

An Inter-denominational Mission Serving the People of LaGonave, Haiti since 1969



Through Christ's love, partnering with Haitians to build a sustainable community

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## Board Meetings Keep Mission on Track

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church hosted the WISH Board of Directors for 2 days of meetings April 22 and 23. It was productive to have both Robin and Beth Churchill with us to review their first eight months on the field and address concerns and ideas for the next year. The fall meeting will be in Nobelsville, IN Sept 30.



As board members tackled the agenda, the spouses met in prayer.

## WISH Evolves While Building a Sustainable Community

The Churchills have hosted several work teams who have helped with refrigeration, mechanics, electrical, construction, ministry, mentoring, and maintenance.

"Through Christ's Love", as our mission statement reflects, WISH has evolved over the years in our effort to build a sustainable community. The original plans for the Library and Resource Center did not include an Agricultural University. However, the Lord brought us partners to

expand our plans and provide a source for library operating funds.

Some years ago we began a project for "senior housing" located across from the hospital. The units sat empty as concerns for its operation stalled completion. It seems the Lord had other plans for those units. With the new Wesleyan University School of Nursing on the hospital compound, the nursing students were in need of housing. The former "Senior Housing" became the perfect location for the nursing students who do not live near Anse a Galets. Recent work teams painted the units and the WISH crew tiled the floors and community shower room. The units

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## March Mission Honored Legacy of Dr. Jack Heck

By Jane Howard

Dr. Jack Heck was a WISH board member for over 30 years and had been volunteering his dental services in Haiti every year since 1981 until his passing in August of 2014. I was fortunate to assist him on most of those trips and immediately knew that we must continue Jack's legacy of humanitarian service to the people of LaGonave Island.

Jack's wife, Mary Jo, and his daughter, Jennifer had each accompanied Jack on one of his early trips. Jack's son, Mike, was now determined to travel to LaGonave with his wife, Missy and their son, Joey, to experience the people and the culture that had meant so much to his father. Our dental hygienist, Debby Berns, and Gayle Page, who had been with us on Jack's last trip in March of 2014, were also committed to returning. However, we needed a dentist to work with us in the WISH dental clinic. We spread the word and prayed. Recently retired dentist, Dr. T.J. Horgan and his wife, Traci, were the answer to our prayers. And so it was that our team came together, supported by many people in our community and the local dental society who paid tribute to Jack by purchasing all our dental supplies for the trip.

Joey Heck, Jack's grandson, had always contributed items for Jack to deliver to Haitian children. We had also spoken to classes at Joey's school. When Joey learned about a special soccer ball that was developed for Third World countries and refugee camps through the organization, One World Play, he started an online campaign on their web site to acquire 20 of these exceptionally durable balls for our trip. It was such fun to have Joey deliver balls to some of the schools in the village and surrounding mountain areas and join the boys as they delighted in kicking their new balls.

As Joey reflected on his experience, he said he expected a lot of what he saw after seeing his grandpa's pictures, but he *"didn't expect all the animals just running free and all the kids without shoes. It opened my eyes to what is really out there. I feel there should be more people aware of it and doing something to help."* He was pleased that he got to see where his grandpa used to work in the dental clinic and meet some of the families who had a special relationship with Jack. Missy said they understood why Jack returned for so many years. *"He was like a father and grandfather figure to many of the poorest people. It was gratifying to see the library in use because that was something Jack had looked forward to for so long."*



Mike, Missy, Joey and Gayle painted the inside and outside of the recently improved feeding program room and the cooking structure where the beans and rice are prepared. The team had plenty of help with the painting from some of the children who do not go to school. Gayle said, *"The biggest highlight from my previous trip had been the friendships we made with the children on the saline. To my delight, we caught up with all but one child, now two years later, right where we'd left off. Everyone had matured a bit."* Joey said that *"even though they are in a country where they don't have much, they're still somewhat the same as the kids in America."*



Returning to the WISH dental clinic for the first time without Dr. Heck was highly emotional. I had shipped most of his dental equipment in a container so it was good to see that it had arrived safely and Jack would be pleased to have it used by future dental teams. His compressor allowed the clinic to be independent from the big depot compressor. The dental chairs and autoclave made Debby and I feel at home after all the years we'd used them in Michigan. This was Dr. Horgan's first dental mission experience. He was challenged by the in-



Jim Otis, Traci & Dr. TJ Horgan, Deb Berns, Jane Howard, Gayle Page, Missy, Joey and Mike Heck.



Dr. Donald assists Dr. Horgan with a challenging case.

ability to converse with his patients as he would at home, having to rely on a translator who didn't fully understand dentistry. Traci was a tremendous help in managing the patient flow from the gate and waiting area. As a former teacher, she knows how to handle groups and communicated well without speaking the same language. Our first week, we were also blessed to have Ginger Beckwith, a retired hygienist visiting at the Wesleyan guest house, assisting in the clinic. LaGonave dentist, Dr. Donald Joachim, also donated his services to treat patients the first week before returning to his job in a charity clinic in Port au Prince. Dr. Heck had mentored Donald in the WISH clinic when his dental school was destroyed in the earthquake in 2010 so his service also honored Jack's legacy.

Robin and Beth were hosting two teams from their home district in Canada while we were there. Those teams focused on youth ministry, installed a sound system in the new library building and painted the new housing for the nurses.

Jim Otis from Pennsylvania also spent a few days with us while he helped with diesel mechanics and other maintenance projects. We had the pleasure of hanging out with Jim as we took an excursion and explored the areas beyond the airstrip in the Mule ATV. **We even had former WISH director, Butch Alexander, drop by for an overnight visit.** What a surprise that was! Beth remarked that there had never been that many guests, using every bed at the mission.

Gayle remembers, *"God's hand was a blessing in every detail of the trip but He made it most apparent on the day of our departure.* As Beth and Robin waved us off from the wharf on LaGonave, Robin could see that we had rough seas beyond the harbor and shouted, *'Remember, this is all part of the adventure!'* He was not aware of the entire adventure that awaited us. We were all drenched in salt water after nearly two hours on the rough sea. Our eyes burned from the salt water and the blinding sun. Our boat captain focused on each wave as it rocked us side to side while he straddled the tiller and his crewman bailed water. Our spirits were still high when we arrived safely at the mainland wharf with enough time to change into dry clothes and relax while we waited for our transportation to the airport. The vehicle was a cattle truck used for transporting teams to the airport about 60 miles up the coastal highway. We had planned to arrive in plenty of time to shop at duty-free and have a relaxing lunch. ***But the adventure was not over.*** We bounced around on the wooden benches inside of the metal truck box with temperatures over 100 degrees. Our view of the street was through the metal slats on the side of the truck and the caged door on the back. Our skilled driver maneuvered this huge truck between sprawling street markets, motorcycles zipping alongside, donkeys with heavy loads and even a funeral procession. He changed routes many times in an effort to get us to the airport in time for our flight. **It seems a bridge had collapsed that morning, creating the worst traffic gridlock I had ever seen! After more than four hours of roasting in the cattle truck, we arrived at the airport only to be put on standby status if a seat was available.** We were finally able to board but other teams were split up on separate flights. Indeed, it was all 'part of the adventure' that brought us home feeling dirty, tired, and grateful for the Lord's protection and provisions."



Our skilled driver maneuvered the cattle truck through traffic gridlock and got us to the airport in the nick of time!

**These circumstances reminded us that our missionaries and Haitians face these challenges everyday. They have to be prepared for the unexpected and put their faith in the Lord to bring them through each 'adventure'.**



Haitians are learning the importance of dental cleanings so Debby had to remove years of tartar accumulation for most of her patients.

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[www.facebook/haitiwish](http://www.facebook/haitiwish)

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even have a comfortable shaded porch for relaxing and studying.

When Tony Wolf first came to LaGonave, he built pig barns to bring pigs back to the island after they were all killed as a result of disease. Those pig barns were later transformed into the WISH Sewing School which was successfully relocated and run by Haitian women. The building had since been used for VBS teams and small meetings. Years ago, teens from St. Louis built a basketball court on the property. Most recently, the old pig barn/sewing school had another transition make-over.



Dr. Janice Catrone, director of nursing school, welcomes student nurses to their new dorms.



The roof was replaced and walls were torn down to create larger meeting rooms. A young Haitian man is managing the facility for use by local youth groups and visiting work teams.



Youth gather at the center each Wednesday for inspiration and direction from young leaders.

## Let's not Forget the Mission Center

Even as we focus our resources on project development and maintenance, we cannot neglect the maintenance of our mission housing. The Churchill's house needs a new roof and the main house needs repair to concrete floors and walls. It is time to replace some of the plumbing fixtures. These are all items that would come from our *General Funds* account which is under-funded. **The mission center is the heart of WISH operations so it is essential that we maintain these structures to last for the next 50 years.**

**Our Solar Energy Task Force** has concluded that the non-technical materials such as fencing and other general construction materials for the equipment buildings will be acquired in Haiti and the project will use local labor as much as possible. **It is prudent that we get this phase of the solar project operating ASAP as our current generator has serious mechanical problems.** When this phase of the solar project is completed, we would be able to step down to a 40KW generator to handle the remainder of the load, realizing a big savings for diesel fuel.

**Your financial and prayer support is essential!**