



HHP 2007

Introduction

The Hastings-to-Haiti Partnership (HHP) sprung from contacts developed in the Bay Area Haitian Community by Professors Karen Musalo and Richard Boswell. Over the years, the primary aim of the HHP has been to support the Ecole Supérieure Catholique de Droit de Jérémie (ESCDROJ), a law school founded by Bishop Willy Romulus and Fr. Jomanas Eustache. ESCDROJ is committed to training a new generation of lawyers who will bolster the rule of law, and protect basic human rights in Haiti.

The HHP aims to send a delegation of students and professors to Haiti each year. In 2006, civil unrest prevented our trip. But elections in 2006 have led to a period of relative stability in Haiti, and a group of students and professors spent Spring Break in Port-au-Prince and Jérémie. In addition to Professors Musalo and Boswell, we were joined by Professor Jan Jemison. The student delegation members were Rana Ansari, Joseph Azam, Blaine Bookey, Josh Friedman, Jens Iverson, Kaitlin Kalna, Laura Sanchez, David Takacs, Oscar Teran, and Asha Wilkerson. Our story follows...



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Friday March 9, 2007

After an uneventful red-eye flight to Miami and a quick turn around flight, we finally landed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. We made it to our temporary home at the Antwan Izmyer Center for Human Rights, which hosts delegations committed to social justice and which does social justice work in Port-au-Prince, and took a couple hours to relax and eat.

Around two, we loaded into our vans and headed over to meet with Mario Joseph at the office of Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (<http://www.ijdh.org/bureau.htm>; To contact the BAI, email avokahaiti@aol.com, or write to B.P. 19048, Port-au-Prince, Haiti). Mr. Joseph is one of the few lawyers working on the release of political prisoners. He gave an enlightening discussion of the political situation in Haiti. He discussed the plight of political prisoners, the situation with the United Nations, and the general condition of Haiti's judicial system. We had been scheduled to visit the National Penitentiary to see for ourselves, but they called our former translator Daniel Tillias to tell us that "the wrong person signed the form" and wouldn't let us in.

Next, Mario introduced us to a few leaders of Collectif Fanmi Prizouye Politik, which is a group of women who are wives of current or former political prisoners. There are twelve committee members and fifty members total. Every Tuesday the women, along with approximately 150 supporters, rally outside of a courthouse demanding the release of political prisoners. Along with demanding justice and release of the prisoners, they provide support to the prisoners in jail, since the prison conditions are horrible, and also to the families of the prisoners. Often the prisoner was the bread-winner of the family, and so the women try to collect financial and material support so the children can continue to go to school and have something to eat.

The women's vocal opposition to the injustice and corruption of the judicial system puts the women in danger. In fact, they had a video of a recent Tuesday protest that shows a woman being struck by the police. The women were very inspiring. The women can be contacted at: Avokahaiti@aol.com. Their members include:

- Secretary Kerline Abellard
642-92-60-460-87-17
- Fritz Joseph 479-0016
- Avrielle Pierre Louis 470-3263
- Amuslte Mayette
- Riespide Petion
- Yvon Atoine de Zap-Zap
430-96-64-602-50-36
- Mirlaine dit lipay
- Paul Remond

Later that night, Dr. Pierre Lovinsky, a renowned psychologist and activist, came over for dinner, and we discussed the current political situation in Haiti. He elaborated on the process by which a person comes into and maintains power in Haiti, and he shed some light on the controversy of the U.N.'s role in Haiti. In addition, he talked about the work his organization, the September 30th Foundation, is doing in Haiti. Overall, Dr. Lovinsky stressed the importance of coming to Haiti and witnessing the struggles that Haitians are facing.

Many of the people we met noted abuses that been ignored by international human rights groups, and that human rights work in Haiti can put activists at great risk. It was a great first day, and we all went to be excited to spend the next week being witnesses to the struggles that face Haiti and return to the U.S. to share what we saw and experienced.



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Saturday March 10, 2005

We began our first full day in Haiti by making friends with the neighborhood children. As we assembled in the front of the Visitation House in the morning we began to attract a small crowd of children. Some of the HHP'ers decided to go grab bottles of soda from the house and began pouring drinks for the kids; Professor Jan Jameson was able to get some of the toy donations that she had brought with her and pass them out to the eager children; Professor Richard Boswell entertained the children by taking portraits of them and then letting them view the results; and delegation members Rana Ansari and Kaitlin Kalna led some of the kids in an impromptu game of Simon-Says (conducted in French, nonetheless!)

After our fun with the neighborhood children we were off to the community organization headed by Anne Sosin. Anne is an American working in Haiti as a facilitator and advisor for grass-roots community organizations. At her office we were able to meet with a union of healthcare worker from the public health facilities of Port-au-Prince. The union workers talked to us about their working conditions and the goals of their union. We learned about the tremendous challenges facing these workers as they attempt to fulfill their mission of helping the sick. Some of the challenges they described included: monthly salaries of less than \$100, full time hospital workers not making enough to take care of their families or to send their children to school, a lack of basic medical equipment, and areas so unstable that sometimes workers must spend the night at the hospital because to walk home would be too unsafe. We listened to the story of these dedicated healthcare workers and we applauded their efforts to help sick Haitians while improving their own working and living conditions.

After the healthcare workers spoke to us about their efforts, delegation members Josh Friedman, Kaitlin Kalna and Teddy Miller gave a presentation to them on the structure of foreign aid with a specific focus on the activities of USAID in Haiti. This presentation was also our first chance to see our translator, Reagan Lolo, in action. He proved to be incredibly talented and was able to help the delegation members communicate their information to the healthcare workers. The presentation was a great success and opened up a great dialogue between members of the delegation and the healthcare workers.

After the U.S. A.I.D. presentation we were joined by the leaders of KOFAVIV, an organization made up of women who have suffered sexual or political violence. KOFAVIV is another group that works with Anne and it has successfully been able to advance and protect the human rights of women in Haiti. The group employs a network of community based human rights workers that work with women in the poorest neighborhoods of the capital. The community workers document cases of sexual or political violence, coordinate medical care for the victims, provide psychological counseling, human rights education, and continuing social support. The organization is currently working with approximately 1,600 victims. KOFAVIV, like the healthcare workers union, is making a tremendous difference in the lives of so many Haitians. At the end of our meeting the members of KOFAVIV presented our delegation with a beautiful painting that we donated as a gift to Hastings upon our return. It was a memorable ending to our first day.



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Sunday March 11

Today, we were taken on an educational tour by our guide who showed us what are referred to as "The Stations of the Cross" These places mark significant human rights struggles in Haiti.

- St. Jean Bosco
 - This is the name of Aristide's church that was located in a poor neighborhood where he preached liberation theology.
 - Since this was the location where Aristide took a stand against human rights violations, the church was set on fire with people inside in order to combat the movement he started.
 - In the process a pregnant woman and her baby were slain with a machete and to this day, that is the image people keep in their minds when thinking of the coup.
 - People still come here to commemorate the important dates and events that occurred at this location.

- Bicentenaire
 - This is the ocean port that was used during the slave trade and it is symbolic because of the history of slavery in the country, and because so many people died in the ocean.
 - In 1993, many Haitians left from this port and ended up dying in the ocean in order to escape political persecution.
 - Today, this area is covered in trash, even though Aristide had put efforts into cleaning it up.

- U.S. Embassy
 - The U.S. has a long and tangled history with Haitian politics, and many hold the U.S. responsible for maintaining dictatorial Haitian regimes that did not support human rights, and for opposing popular regimes that attempted to sustain human rights, while opposing U.S. imperialism in the nation's affairs.
 - Currently there is a \$70 million project to build a new embassy although the Haitian Constitution forbids buying and building new land.

- Cathedral of Port au Prince
 - This is the place where Bishop Romelus, a preacher of liberation theology, was beaten to death after performing a mass for the political prisoners that died in the ocean.

- Makandai (Neg Mawon)
 - This is a statue of the first runaway slave in Haiti and marks the beginning of the slave revolt.



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- The legend is that when he was captured, he was impossible to kill because a voodoo spirit protected him. In order to kill him, he was burned to death.
- The statue was built under Duvalier in order to remind the youth of their history. The recorded history does not start with the slave revolt, but with a German man.

- Champs-de-Mars
 - This is a public park where come to hang out, wash clothes, and bathe.
 - Sometimes this park is used to organize rallies.

- Paroisse Sacre-Coeur
 - This is the church where Antwon Izmerly was killed after the 1991 coup.
 - Izmerly was an entrepreneur who owned a bakery and motivated people after Aristide left; the Center where we are staying is named in his army;
 - The army accidentally killed his younger brother by mistake but Ismarie did not let that scare him, instead he held a mass in honor of his brother.
 - The army killed Izmerly on his way out of the church after the mass because he ignored their death threats.

- Lafammi Selavi
 - The orphanage is actually not part of the Stations of the Cross. It is located in a building which housed Aristide's office, orphanage, school and radio station. It is a shelter for homeless children that Aristide established in 1986.
 - It was abandoned after Aristide left Haiti, but since 2004, there have been efforts by adults who lived there as children to get the program running again.
 - Aristide set up a youth radio station that was run entirely by children in the shelter.
 - Currently the shelter is struggling because it has no funding, no money, and no food. Here are some of the questions and answers from our meeting:
 - Q: How many boys do you want to provide for?
 - A: Right now there are 30, but we're not sure how many we can get.
 - Q: What kind of services do you want to provide?
 - A: Food, school, shelter, a cafeteria, and beds.
 - Q: How do you feed the children now? Is there any community help?
 - A: We do not get help from the community, but we have some friends who send us food from outside the country.
 - Q: Is the shelter just for boys? What ages are they?
 - A: The shelter is just for boys and they are ages 5-16.
 - Q: What are your most urgent needs?
 - A: Right now we need beds, sheets, soap, dishes, kitchen supplies and teaching tools.
 - The Delegation made a financial contribution to the orphanage, and discussed ways to maintain a partnership with the orphanage and the courageous men who are sustaining it and the boys who depend upon their care.



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Monday March 12

The Hastings to Haiti Partnership (HHP) delegation arrived in Jeremie, Haiti. Father Jomanas, the Director of ESCDROJ met the group at the Jeremie airport. After resting for about an hour Fr. Jomanas gave the HHP delegation a personal tour of Jeremie.

Our first stop was Fr. Jomanas' small church, which also serves as a grammar school for about 80 grammar school students. Fr. Jomanas' motivation to set up the school was that a large portion of poor children in Jeremie could not afford to go to school and receive a decent education. Our next stop was a medical clinic that Fr. Jomanas built near the small church. Fr. Jomanas reconstructed a storage room adjacent to the church and turned it into a medical clinic. The clinic had only 1 doctor, 3 nurses, one small examination room, and a porch that served as a waiting area. For some Jeremie residents this medical clinic is the only available medical facility available to them and was specifically created by Fr. Jomanas to serve Jeremie's most destitute residents. Lastly, Fr. Jomanas took the group to the construction site where he is building a new school. Fr. Jomanas felt that he needed to build a new school because the church was too small to hold so many students. Fr. Jomanas receives funding for the construction from donors in the United States and from the Catholic Church. The construction is expected to be done in August 2007. After the tour Fr. Jomanas took the group to the Centre d'Accueil in Jeremie, where the group stayed at for the rest of the week while in Haiti.

Fr. Jomanas then sat down with the group and introduced us to the law school, Ecole Superieure Catholique du Droit de Jeremie (ESCDROJ). ESCDROJ was opened in 1996 after Fr. Jomanas made the decision to reopen the school after it had been shut down. Since ESCDROJ reopened, 150 law students have graduated. Many important Haitians have visited ESCDROJ. President Preval visited the ESCDROJ when he was the Prime Minister of Haiti, under President Aristide. Senators and Ministers of Justice have also visited the law school. When the Minister of Justice in Jeremie visited ESCDROJ, he was so impressed with this law school that he asked Fr. Jomanas to recruit law students to represent individuals who were facing criminal charges and did not have legal representation. Since then law students have represented about 22 individuals.

After discussing the history of the law school Fr. Jomanas gave a description of the structure of ESCDROJ. Once a student is enrolled at ESCDROJ, she or he must choose an area of concentration. Originally, only 5 females were enrolled but each year the enrollment of female students increases. The average age of a student is 25. Most of the students work during the day and attend law school at night. ESCDROJ advocates tolerance and it is attempting to assist in the development of democracy in Haiti.

Later that evening HHP delegates were introduced to the law students of ESCDROJ. Most students work full-time during the day in professions as teachers, police officers, nurses, businesspeople, etc. It was also the first evening of presentations. Teddy Miller, Kaitlin Kalna and Josh Friedman gave a presentation of international and developmental foreign aid. The ESCDROJ students were very interested in the subject matter, especially since foreign aid has such a huge impact on Haiti. The ESCDROJ students asked several questions on the subject matter and wanted more information and explanation of the United States' role in foreign aid.

The first night in Jeremie was a great and enlightening experience.



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Tuesday March 13, 2007

Over four years ago, the Hastings to Haiti Partnership established a computer lab for the law and nursing school located on the joint campus grounds. Every year we visit we have added more laptops, maintained the satellite internet connection, and trained staff and students on their use. Since that time, an association with the law school has been started with Seton Hall Law School, in New Jersey. Seton Hall also provides computers, printers, and books. This morning after breakfast, Professors Boswell, Musalo and several students went to campus to deliver several additional laptops and software packages that our group managed to get donated. The linux operating systems had mostly been replaced with Windows. A lot of work was required to install appropriate antivirus and office software and to train staff and students as to how to maintain both the hardware and software.

The law school, ESCDROJ, is an important force in the administration of justice in the Grand Anse province where it is located. The local judges and prosecutors are either graduates or teachers in the school. One of the former students, Gabrielle, is working at the Minustah human rights office in Jeremie. The law school provides this training to people in all walks of life, not just to a university-educated elite. Some of the students are government workers, teachers, and health care workers. They come to school at night, after the nursing school has ended, and learn about human rights and the law.

On this morning, a little before noon, all of us students headed to the beach. At the beach several students swim out to the location of a sunken submarine, others worked on translating their presentations and practiced run throughs of their presentation with our interpreter Reagan Lolo.

Later, in the afternoon, while we were waiting on the dirt road for our ride to come pick us up we sat around and had a chance to observe the daily life of Haitians before us; we saw many children in clean starched uniforms walking back the long distance home from school, two young boys across the road from us sifting through gravel on a construction site (which we learned was going to be a hotel—an entrepreneurial project funded by a wealthy Haitian expatriate of sorts), several MINUSTAH armored trucks drove past—some even stopped and parked and went down to the beach, several women rode by on or beside their mules transporting goods to and from town. At one point one village woman with her donkey strapped full of fruits stopped and sold the construction workers some citrus fruits, then continued along the way.

Then out from behind the bushes a few students heard some billy goats baahing away and wondered to whom they belonged. Next thing we knew, out of nowhere appeared a skinny youth (Wittlyn LaGuerre, Age 16). Speaking with an excellent English, Wittlyn began to engage a few of us in casual conversation. Things like name, age, where we came from, what we were doing, whether we knew “Andrew” or “Jerry”—his two American friends who apparently live in New York. When we asked where/how it is he spoke such excellent English he told us he had only been learning it for the past three years. He next proudly told us about how he bought several goats for \$100 and how he plans to raise more goats and sell them for a profit.

Our dialogue with Wittlyn was touched so many of the members of our delegation that we decided to invite Wittlyn to come visit us at ESCDROJ to watch one of our upcoming evenings’ presentations. We thought this was an especially good idea given Wittlyn fascination



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with America, the English language, education etc. Since the law school was about an hour's walk from Wittlyn's home and since Wittlyn was temporarily tied up tending to his goats and couldn't drive into town with us at that instant, we decided to give him enough Haitian gourds to be able pay for his roundtrip taxi fare into town and back home. He promised us he would come, and while he didn't end up making it to our presentation that night, he did keep his promise. In fact, he came the following night, and even brought his 19-year-old brother along.

For much the rest of the week we had many other meaningful interactions with Wittlyn. Much to our pleasant surprise, on the morning of our departure from Haiti, we arrived at the airport to find Wittlyn waiting with a heavy heart, sad to see us leave, but begging us to pray to God for him, that he could one day perhaps see us again, either us back in Haiti next March, or he in the U.S. Wittlyn was a special part of the meaningful memories from our trip to Haiti, and Jeremie in particular. Often Wittlyn's responses to questions --something that our Hastings delegation now affectionately uses in his memory--was "of course" or "but of course".

On this particular evening, our presentations at the law school included: Same Sex Marriage and Minorities in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and their status and treatment in the U.S. prison system.

First we began with Oscar Teran and David Takacs who spoke about the status of gay marriage in the U.S. and the struggle for equal legal rights for homosexual couples. The presenters covered how marriage laws work in the U.S., and provided quotes from the justices of the four states where same sex marriage has been adjudicated by the states' highest court. As we had been warned, the Haitian students at ESCDROJ were extremely reactive to the topic. It was interesting, to say the least, to see their reactions to concepts such as homosexual couples adopting children, or having the same civil liberty rights as heterosexual married couples. Some amongst them wondered aloud whether one solution for homosexuals in America might be for them to have their own state dedicated to them. Others wondered how children raised by homosexual couples would be affected psychologically, emotionally and developmentally and how it would affect the child's own sexual orientation preference. Our Hastings presenters answered these questions courageously, articulately, and most importantly respectfully. It was one of those instances where at some point we (Haitian and American law students) had to just accept the fact that we could not see eye to eye on the matter and would just need to agree to disagree, but our presenters still provided the necessary "education" on concepts of equality, inalienable human rights, and the dangers of segregation.

We ended the evening with Asha Wilkerson, Laura Sanchez and Rana Ansari who discussed the minority victims in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and on a related note, the minority victims of the U.S. prison/justice system.



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Wednesday March 13

Today we visited the local and regional courts in Jeremie. All the judges and prosecutors in both courts graduated from ESCDROJ.

Interview with Mr. Joseph Descharles, Chief Prosecutor; Mrs. Nedine Dinvil, Assistant Prosecutor/"Substitut"; Mr. Jean-Garry Lunday, Assistant Prosecutor/"Substitut"; Mr. Johel Dominique, Investigating Judge; and Mr. Frantz Drice, Investigating Judge, at Prosecutor's Office, Courthouse, Jeremie, Haiti, on Thursday, March 15, 2007.

Caseload:

- The most frequent cases involve rape, violence, and robbery.
- During the recent coup d'état, these types of cases increased.

Procedure:

- A case arrives on the Prosecutor's desk for analysis and then is sent to the Investigating Judge.
- If the Investigating Judge finds insufficient proof, the case is dropped.
- If the Investigating Judge amasses sufficient proof, the case is returned 7 months later to the Prosecutor for filing with the court.

Access to Justice:

- Haitian law requires criminal defendants to have legal representation. In order to ensure greater representation, law students may appear before the court in criminal cases but not in civil cases.
- Through a recently established program, the law school provides law students as court-appointed advocates for criminal defendants in the courts in Jeremie.

Rape & Domestic Violence:

- The incidence of rape cases has been increasing over the last decade.
- The causes of the recent increasing incidence in rape cases include:
 - A weak justice system that fails to deter criminal activity;
 - Insecure prisons (prison breaks are frequent);
 - The fact that most rapes are committed by someone living with the victim (e.g., husbands or other family members);
 - Increasing drug use, which causes a loss of inhibition;
 - The fact that judicial jurisdictions are too large, making access to courts and law enforcement prohibitive for rural residents; and
 - Corruption of law enforcement officials who regularly accept bribes from perpetrators.
- Under Haitian law, marriage entails 3 obligations for the couple:
 - Fidelity; Support and succor; and Residence under one roof.

Deterrence:

- The results of rape prosecutions are not communicated to the public through television or radio.



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- Measures to enhance deterrence of rape and other criminal offenses have only recently been implemented:
 - In 2005, courts began to publish their decrees in rape cases.
 - The courts now use public outreach seminars to disseminate their decisions.
 - The courts themselves, which are open to the public, also operate as public forums for communicating punishments.

Interview with Mr. François Finey, Justice of the Peace/"Juge Titulaire," Courthouse, Jeremie, Haiti, on Thursday, March 15, 2007.

Caseload:

- Court tries approximately 100 cases per month.
- When a case continues for over 5 months without progress, the judge may dismiss it.

Access to Justice:

- Only 5% of litigants have legal representation.
- Trials proceed despite lack of representation because "judges must judge cases as presented."
- Haitian Constitution provides that prisoners are to spend no more than 48 hours in jail before appearing in court. The actual average time for most prisoners is closer to 4 to 5 days.

Domestic Violence Disputes:

- Domestic violence is a minor infraction of the second degree, prosecuted under the general assault-and-battery code.
- Disputes are resolved by two-step process: Parties first come to the judge to ask for mediation, in which case the judge acts as pater familias or referee to reconcile the family. If the parties escalate the dispute, the judge may proceed with a formal trial and render a decision.
- After a complaint is made, the judge orders a medical evaluation for the victim. In terms of evidence, the victim's testimony is not sufficient. The law requires witness testimony, a positive medical evaluation, or actual evidence (e.g., bruising and other wounds).

Contract & Tort Disputes Against US Nationals:

- The law allows Haitians to bring contract and tort disputes against US nationals.
- Procedure requires decisions in such disputes to be rendered in a Haitian court and then filed with the Ministry of Justice, which finally forwards the decision to the US embassy.
- US nationals who commit wrongs against Haitians in Haiti can be excluded from reentry.

In the evening, Gabriela Paul, a student at ESCRODJ, gave a presentation on the situation of women's human rights in Haiti. Her presentation (in French) is available as a link on our website.

HHP delegation member Jens Iverson began a presentation for his group by talking about the meaning of "acquiescence" in international law, particularly as it applies to state policy on torture.



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Thursday March 15, 2007

Today was our last day in Jeremie. We walked from the Centre d'Accueil to the Haitian Health Foundation (HHF), one of the most successful and far-reaching public health programs in Haiti. Founded by Jeremiah Lowry, HHF has become of model of how community participation and relief tempered with development can lead to success in meeting even the most dire public health crises.

We were met at HHF by Bette Gebrian, PhD., who oversees HHF's operations in Jeremie. Bette, who is also a registered nurse, has been working at HHF for almost 20 years and gave a fascinating presentation on the history of HHF and the organization's mission.

HHF operates on a principle that is captured in a famous Haitian saying: it takes three rocks to hold the cooking pot. For HHF, the three rocks are the community, the providers, and donors. Following a "flipped Public Health model," HHF places people in the community first. In fact, 99% of the HHF workers are local. With regard to providers, HHF has forged strong partnerships with Cuban doctors, non-governmental organizations such as CARE, and American medical schools, including UConn, NYU, Temple, Michigan, and Johns Hopkins. One-third of the funding for the organization comes from US AID while a very large chunk of the funding comes from the Hilton foundation, which has worked with HHF from its creation.

Women and children are a focus for HHF. As such HHF, has been responsible for implementing all types of community education programs relating to family planning, safe pregnancy, nutrition, and disease prevention among some of the most vulnerable members of society. Realizing that men could not be left out of the equation, HHF also started a father's club to involve men in the health and well-being of their children.

All of these efforts have led to some astounding results. In 2007, HHF had registered and tracked the health of over 200,000 individuals and reduced the child mortality rate in its area by 50%.

In addition to the presentation by Bette, we also had the privilege of hearing from Roxanne Dimanche, a law student ESCRODJ. A copy of Roxanne's presentation is available on the HHP website. Roxanne spoke about the problems associated with motherhood in Haiti. Specifically, Roxanne discussed how pervasiveness of maternal mortality and how this was, in her opinion, an indicator of the difference between men and women when it comes to access to social services. In a country where 93% of births take place in at home and barely 24% of women are receive assistance during childbirth from qualified personnel, Roxanne's message was that women must not lose their own lives while giving life.

Casamir, another graduate of ESCRODJ, and a nurse at HHF, gave a presentation on his work in rural areas. He and another ESCRODJ graduate, who is a judge in Jeremie, travel on weekends (as far as 25 km. on donkey) and hold seminars for men and women who live together in situations akin to marriage, but lack the legal formalities of marriage. Unfortunately, this leaves women with no legal rights and no means of support should their men abandon them. Legal rights are meaningless if women and their children are starving and cannot take advantage of them; and women's health cannot be advanced without access to legal rights. The ESCRODJ graduates thus help men and women understand what the law means for women's rights – including laws on domestic violence -- and helps the couples brainstorm win-win situations that



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advance the law and advance health. For example, wouldn't the man in the relationship be happier to know that their children will be taken care of should something happen to him? Might it be a good idea to put farm plots in the name of both members of the couple so that the woman can have a means of supporting her children?

After these presentations, we were given an extensive tour of the HHF facilities and were fortunate enough to meet with many individuals responsible for the day-to-day operations of the foundation. The experience left us all very impressed.

After our time at HHF, we held an informal meeting with Lolo, our good friend and translator. Lolo was with us from the moment we landed in Haiti and meeting him was one of the most inspiring aspects of our trip. Over the course of the week we learned of a community movement that Lolo and a group of his friends had started in his neighborhood. Known by the acronym of AVJ, the movement is structured horizontally and geared toward getting individuals to take initiative in improving education, and the quality of life in their community.

Lolo spoke about political movements in Haiti and how he hoped his would differ. In describing past movements he used a Haitian proverb that was particularly striking. People in these movements, he said, would often "run from the rain for fear of getting wet and end up jumping in a river." It seems like his movement has taken a different angle; we were all impressed and totally inspired by his passion and commitment. Lolo and several of his colleagues have expanded their program to include a school where they all teach. We hope to start a new partnership with Lolo and work with him and realizing the vision that he has worked so hard to develop.

Later that evening, we concluded our week of presentations with talks by Blaine and Joseph. Blaine discussed developments in U.S. Foreign policy with regard to the definition of torture and tactics used in the War on Terror. Joseph built on Blaine's lecture by discussing the US Supreme Court's decision this past summer in the Hamdan case. The Haitian law students were extremely responsive and engaged the group in some fairly intense discussions of U.S. Foreign Policy.

Finally, Prof. Jemison gave a talk on how Haitians (or anyone with access to the internet) can investigate charitable organizations' funding, thus understanding more about what their motivations are, who their backers are, and how that might influence the work they do in Haiti.

The night ended with some downtime for the delegation and its Haitian counterparts at the law school. All of the Haitian law students were recognized one by one for their participation in the week-long conference. We ended our day and our last night in Jeremie dancing and socializing with the new friends we had just made. It was, in so many ways, the trip of a lifetime for many of us.

We were deeply moved by the fighting spirit of the Haitian people. We were inspired by the many Haitians our group met with, who despite the great adversity they have faced in their own everyday lives, are working so hard and passionately to be a force for positive change within their country. We all have something to learn from the Haitian society and way of life, and a great deal to be grateful for in our own lives. The trip further confirmed our commitment to work for human rights in whatever contexts we find ourselves, and for ensuring that the U.S. and all violators of human rights are held accountable for atrocities that occur as a result of their actions.