

The Need

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with an economy and environment battered by years of repressive politics, widespread corruption and mismanaged resources. As Haiti's infrastructure has suffered, so too have the Haitian people. Life expectancy at birth is 61 years, and nearly half the population over 15 is illiterate. Less than 60% of the population is employed, and many families live in such dire poverty that they cannot feed their children. With little to no social services available, many families must seek alternative care for their children.

On January 12, 2010, a massive earthquake plunged Haiti into further turmoil. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their homes, including thousands of children, many of whom either lost their families or whose families could no longer provide for their care. The earthquake also significantly damaged key infrastructure, which two years later remains in very poor condition. In October of 2010, a cholera outbreak rapidly spread through the makeshift tent cities that emerged in the aftermath of the quake, killing thousands of Haitians and causing further strain on medical facilities and personnel. While no longer at peak levels, cholera persists in many areas of Haiti and is anticipated to remain endemic in the country.



Holt's History in Haiti

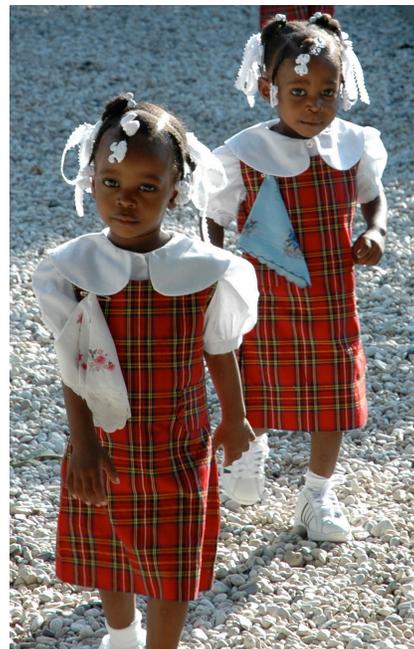
In 2003, Holt began serving children in Haiti through a partnership with the Hope for Haiti Foundation, a humanitarian organization founded by Peter and Shay Fontana. The Fontanas also built the Children's Village north of Port-au-Prince. Here, groups of ten children live in well-constructed, four-bedroom houses under the care of a housemother. Holt provided the support and

expertise to develop a comprehensive child service program centered at the village, now called the Holt Fontana Village. Holt also began processing international adoptions (ICA), first placing children with U.S. families in 2006.

Before pursuing alternative permanency solutions, Holt's first priority is to keep children in their birth families. Thus, while developing an ICA program, Holt also sought grant funding for a family preservation program in a region north of the village. In 2007, Holt established Fanmi Ansanm, or "Family Together," through which families received crisis counseling, emergency assistance and ongoing support as they strived for self-sufficiency. They also received tuition for school fees, food and kitchen supply kits, weekly family wellness trainings and regular home visits by trained caseworkers. Ultimately, these services helped to stabilize families, ensuring a safe, structured home environment for at-risk children. Child sponsorship and donor funding has sustained Holt's family preservation program in Haiti.

Through Fanmi Ansanm and the Holt Fontana Village, Holt succeeded in improving living conditions for thousands of children in Haiti. During the first years in operation, however, Holt's ICA program encountered numerous challenges. Lengthy processing delays and legal requirements resulted in an average ICA process of 28 months. In 2009, the Haitian government imposed additional requirements, further exacerbating – and lengthening – the ICA process. Political instability also confounded efforts in the region, creating travel difficulty for both Holt staff and adoptive families needing to complete the adoption process in country.

Although ICA fell to a near standstill, local programs for children and families continued to thrive. Holt staff directed greater energy and resources toward improving the quality of care at the



Holt Fontana Village. In 2009, Holt donors enabled construction of four new cottages, doubling the village's capacity from 30 to 60 children.

In January of 2010, Holt began emergency relief efforts for people affected by the earthquake – immediately sending \$25,000 to provide medical supplies, water and food for over 6,000 people. Fortunately, the Holt Fontana Village was not damaged in the quake, and all the children and staff were safe. To provide emergency care for children displaced by the disaster, Holt immediately readied the new cottages to accommodate an additional 25 children – all of whom have since reunited with their birth families.

To ease the added stress on families in our family preservation program, Holt increased food distribution and also built small houses for five vulnerable families. After the earthquake, emergency fundraising also enabled Holt to expand Fanmi Ansanm to families in the city of Jacmel – where approximately 10,000 people lost their homes.

Current Projects

After six years of serving children and families in Montrious, in 2011, Holt decided to move the family preservation program closer to Holt's central office in Haiti. Over the years, the program has posed significant challenges for our staff in Haiti. The distance between our main location at the Holt Fontana Village and the families in Montrious – as well as in Jacmel – made oversight especially difficult. Although we kept an office in Montrious, it became increasingly unaffordable to maintain.

In 2011, Holt devised a new strategy for family preservation that centralizes the administration of programs through the Holt Fontana Village. Here, Holt implemented a plan to work with schools no more than 10 miles from the village. Not only will such close proximity allow for better oversight of families, by allying with local educators, Holt staff can also better monitor the health and wellbeing of children in the program. After identifying four schools with which to partner, Holt provided books, supplies and tuition for 300 children in greatest need. In the coming months, Holt plans to partner with another four schools – serving a total of 700 children in 2012.

As another strategy to strengthen our family preservation program in 2012, Holt plans to provide small-scale vocational training scholarships for parents in the family preservation

program. Through this program, struggling parents will have the opportunity to learn a trade – such as sewing – that will help them support their children.

The Holt Fontana Village will also continue providing children in need with respite and/or temporary care. Children may stay for approximately 3-6 months, and may enter care for a variety of reasons, such as malnutrition or illness. The village will also accommodate children identified as “high risk” by our partner schools.

Following the 2010 earthquake, 21 children came home to adoptive families in the U.S. on humanitarian parole visas. After placing these children, Holt delayed processing of new adoption cases until legal changes were instituted. Political instability arising in the aftermath of the quake stalled ICA further. In 2011, Holt resumed adoption services from Haiti – matching all children eligible for adoption from the Holt Fontana Village.

Strategic Directions

Holt continues to find families for children in Haiti through ICA, with a growing number of families expressing interest in the program. However, several possible changes to the adoption process may potentially affect the program as early as 2012. In particular, the Haitian government continues to deliberate on when and how to ratify the Hague Convention.

As relief gives way to recovery, Holt continually strives to better serve families and children in Haiti. Over the next three years, as we ally with local schools and centralize the family preservation program through the Holt Fontana Village, it is our hope that families will gain stability in even the most unstable of environments.

To reach program goals, Holt plans to expand and diversify funding sources that include grants, child sponsorship and donor funding. Within three years, Holt hopes to grow the number of sponsored children from 300 to more than 700.