

Mediator-Ascension Partnership

“Rebuild our Church in Haiti”. One year after the 2010 earthquake that killed approximately 300,000 people in Haiti, the call to arms came: “Rebuild our Church” - more specifically, rebuild the Cathedral in Port Au Prince. At the Mediator we started two fundraisers to do just that. With the “one heart, one love” t-shirts and “Buy-A-Brick” programs we raised \$2000 dollars to offer toward the rebuilding of the Cathedral in Port Au Prince.

As momentum grew about helping our own Episcopal brothers and sisters, Helen asked if Katy Watkins and Robert Covington would represent the Mediator and go to Haiti to look at the Haiti Partnership which pairs Episcopal Churches in the US with companion Episcopal Churches and schools in Haiti. The Mediator-Ascension Partnership grew out of this trip. Ascension Episcopal Church and school are located in Beraud, a small agrarian community near Les Cayes and approximately 125 miles from Port Au Prince. The classes for the school are held the sanctuary of the church. For the school year 2010-11 there were 56 students. The enrollment grew to 100 for the 2011-12 school year. The tuition for the students is \$25 US per year. There are four teachers at Beraud, each teaching two classes simultaneously. The teachers’ pay is \$50 US per month. Many of the students cannot afford to pay their tuition but none are turned away. The teachers often go months without pay.

Through the partnership we have helped with paying teachers’ salaries and offering 20 scholarships for students at Ascension. We are making a difference. We are trying to offer assistance - to lift up Beraud without creating dependency.

“The Dream”. This is a statement heard often in Haiti. Our dream, for Ascension, is a school. A permanent structure devoted to the education of the children of Beraud. We are working very hard to make this happen. The Drawdown, Jan. 27, 2011, is being dedicated toward this goal. Also, we have applied for a United Thank Offering grant to help offset building cost. And we are looking at other ways to help fund this project.

The interest in this project has grown. A group has volunteered to visit during 2012 to determine next step in this process and hope to have Vacation Bible School for the children at Ascension. We see this project as meeting part of our mission of sharing God’s unconditional love with each other and the larger society.