

Add Your Light Projects

Newsletter of the Add Your Light Charitable Foundation (www.addyourlight.org)

"you do whatever you can about the misery that's in front of you... add your light to the sum of light" (from the movie, "The Year of Living Dangerously")

Dear Friends of Add Your Light,

Finally, it is spring here in Calgary and the time is right to update you on the projects and people in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. I am so pleased that, more and more, our work is having an impact in Haiti and I hope that will expand.

You will perhaps be disappointed to read my **decision about the orphanage** (pg. 3). You may be unhappy to read about the continued obstacles we are facing with the **solar/LED lighting** project (pg .2). You may feel upset about the **Biosand filter** project and how the small businesses may be threatened (pg. 4).

Your reactions will likely parallel some of the feelings I've had over the past few months. It has been a time of upheaval, of letting go of old dreams, of more financial stress than usual, etc.

Some things definitely have not gone the way I'd like. However, I believe that we are learning from the hard knocks and that some amazing good is going to emerge from what appears to be "not-so-good" in the moment. And there are several wonderful things happening as a counterbalance, for example, the construction of the **Community Action Center**, the construction of three **classrooms**, the birth of the new Dominican NGO, "**Agrega Tu Luz**", the joy of the Haitians and Dominicans with their new lighting systems, the highly positive reactions to the **training videos**, etc. We are also very proud and excited that our **LED lamps** are being pilot-tested by the **Earth Institute's Millenium Global Village Project** at their site in **Sauri, Kenya**. Their projects are discussed in Professor Jeffrey Sach's book, "The End of Poverty".

This newsletter will give you a taste of what this whole effort is like for those of us attempting to translate theory into practice. Once again, I thank you for your response to my urgent appeal back in November and I ask for your continued financial support to help us move forward, expanding, learning, growing. **I count on your help! Thank-you!! Jan**

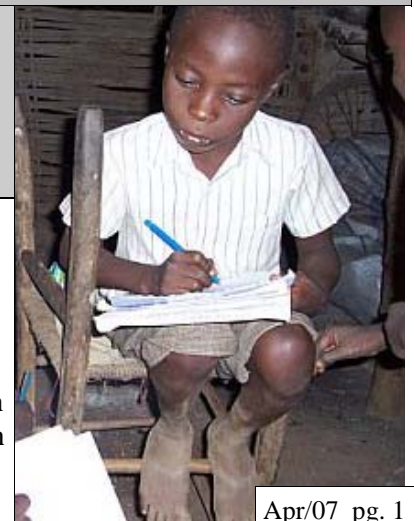


Little ones in Haiti, holding their lamps.

FINANCIAL PRIORITIES: Total: \$89,300

- 1) **\$25,000** for technical services for the LED/solar project; and to pay for the extra 1000 lamps we had to order to obtain quantity pricing (still owe this).
- 2) **\$3,300.00** to keep Yudelkis and Rebeca in university for the next 6 months, for Daniel to go to trade school, and to provide their food during this time.
- 3) **\$16,000.00** for project supervision and admin. costs for 6 months (Jan's work).
- 4) **\$150 X 300 = \$45,000.00** to put LED lighting in 300 more homes.

Haitian child drawing a picture to thank donors for his new LED lights.



Why do I need your help to purchase another 300 LED systems?

Our experience is showing us that Dominicans will pay the full price for these systems, but some families need more time. So I did the math, and it's all about critical mass. Giving the families more time to pay will delay the ordering of new inventory. The project will lose steam and those working on it will lose interest. If we can get 300 more systems installed rapidly on top of the 300 systems that are starting to go in now, the funds collected will more quickly grow to the point where more systems can be purchased without donations. Timing is crucial. Can you help us out with this?



Katherine with Jan Martel and Francier.

The LED lamps were a cause for celebration in Acul Samedi, Haiti, thanks to **Katherine Buckel**, all her sponsors in the U.S., and two delightful Haitian men, **Jan Martel and Francier**. Katherine raised funds for 17 systems which were installed in February. They held a contest, and the 17 families who won had to have 500 Haitian gourde (about \$13 USD) as their payment. We did not insist they pay full price, as their level of poverty is worse than that of Dominicans and trying to collect the money from across the border would have been virtually impossible anyway. **Another good news item is that our new injection mold in Ontario is ready for production of lamp housings!!** Thank you so much again to the donor — you know who you are!

Unfortunately, what did become painfully clear on this last trip is that, not only were the newly designed **charge controllers still failing despite our efforts**, but that some lamps were acting up (3 LEDs flickering or completely out). These lamps were working fine before!! What frustration! Instead of investigating outbreaks of human illness (my last job), I found myself studying an outbreak of LED failures. Luckily, I keep a register of all installed systems, so we have data to help us solve problems. **Cindy McArthur** and I are sorting this out and at the time of writing, I have strong suspicions as to the cause, but want more proof. As for the charge controllers, the Dominicans were never happy installing the newer controller anyway, so we will return to an older, simpler, cheaper version that gets the job done. It lacks some features, but it has never failed in the field, and that counts for a whole lot right now.

The Biosand filter and LED/solar lighting training videos are even better than expected!

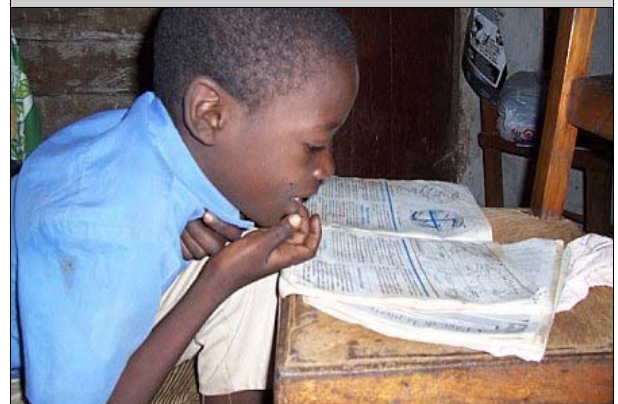
Thanks again to **Rick Castiglione of Cielo Pictures**, as well as editor **Bridget Durnford**, for their excellent work! **Whitby Sunrise (Ontario) Rotarian Bob Jarvest** reviewed the Biosand filter video with **Hector Jimenez and other Rotarians from Consuelo, D.R.**, and bought the first copy to use for training more community facilitators. It was a pleasure to meet both Bob and Hector during my recent trip! The **Rotary Club of Medicine Hat Saamis then purchased a DVD for the Rotarians of Jarabacoa, D.R.**, whose response was the same, “**El DVD es muy, muy bueno**”. Now that José has trained some of them, they plan to use the whole video to train more facilitators, or parts of the video to educate filter users. Three other organizations are now evaluating the video for their filter projects in other countries.

We are selling the Spanish DVD at the price of \$750 USD, knowing that six years of Biosand experience condensed into a 100 minute video is worth every penny for someone starting or running a filter program. An enormous amount of work went into writing, filming and editing the video. If your organization wants several copies for different sites, pricing is negotiable. Copies that become damaged can be replaced at cost. The funds collected from **DVD sales will support other projects, eg. filming of the video in English.** At the moment, it is only in Spanish, because its complexity and length precluded English dubbing.

An organization’s philosophy of development economics, as well as the terrain in which they are working, will govern whether they import the lightweight plastic Biosand filters from the United States (see pages 4) or whether they support the concept of small local business development and producing the concrete Biosand filters. For those who continue to work with the concrete filters, the video is invaluable, with **chapters on theory, installation, maintenance, and problem-solving.** We have the experience — why not learn from it and at the same time, contribute to Add Your Light’s efforts?

The LED/solar lighting video is in English and Spanish, lasts 40 minutes, and explains the benefits of a lighting system, its components, and how we install the systems. We are selling this video for **\$200 USD** in order to recover costs and do more projects. However, anyone who purchases a video and then goes on to buy lamps from our satellite company, **Add Your Light Products Inc.**, will have the cost of the video deducted from the price of the lamps. Are you ready to do a lighting project in the D.R. or any other country? Contact jan@addyourlight.org for more information.

Rodnei can now do homework with his LED lights. He lives in Acul Samedi, Haiti.





Cristian with new uniform & helmet. He rides a "moto" to school.

Marj Schell & Curly Walz visited us in the D.R. and it was truly enjoyable to show them the projects and introduce them to Cristian. He now has his hearing aids and is happily living his dream—to attend the Special School, to learn to speak, and to be with kids who are just like him! See photo to left.

Is it your personal mission to support an orphanage or foster care facility? If so, an opportunity awaits you. We have been supporting the orphanage in Puerto Rico a Pie since August, 1998. It actually has been utilized more for short & long-term foster care, which is fine, but never quite became what I had in mind — a home for 15-20 children who had no family at all, funded by Dominicans (government, Rotary or other NGOs, private citizens).

Yes, as John Lennon said, **“life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.”** In 1999, the original Pastora, **Lucrecia**, died suddenly of unknown causes. We continued our support while **Papo** struggled with 8 children and then, later that year, met and married Puerto Rican **Margaret Castrillon**. With hope, we built the dorm, the school, and the workshop between 1999-2002, and then stepped away again as they went through a two year process of separation and divorce. We offered our support again in 2004 when Margaret chose to re-open, brought in seven children, and began applying for Dominican government funds.

(Papo’s three children were also still there.) As time passed by, and we kept sending money, I reminded myself that long-term support of a foster care facility was never part of my personal mission. Then the government did not approve the funds and no reasons were given. And a wise mentor advised me to **“get out of the way** for the right people to appear”, because as long as Add Your Light sponsors were paying 95% of the bills, other people would never step up to the plate.

So we will be **withdrawing our support at the end of the school semester (May/07)**. The six children still living in the dorm (Emanuel, Martin, Hamlet, Yamelfi, Raquel, and Pincha) will all have safe places to live after May. Perhaps this will be another Easter story of “death”, waiting, and resurrection in a new form. Margaret may re-open if the right partners come forward. If you have any questions or concerns about this decision, please contact jan@addyourlight.org.

We will continue to support Yudelkis (age 21) and Rebeca (age 19) to finish their university degrees, and Dani to go to trade school. For me, this is an honoring of Lucrecia, to support these three children now that both parents are gone. The girls have high marks, have not gotten pregnant or married like many of their peer group, and are really trying hard to be employable. Dani, as the youngest, has really been hit the hardest with his mom’s death and his dad’s departure. His road is rocky, but he’s a good kid. They need and deserve our support! Please consider making a financial commitment to one of these kids.

What is your philosophy? When is a straight donation necessary & helpful, and when should capital be provided to finance microloans? If a Haitian family would take four years to pay off a lighting system, should we subsidize it? Should donors jump in and give away thousands of water filters because “clean water is a right” or is this strategy doomed to fail? I struggle with these questions. If you’re interested in the topic, read “The Soul of Money” by Lynn Twist and “The End of Poverty” by Jeffrey Sachs.

New NGO Board members accept bank draft for Center!

Thanks to the Wild Rose Foundation and the Rotary Club of Calgary Chinook, with contributions from the Rotary Clubs of **High River, Calgary West, and Calgary South**, the Center for Community Action is under construction! The photo shows the Board members gratefully receiving the bank draft! They are a capable and thoughtful group. I hope some Rotarians will come visit in the fall and see the fruits of their labors! It will be such a relief to have a home for the various projects, and it will be a joy to see the members of this new NGO, **Agrega Tu Luz**, start imagining and initiating their own community projects. Thank you so much for everything you all did to raise these funds!!



We have a new preschool and primary classroom at Los Miches, thanks to the **Alberta Centennial Charitable Society** and the **Wild Rose Foundation of Alberta**. Supervised by José, a group of construction workers are now finishing off another classroom in the barrio of La Alegría. A third classroom will follow quickly and then we will assist ACCS with their reporting requirements to the Wild Rose Foundation. We are truly grateful for the fundraising efforts that are going to open the doors to education for so many children! The photo to the right is Los Miches school.



Preschool children in their new classroom at Los Miches. They had so much fun with the digital camera!

The Biosand Filter Research Study results

were announced on February 19 in Michigan, and I attended the conference. **Dr. Mark Sobsey** reported that the houses that had filters had > 50% less cases of diarrhea than houses without filters. Dr. Sobsey used the words “dramatically less diarrhea” and “highly significant” to describe the results. Why is there still diarrhea? One reason is that not all diarrhea is caused by water. Also, some people have established long term parasitic infections and these were not treated during the study. Thus, changing to filtered water would not necessarily help them. We can be very proud and happy with these results, and with the fact that the study used filters made by José Rivas, our chief filter technician.

International Aid has announced the manufacture of the plastic Biosand filter. These plastic filters will be introduced into the Dominican Republic within the next two months through another organization. Although the plastic filters have many disadvantages in comparison to the concrete filter, their one big advantage is ease of transport. Thus, if these plastic filters cost dramatically less than concrete filters in the D.R., or are given away by donor agencies, our filter technicians may be out of work. As you can imagine, the technicians and their employees are feeling quite nervous. I am unable to do much other than **encourage them to keep their quality high, continue to believe that Rotarians and others will start to champion micro-financing as opposed to hand-outs, and ask to be involved in a consumer satisfaction study** (eg. study 40 households, 20 with concrete and 20 with plastic filters, in the same community). Unless the costs are vastly different, I believe the concrete filter would come out on top if this kind of study were undertaken. Add Your Light would not be seen as totally objective, so the study might have to be done by someone else. But first, let’s see how prices compare. Stay with us as we ride this wave!



Biosand filters waiting to be painted.



The Horticulture Project was great for “Los Dinamicos”!

They worked hard and learned a lot! To the left is Solange’s mom, Adis, buying some of the vegetables. Some produce was donated to a home for seniors and to the Special School. The students are deciding how to use the \$150 they made in sales (reinvest, donate, celebrate?). A new class may get involved next year. Gracias to Glenn’s group for funds & to Rick Castiglione & David Valentín Zapién for the video work!

Jan is a medical doctor with specialist certification in Community Medicine & a Masters in Health Care & Epidemiology. To make a tax-deductible donation, see the enclosed donation form, or contact Jan directly. Jan’s email is jan@addyourlight.org and her fax is 403-670-0163.

www.addyourlight.org