

## The PAZAPA Report 2013

The mission of PAZAPA is to provide treatment and education and foster development of children with disabilities and to integrate them into their community. PAZAPA was established in 1987 and has been registered as a Haitian NGO since December 1997. All services are offered free of charge including medical, educational, and social-economic services.

I want to take advantage of this report to thank all the volunteers who dedicate their time and passion to the children of PAZAPA. We enjoy your visits to the Center and hope to have you among us regularly!

A special thank you goes out to Global Fund for Children for their sustainability award, trainings and more specifically for allowing us to meet and learn more about their partners in Haiti!



### Orthopedic and Medical Services



PAZAPA continues to provide clinical evaluation, orthopedic, neurologic and plastic surgery, occupational and physical therapy, and rehabilitation for physically disabled children.

Local medical and international volunteers provide all treatment for the children with foot, knee and hip deformities. 20 surgical patients were treated over the course of

2013, in part by joint team effort lead by Dr. Fred McGlynn (Salva Vida) and Dr. Kevin Latz from Kansas City; other children were treated by Dr. Rozan, our local orthopedist.

PAZAPA provides, free of charge, medication to control epilepsy and infectious bone disease as prescribed by local and international volunteer physicians. The last neurology clinic was held by Dr. Chris Miller in February 2013 for 51 patients. A total of 59 children are on anti-seizure medication.

The nurse is also available for educating families and senior students about sexuality and STDs, hygiene, birth control, immunization, reducing endemic problems of malnutrition, parasitic infections, HIV, and diseases caused by unsanitary conditions.

### **Special Education**



The Special Education Program and the School for the Deaf activities continue to date under temporary shelters as the construction of the new building is on-going and is being financed by CBM, Plan Canada and Team Canada Healing Hands. Further funding is needed to build a cafeteria for the students, a kitchen, a storage room for the food, a room for the guardian, and ideally a multi-purpose meeting room (available to rent) which would be a great source of income.

The PAZAPA Center is currently providing special education and therapy to a total of 121 children with developmental/mental challenges from infancy to late teens. The school provides five levels of education: Early intervention (0-3 years) focuses on working with mothers and other caregivers to ensure that stimulation therapy and socialization techniques are learned and carried out in the home. 19 babies are currently benefitting from this service. The early school level (4-10 years) emphasizes motor, language and social skills while helping children develop confidence in their abilities. A kindergarten level sign language class is offered to 11 children with severe language or hearing impairments. The senior class continues the academic program, assisting those 10 students who can manage a regular school curriculum to be “mainstreamed” in an afternoon public school program. Senior students who have achieved the maximum academic level are taught life skills, cooking (for home and commercially), sewing, carpentry, and other skills either at the center or through an apprenticeship arrangement. Six hearing-impaired young girls are learning sewing at a local professional school.

Fourteen children with multiple, severe handicaps who are unable to attend the school are enrolled in the Home Visit Program and are seen in their own homes and community by PAZAPA teachers and visiting volunteers. Many of these children face poverty and hunger, which are major obstacles to their proper physical development. There is currently no funding available to continue the critical monthly dry food distribution.

The Special Education Program benefits from visits from Team Canada Healing Hands in the fall and spring. They spend a week at a time and provide speech/language therapy and physiotherapy support to the children at the Center and in the outreach locations. The PAZAPA staff also greatly benefit from TCHH's visit because it is always an opportunity to learn and increase their knowledge (physiotherapy for spinal cord injury patients, individualized speech and physiotherapy plans for student, etc.).

In April 2013, a second one-week in-service training was offered by special education staff from the Northville (Michigan) Public Schools. The PAZAPA teachers were trained on best practices and were assisted with planning, using donated school materials for lessons, implementing concepts learned, and behavior management training.

CASS donated funds for a Christmas party, which was held on December 21st. There were enough funds to buy presents for all students and staff members (who are most often overlooked). The children and their parents had a nice meal. There was a DJ, lots of music, and the kids put on a great show to end the year on a positive note.



With the funds donated by the Secretary of State for the Integration of disabled people, and a Carnival float offered by the Mayor of Jacmel, Pazapa was able to take part in the 2013 Carnival. Sargine was chosen as queen. In her beautiful princess dress, she did not miss one beat and danced for the entire length of the parade! Her Pazapa friends had their face painted and followed her throughout the streets of Jacmel!

### **School for the Deaf**

Currently 33 children attend the School for the Deaf from junior kindergarten to grade 6. The major challenge this year was with the Ministry of Education itself. The Hearing Impaired children in Grade 6 were refused a supervisor who knows sign language during the exams. Pazapa engaged in lobbying and advocacy with the help of the local media and the supervisor was approved. However, all three of

Pazapa students failed most likely because a specialized teacher was not chosen to do the corrections. This is an ongoing problem which was dealt with in the past but for some inexplicable reason, Pazapa is back at square one of its fight for integration and acceptance.

On a more positive note, the deaf children were able to participate, once again, in the Flag Day parade! This year they were joined by the senior students of the Special Education Program. This event has always had a positive impact on the community, the other participating schools as well as the local authorities!

### **Family Support Programs**

The staff at PAZAPA believes that the health and development of a child are closely related to the family's economic status. Often the mother, obliged to be the sole caregiver for a disabled child, is unable to work outside of home. Therefore, PAZAPA has facilitated small independent commercial ventures through business loans to families of PAZAPA children as well as to senior students. With the support of CBM, a total of 72 parents and graduates are currently benefiting from these loans. The microloans have been offered concurrently with workshops on developing economic skills, and long-term financial planning for all participants. Previous programs have included a solar fruit-drying project; courses in sewing, pattern-making, and cooking leading to a government recognized diploma; literacy and bookkeeping classes.

The preparation of goods such as peanut butter, jams, and other baked goods for sale has been stalled due to the construction on site. There is no space currently available to continue this project. The family project activities will resume once the new building is finished.

## Outreach

Through our outreach initiative, PAZAPA can, with the support of the community, offer solutions for children with disabilities. Solutions will vary depending on local resources and how isolated the areas are. PAZAPA now has a total of five outreach locations with 10 monitors and one coordinator.

The monitors have worked closely with the parent groups and have identified and registered those children in their locations in need of PAZAPA's intervention. Currently the Outreach Program has a total of 119 children registered in the Jacmel rural areas. PAZAPA recognizes that this is the tip of the iceberg and with more funding and a vehicle, would consider reaching out to other potential rural areas around Jacmel.



In the Fall of 2013, Pazapa welcomed Pierre Paul Exilus as a temporary Outreach Coordinator. This change in management has come with realizations that certain approaches must change in order for Outreach to thrive. Throughout the numerous parent and community meetings, home visits and training sessions already provided, it has become clear that changes should be brought to the selection criteria of Outreach monitors and the training required for them.

To re-energize the Outreach Program, Pazapa has held medical and triage clinics in outreach locations with the help of Dr. Fred McGlynn for Orthopedic cases and Team Canada Healing Hands for Speech and Rehabilitation candidates. In February of 2013, a Neurological clinic was held by Dr. Chris Miller, and 25 children from Outreach had checkups to control their epileptic seizures. Triage clinics were held in June 2013 to identify more candidates for surgery, seizure medication, birth control, etc.

Meetings and training sessions for the monitors have been held in all of the outreach communities. The monitors have been trained on topics such as leadership, awareness and advocacy. Due to this awareness, the parents of the disabled children have been motivated to support each other and organize activities in their respective communities; for example, starting small community projects incorporating both parents and challenged children to generate income (fruit and vegetable growing, goat farming, arts and crafts, etc.). PAZAPA strongly encourages these types of projects because disabled children who take part in income-generating projects are more appreciated and respected by their families and communities.

With the additional funding provided by CBM, 25 families from various Outreach locations have been included in the microloan project.

Radio Interviews were held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the challenges of disabled children in their communities. Another interview was held on April 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss the importance of accessibility and the integration of disabled people in society.

### **Conclusion**

PAZAPA has been a source of hope and help for disabled children and their families since 1987. It has operated continuously for 25 years through changes of government, provided special funds in the aftermath of devastating hurricanes and earthquakes, and kept its doors open during embargoes, political violence, international isolation, and neglect. In spite of—or perhaps because of—these challenges, PAZAPA is recognized by supporters and by members of the government as a successful model in Haiti.