than 25 students enrolled the supervisor and teachers go door to door, or use a megaphone, to advertise the class throughout the Citè. The classes are held in adjoining rooms so that the teacher can instruct one class while the other is working on an assignment.

The ICC adult literacy classes meet for two hours, from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM, in the evenings. International Child Care partners with local private schools to use their buildings after hours. In Haiti, primary age children attend school in the mornings and high school students in the afternoons. Once the high school students are released the adult students are there and ready to learn.

Each literacy class is held for six months and students are required to take the Kreyol class first, as a prerequisite to the French class. At the completion of the course, the students are tested. If a student does not pass the test, they may retake the class until they do so. After completing both courses, students graduate from ICC's adult literacy program and can enroll in public school if they so desire.



Dupera Bien Aime

Dupera Bien Aime, the ICC Adult Literacy Supervisor for the Urban Community Health program, meets with the teachers every two months and regularly monitors the literacy classes. Each teacher is required to take a three month training course and attend a refresher course every six months in order to instruct in ICC's adult literacy program. International Child Care's teachers receive a small stipend of 750 Haitian gourds per month for their work (\$30 US).

ICC partners with Haiti's Ministry of Health (MSPP) in the adult literacy program and offers the classes free of charge. The MSPP provides free workbooks for the students, as well as teacher's manuals. ■



photo © Carol Hunsberger

Learning to Read in Northern Haiti

International Child Care's Integrated Community Health Programs (ICHP) reach thousands of people living in remote villages of northern Haiti. Through ICHP, International Child Care offers adult literacy training in two main areas, Grand Rivière du Nord and Bahun, where the socio-economic situation is especially dire. The literacy training is focused on nine communities in these geographic areas.

Individuals, taking part in other ICC Integrated Community Health activities, are often recruited for the adult literacy training. Students include trained Traditional Birth Attendants, women involved in micro-enterprise projects and mothers of infants who receive post-natal care through ICC sponsored clinics in the north.

In ICC's rural program sites, Health Committees are used to spread the word about upcoming literacy training classes. The Health Committees, fairly elected by their own communities, explain the benefits of being able to read and write and encourage individuals to attend. Then, once students have been recruited, ICC Health Promoters help facilitate the actual classes. The Health Promoters organize the students into classes of 25 each, and then locate meeting places big enough to accommodate each class. The community Health Committee is then required to provide a table, chalk board, chalk and other classroom supplies.

As with the urban adult literacy training, each teacher is trained by International Child Care and teaches two classes, one Kreyol and one French, per six month session. ICC teachers are required to produce a monthly summary of the progress their classes are making and report to their local Health Committee. The elected Health Committees supervise the teachers in their specific communities and then report to an ICC Literacy Coordinator who oversees the entire program in the north. ■

Answer to Prayer: Spiritual Director Named for International Child Care

We are excited to welcome Reverend Susan Kronbach to the ICC team. Susan received her M. Div. from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, is an ordained elder in the West Ohio Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and has served in Parish ministry for 11 years.

Susan began her nine-month volunteer term as Chaplain in September. This opportunity came as a result of many answered prayers. Susan first visited ICC and Grace Children's Hospital on a Mission Education Encounter and, like many of us, fell in love with the spirit, mission and heart of the people. Next, her husband, Professor Barry Mickey, was awarded the prestigious Fullbright Scholarship to teach at the university in Port-au-Prince. The Bishop in the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church then granted Susan a sabbatical to be served at International Child Care as Chaplain.

Susan says, "It is truly a blessing for me to have the privilege to be in ministry with the people of Haiti and the Dominican Republic through the work of International Child Care. As we walk together through this year, it is my continuing hope and prayer to be able to establish an ongoing ministry of spiritual direction, to complement the already existing ministries of care, which encompass both the physical and the spiritual." Susan is currently living in Port-au-Prince with her husband, Barry, and son, Patrick (15).



Rev. Susan Kronbach at Grace Children's Hospital

Become a Member of ICC's Prayer and Praise Team

There are two ways to partner through ICC's ministry of prayer. You can either view weekly prayer requests and praises by logging onto our web site at

www.intlchildcare.org and accessing the Prayer and Praise page under the Get Involved tab. Or, use the enclosed response form to indicate your email address to receive weekly Prayer and Praise information.

Grace!

Grace! is published quarterly for friends of International Child Care. ICC is a Christian health agency working in Haiti and the Dominican Republic to change conditions which make people sick, hungry, unemployed and afraid.

ICC depends on individuals, churches, and donor agencies for the financial means to serve. A response card and envelope are enclosed for your contributions. Your gift will be receipted for income tax purposes.

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Integrated Community Health (Haiti): 418847-3
Community Health Development Program (D.R.):
410215-6

Child to Child Health Promotion: 418242-1