

Haiti Trip August 17-20

Wayne White and Ted Kruse traveled to Haiti to visit the Kay Papa Nou and Unity House in Port-au-Prince. They were welcomed with balloons, ribbon, and a “Welcome Ted and Wayne” sign as they entered.

The New House

David and Danny’s family and the girls moved into the house in early July. The house was renovated to meet their needs. Previously all the windows were precast cement louvers that made the house dark. The new windows allow an abundance of light into the home. The existing well was deepened. There is no public water system in Port Au Prince. Purchasing water for washing is no longer required. Drinking water is purchased but in the future they will filter their water to make it safe for drinking. The outside porches on the front and back were repaired. This allows for the separation of activities. Children can practice their instruments on the back porch without interfering with others who are studying in the front porch. Many minor repairs were done such as completing the floor tiles. In many rooms, tiles stopped short of the wall. Perhaps the original tile setter did not have a tile cutter?

A generous donor purchased a generator to supplement the erratic electric service in Haiti. We had to look for the generator because it made very little noise.

The home is a lovely, quality house that will meet their housing needs for many years. Owning a home increases the security for the children and removes a major worry about finding another home when a lease ends.

The home seems large but over twenty people are living there. The house can better accommodate children and young adults who will stay for awhile but not permanently.

Houses in Haiti are never finished. As long as a home is unfinished, no property taxes are assessed. A better kitchen is slowly being built with guest rooms above it.



David and Danny are grateful for the financial support from Govans and Roland Park Churches that allowed the home to be purchased and renovated.

The Beds

The mattresses had completely worn-out and the wood bunk beds had started to collapse. We went to C&K Hardware, a French-Haitian company, to buy metal bunk beds. Inside the store looked very much like Home Depot in the USA. The prices seem comparable to prices on



similar products in the USA. Usually prices are much higher in Haiti. Nearly everything was imported in the store and all products were priced in US dollars. More businesses are pricing in dollars to protect themselves from the falling value of the Haitian goud. Many businesses in Haiti say they will accept credit cards but there always is a problem with their machine or the bank telephone line because they do not want to pay the merchant fees. At C&K Hardware the credit card was accepted and the receipt was printed in less than one minute. The store did not even ask for any ID.

The 12 bunk beds and 24 mattresses were loaded into David's truck that also doubles as a bus. The truck drove back to the new home. The chaos of unloading and assembling beds began. Three groups were assembling the beds. The diagram instructions omitted the important detail that there was only one orientation that allowed the ladder to the upper bunk to be attached. Chaos was increasing. Then David said "stop," they prayed and sang a hymn. The result was the chaos returned to a manageable level.

New sheets were brought and they provided a nice finishing touch to the new beds.

Sunday Worship

Worship is the major focus of the homes. On this Sunday it was a four hour service. The band which now has drums, keyboard, woodwinds and brass played two songs. The bulk of the worship time was devoted to preaching. David spoke in some detail on four chapters from the Bible. One of the older boys read part of a verse and then David preached. This pattern of reading a verse and then preaching continued through all the chapters. Gael, one of the older girls, translated but the most help was locating all the chapters. The service was long so water was distributed and passed in the middle of the service. We learned from previous trips



that the folks in Haiti were a little disappointed their visitors from the USA did not sing or play a musical instrument. Wayne was alerted and brought his saxophone mouthpiece. He played one song that was well received.

The church has grown with people from the community in Canaan and was nearly full.

Bits and Pieces

Tap-taps the colorful shared taxis often have painted messages. This trip our favorite was a sign above the windshield that read “Batman” next line “ Only God.”

Wayne was taken by the traffic congestion but there was no sign of anger or road rage. Drivers remained calm and went with the flow. There are almost no traffic signals in Haiti and only a few police officers on traffic duty.



Summary

We travel to Haiti not to do work projects but to foster and maintain relationships. Speaking to them on services such as Whatsapp is not the same as being there. Joyce and I feel the folks at Kay Papa Nou and Unity House are part of our extended family. We are going more for a family visit rather than an inspection trip. We also go to be a bridge between the folks in Haiti and their supporters in the USA.

Kay Papa Nou and Unity House are supported by Govans and Roland Park Presbyterian Church and Neighbors Near and Far.