

# Annual Report 2023

# OUR MISSION

Partners in Literacy Haiti enhances reading through Kreyòl books, technology, and training focused on children (birth to 8-year-olds), families, and teachers in community libraries, schools, and centers.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2023

### Duplan Grant & Update

The Duplan Village Library remains our only current library project in Haiti because it is somewhat geographically isolated from the country's widespread turmoil. The entire Duplan Methodist Village has been very excited about the library. The Village Administrator Pastor Edzaire Paul, whose family founded the village 200 years ago, would like to see the project proceed by constructing a larger building soon. He has even selected and is reserving a prime lot of land in the middle of the village. Progress in that direction must await the future, more secure conditions.

### NABU Recognition in Miami, Florida

In December Partners in Literacy Haiti was recognized by NABU as one of ten outstanding organizations working with the Haitian Creole language. PILH received 2,500 books from NABU and we sent 1,000 directly to the Duplin Community Library project in Haiti. We also delivered these books to other Haitian groups or organizations in the United States.

### Upstate South Carolina

Our second project, begun in 2023, has been in Upstate South Carolina where our nonprofit office is based. We are reaching out to the permanent Haitian diaspora here and to recent arrivals from the Biden Immigration Plan which allows citizens from Haiti, as a favored nation, a possible two-year residence. The Haitian Evangelical Wesleyan Church Book Center is still in the evolutionary stage but has already garnered great interest in the professional library, worldwide.

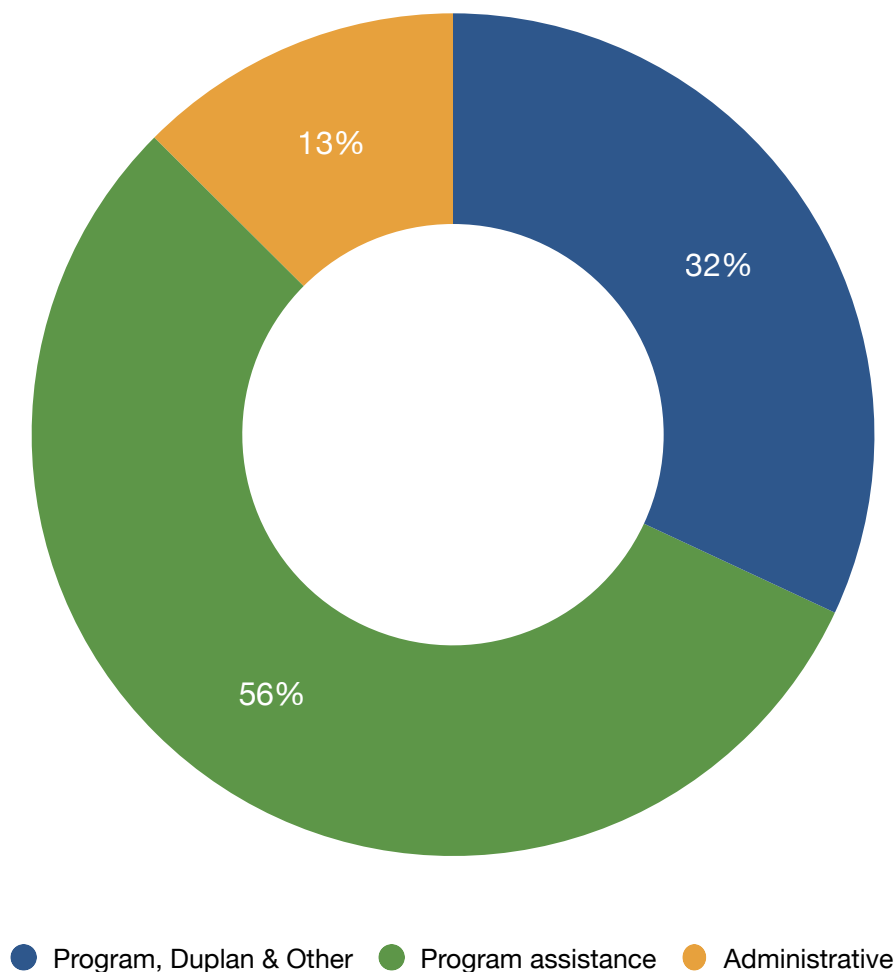
### Indiana Connections

PILH representatives Deacon Lee Ashton, Sanford Miller, and Dan Linginfelter, all residents of Indiana, have been communicating with both the Indianapolis Public Library and the Haitian Association of Indiana. These meetings have been to explore possible collaborations for expanded Haitian children's programs in the greater Indianapolis area. Indianapolis, Indiana has experienced a large expansion of Haitian families over the past few years. Next year PILH hopes to expand its partnerships with both organizations.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Unrest in Haiti has made it difficult for our 2023 budget to go as far as we would have wished. Extra expenses such as armed guard deliveries, librarian stipends, and the general lack of necessities in Haiti made 2023 a financial challenge. PILH expenditures exceeded our contribution in 2023. Our total disbursements for the calendar year were \$33,468.00, contributions only covered 2/3 of our costs. Our work for Haitian children has expanded for some relocated Haitians in the USA.

### Partners in Literacy Haiti's Financial Information for 2023





# A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

**A**s I complete my thirteenth year of work with literacy and libraries in Haiti, I look back with pride on all that we've accomplished with your help. Together we have impacted 100's of classrooms and 1000's of students. In 2021, we entered the nonprofit arena encouraged by many of you who felt we had been functioning as one for several years and believed that it was time for PILH to step into the spotlight. In two years we've sharpened our focus and moved steadily forward. With a mission unique and proudly in tandem with our Haitian collaborators.



Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara C. Mansbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Sara C. Mansbach  
Executive Director, PILH



# OUR UNIQUE MISSION...

✓ **How unique?** Our focus, on promoting Creole reading readiness, is a specialized one in the midst of multitudes of other Haitian education organizations. We uniquely serve children from birth to age 8. Reading readiness is foundational for children's success in learning to read. In a nutshell, we “preach” its overwhelming benefits —

- Improved Language Proficiency: By focusing on young children’s phonemic awareness and vocabulary development, students improve their oral language.
- Positive Attitude towards Reading: Exposure to diverse books and early literacy activities instills a love for reading in our students.
- Academic Success: Strong reading readiness skills form the foundation for future academic success, as reading is a fundamental skill in all subjects. This level of attention to early literacy learning is virtually unknown in Haiti.

✓ **How unique?** We are not working with just one village or just one school, but with an idea of systemic change for the country as a whole. Research tells us that we must work with Creole, (not French, English, or others, )as the language from birth— 1) that young children must practice before entering school, 2) that parents must nurture for vocabulary and phonemic “brain bank” building, and 3) that teachers must be required to use in pedagogy in the classroom. We know that learning to read in one’s Mother Tongue language is easiest and most effective. It’s the starting place for the 95% of the 10.5 million Haitians’ native language. We are crusaders for this.

✓ **How unique?** We know that books and access to free books is the cornerstone for a free and learned society. We are championing the idea of libraries and book centers. We are developing a model process of library creation *for the future*. In Haiti, there does not seem to be a single government agency advocating for libraries and literacy. Unlike the governments of many other developing nations in Africa and Asia which are actively seeking funding partners and investing themselves in local, regional, country networks, and in the case of Africa, even continental library networks, by comparison, libraries in Haiti networks of libraries are not even imagined, let alone coordinated. [The Foundation of Knowledge and Liberty’s (FOKAL) network of community libraries has diminished to 2 to 3 from a maximum of 18]. Countrywide, there are no common policies or administrative guidelines. The government of Haiti, currently preoccupied by multiple crises, can pay little attention to building, creating, or developing libraries.

PILH along with a core of far-sighted Haitian collaborators wants to refine the process *now* by which a strong network *might someday* be created. This trajectory will hopefully alter the future. We would like to end isolated and silo-functioning libraries. In the future, we wholeheartedly believe it would be possible for different institutions to coordinate together to advocate and gather strength, rather than seeming to prefer to compete or act in isolation. Why not a library system like those in USA states or counties for those who are committed to libraries by providing opportunities for professional development and communication and by advocating principles and issues related to librarianship and library service? A Haitian Library Alliance could be established by Haitian professionals for library staff and trustees, library worker students, libraries, and friends of libraries representing the full spectrum of librarianship in Haiti. [There are a few notable libraries and librarians that long for this.] It could become a legally chartered Haitian non-profit organization. This effort which would be Haitian-led, could be mentored by the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs in Champagne, Illinois, with PILH assistance.

✓ **How unique?** The resources and services that Book Centers and libraries are invaluable; they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society. They also help ensure an authentic record of knowledge created and accumulated by past generations.

This year, PILH embarked on an exciting new pilot program. With violence endangering our ability to travel to Haiti, we began serving Haitian-Americans and immigrant Haitian families with refugee status arriving in Upstate South Carolina, USA. Here we have begun a Children's Book Center in a Haitian church community hub. In the future, it will connect people to information and connect people to people. We hope to establish this program as a model and replicate it in other Haitian communities. These Book Center Hubs are safe havens for kids, providing Saturday and after-school homework help, games, and book clubs. They offer ESL, GED, and computer classes, allowing adults to upgrade their language skills or to become engaged in a digital world.

## Haitian institutions reward our uniqueness.

In 2023, we received two outstanding accolades from Haitian language experts at the highest levels.

- The Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen officially recognized our six Haitian Creole/French booklets as quality Creole publications & honored us by placing them in its library.
- Our PILH published alphabet chart, field-tested over 13 times, in numerous schools was added to the MIT-Ayiti's teaching platform for sharing of teaching materials in Haitian Creole ("Kreyòl") in all disciplines at all grade levels by noted linguistic Professor Michel DeGraff.

These are only some of our unique, highlighted efforts and plans. Please think of us as you think of selecting the charities you'll support this year. We need you to fund our efforts and volunteer with us to provide even greater impact to our programs in Haiti and in the USA. Literacy can contribute to personal fulfillment and national peace.

***Help us to reach many students, develop more libraries, and mentor a library alliance for a more literate Haiti today and tomorrow.***

***Ede nou rive jwenn anpil etidyan, devlope plis bibliyotèk, ak konseye yon alyans bibliyotèk pou yon Ayiti plis alfabetize jodi a ak demen.***





# REPORT ON OUR ACTIVITIES

## DUPLAN LIBRARY PROJECT AND HAITIAN PARTNERS

The Duplan Village Library our continuing, currently active library project in Haiti is fortunately geographically isolated from the country's widespread turmoil. This is our second year of collaboration with the village and the library has become much more modernized with solar panels. Chrome books, weeding of old materials, replacement of new books began the renovation for a second year.

Beverly Stephen continues to bring expertise as the Lead Library Worker. Prior to receiving any of our formal training, she taught herself library skills by searching the internet. Loving her job, her career goal is to be a librarian. A high school graduate, she previously attended (prior to the violence) a Port-au-Prince university studying Administrative Management. Due to the increased library use, in the late Spring 2023, Judeline Marechal was selected by the village administrator Rev. Edzaire Paul as the assistant for Beverly. A resident of Duplan and highly motivated, she cites her desire to improve young children's education as her workplace goal. The two women work very compatibly together.



In keeping with our emphasis on Creole, more Creole materials were purchased to expand the Duplan Library collection. In April 2023, Dr. Sara, our PILH Board Chair and a Reading Specialist flew to Florida where she was met by Brulan Jean Michel, our PILH Outreach Coordinator. The two spent a much of a day with Maude Hertelout and Frequeire Vilsant, the owners of Educavision, a foreign language publishing company in Pampano Beach known for its quantity of Haitian Creole titles. PILH purchased an encyclopedia set, and numerous history, geography, science, social science and other informational literature books. We also bought several notable posters.



Due to increasingly dangerous travel conditions, Brulan Jean Michel was unable to transport the 550+ books until July 4<sup>th</sup>. How appropriate that PILH, which believes that reading critically leads to freedom, arranged for

these books to arrive on our USA Independence Day! They were immediately unpacked and gradually catalogued. And soon, regularly used and enjoyed.

The entire Duplan Methodist Village has been very excited about the library. The Village Administrator Pastor Edzaire Paul, whose family founded the village 200 years ago, would like to see the project proceed by constructing a larger building soon. He has even selected and is reserving a prime lot of land in the middle of the village. Progress in that direction must await the future, more secure conditions.



PILH continues to mentor and attend closely to our ongoing library projects at both LaChapelle and Ravine Sèche. We speak regularly with the two sponsors of the libraries, Dottie Kelley and Michaëlle Saint Natus. She is also in touch with the mentor of the Des Chapelles Library, Jenifer Grant.

### **NABU RECOGNITION IN LITTLE HAITI, MIAMI**



In October, NABU, an award-winning global literacy program contacted and later selected PILH to receive a 1,000 free copies of 4 printed titles of its books. PILH was 1 of 10 Haitian literacy nonprofits based in the USA to be honored. Dr. Mansbach drove to Miami to claim the books. Because of our many Haitian partners, we were eventually given 1,500 extra books to share on the

condition that they could deliver the books safely in-country, in Haiti, prior to the end of January 2024. Different PILH partners were able to ship books through their air transport contracts before the end of 2023.

### **THE HAITIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTER, FOUNTAIN INN, SC, USA**

This project began in July 2023 with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between PILH and our partner, Rev. Dr. Patrick Gué of the First Haitian Evangelical Wesleyan Church, in the city of Fountain Inn, Greenville County, South Carolina. The President, Jean Pierre Gabrielle of Haitian Association of the Upstate's members are also very interested and involved in the pilot project.

The First Haitian Evangelical Wesleyan Church, in the city of Fountain Inn, Greenville County, South Carolina was started in 2006 and continues to flourish under the

leadership of Rev. Patrick Gué, PhD, its full-time pastor and an Affiliate Professor of Theology at Wesley Seminary. It celebrated its 15th year of religious services in November 2023 (with 250 members and guests in attendance). It is a 501(c)3 nonprofit offering social services purposely chosen and needed to provide to the church members and community beyond.

Founded in 2020 and currently applying for a 501(c)3, the Haitian-American Association of Upstate, SC. (HAAUSC), the mission of organization is to provide visibility, offer support, be a voice for, and network with agencies to serve the community. It hopes to become an agency to create many educational advancements for ALL Haitians in the Upstate, permanent residents and newcomers.

This project began in July 2023 with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between PILH and our partner, the First Haitian Evangelical Wesleyan Church, in the city of Fountain Inn, Greenville County, South Carolina.

The PILH-sponsored Haitian-American Children's Book Center prepares young Haitian children through bilingual early literacy for English language primary school success. Depending on their backgrounds, parents and children speak all or some Haitian Creole, along with some or mostly English, Portuguese, Spanish, or a greater mix. The Book Center houses Haitian Kreyòl language, bilingual Kreyòl-English, and English Haitian Heritage books to teach literacy and preserve the language intergenerationally. In Greenville, there are none of these books in any public library or bookstore, yet Haitian infants and young children learn best in Kreyòl, which 95% of all Haitians speak. The library has seriously outgrown its dedicated space and needs more room to expand to include many more books and families. Dr. Sara Mansbach collaborates with the all-HEW volunteer Librarian and Library Committee.

Here, with close collaboration from the Pastor, Dr. Patrick Gué, the project began with getting to know Haitian Church and Haitian Association of the Upstate members.



The first announcement of the Book Center Project took place on August 13th at a Cleveland Park Picnic Shelter at a Haitian Association of the Upstate sponsored cookout. The project overview to numerous Haitian families gathered about the overall concept of the Book Center and its location at the Haitian Church was received with enthusiasm.

On September 8<sup>th</sup> International Literacy Day and Book Center Project Kickoff held at First Baptist Church's Parlor,



this was an evening when we shared a potluck supper brought by all participants and a discussion of what the project would involve. We were assisted with childcare by St. Joseph's Interact Rotary Club while the parents held an ice-breaker and learned some statistics their important role in children's reading readiness. Both the First Baptist Community Engagement minister, Dr. Matt Rollins and Dr. Patrick Gué spoke.



On October 14<sup>th</sup>, we got to know each other better during a trip to the Unicorn Farm in Fountain Inn. The farm was decorated for Halloween. Children petted and rode tame donkeys with unicorn headgear and fed goats and chickens. A story time with the book Unicorn Dreams by Dyan Shelton was shared for fun and discussion. The ideas that books could be tied to and enrich family activities was introduced.

The 104th anniversary of Children's Book Week in the United States took place November 6–12<sup>th</sup>. The theme for 2023 was "Read Books. Spark Change," which was chosen to highlight the power of books and stories to inspire positive change in individuals, families, classrooms, and communities. This was a very appropriate theme for our collaboration, since the purpose of our evolving Children's Book Center is to help Haitian-American and new immigrant families make a transition to a better and new life in the Upstate of South Carolina. We celebrated by distributing a book to each child ages 1-10 years old after the church service at the Haitian Wesleyan Church.

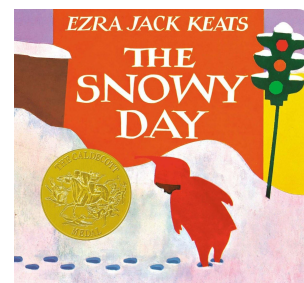


Christmas is a special time for sharing books. Most of the children ages 1 to 5 years old received a copy of *The Snowy Day* at the Haitian Evangelical Church Christmas Party. This Caldecott Award book is the New York Public Library's #1 book on the list of "Top Check Outs of All Time."

In 1962, a little boy named Peter put on his snowsuit and stepped out of his apartment house and into the hearts of millions of readers. Universal in its appeal, this story beautifully depicts a child's wonder at a new world of snow, and the hope of capturing and keeping that wonder forever. PILH chose this book and its accompanying red snow-suited African-American plush Peter doll to jumpstart cuddly parent-child reading and

emphasize seasonal joy. Older children each received a new multicultural diverse book published by Scholastic, Inc., provided in partnership with Greenville County First Steps.

In the year ahead, we intend to build a collection featuring these types of books: 1) Haitian Kreyòl language, 2) Bilingual dual Kreyòl-English and 3) Haitian heritage pride-building books in English. In South Carolina, there are none of these books in any public library or bookstore, yet young children learn best in their Mother Tongue Kreyòl which 95% of all Haitians speak. At the Children's Book Center, PILH will house books in a secure location and oversee a Haitian volunteer librarian and library committee operating the library and supervising the book cataloging and circulation. Supported by church members, we are developing together a program that addresses the age-appropriate reading needs of approximately 70 Haitian children birth through age 10.



## OUR 2023 LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Board Members

#### *Executive Director*

Sara C. Mansbach, DEd.

#### *Vice Executive Director*

Theila Schnauffer, (until July)

Marc Prou, PhD. (August-December)

#### *Secretary*

Lisa Bodenheimer

#### *Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair*

Sandford Miller

#### *Board Director/Communication Chair*

Dan Linginfelter

#### *Member at Large*

Dcn Lee H. Ashton

#### *Fundraising Co-chairs*

Linda Russ & Elaine Payne

### *Advisory Board members*

Michaëlle Saint Natus

Clara M. Chu, PhD.

Rev. Patrick Gué, PhD.

#### *Training/Outreach Coordinator*

Brulan Jean Michel

#### *Duplan Librarian's Trainer*

Debra Spear



*Donate Here*





**Board of Directors:** Chair, Dr. Sara Mansbach - Treasurer, Sanford Miller  
Secretary, Lisa Bodenheimer - Board Director, Dan Linginfelter

Partners in Literacy Haiti HQ | 202 Hope Street - Greenville, South Carolina 29601 USA  
Partners in Literacy Haiti Banking | P.O. Box 90057 - Indianapolis, IN 46290-0057  
+1.803.271.3602 | [haiti-literacy.org](http://haiti-literacy.org) | [administrator@haiti-literacy.com](mailto:administrator@haiti-literacy.com)

Federal EIN: 87-0904773 © 2024, *Partners in Literacy Haiti*