

ZANMI BENI WAS BORN OUT OF TERRIBLE TRAGEDY; THE EARTHQUAKE THAT DEVASTATED HAITI ON JANUARY 12, 2010, AND AS A RESPONSE TO A GREAT NEED; A GROUP OF EXTREMELY VULNERABLE CHILDREN LEFT HOMELESS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE EARTHQUAKE.

These children, many of whom were disabled, orphaned, or abused, were living in a single ward at the General Hospital in Port-au-Prince. The children, many of whom had lived at the hospital ward for years, had been abandoned or had been left at the hospital by parents who were, sadly, unable to care for them. Pre-earthquake living conditions for the children were less than optimal, but when the quake hit, the building suffered severe damage and the already-overtaxed hospital staff, overwhelmed with throngs of severely injured people, were unable to even provide basic care for the children. When Paul Farmer, Loune Viaud and Nancy Dorsinville arrived at the hospital a few days after the earthquake, they found the children alone, hungry, frightened and surrounded by chaos, injury, disease, and death. It was apparent that something had to be done immediately to protect these children, and that it would be necessary to secure a safe and permanent home as soon as possible.



Founders – Bill Horan, Loune Viaud, Paul Farmer, Nancy Dorsinville

It seemed almost miraculous when, in the midst of the devastation of the earthquake, Loune Viaud found a beautiful, sprawling property for sale just outside Port-au-Prince. Paul Farmer had recently celebrated his fiftieth birthday and generously donated the funds that were given to him as a birthday gift to help purchase the property. Partners In Health and *Zanmi Lasante* then formed a partnership with Operation Blessing, and together these three international organizations moved quickly and decisively to develop a plan to convert the property into an appropriate and high-quality living environment with the necessary accommodations for the children with disabilities.

Existing buildings on the property were renovated, and new buildings were designed to meet the needs of the growing community. Staff was hired and trained, programs and daily schedules were created, and due to the yeoman's efforts of a small group of dedicated people, the children were settled in their new home within four months. In the year following the earthquake, other orphaned, displaced, and abandoned children have joined the original group, bringing the total number of children in the *Zanmi Beni* community to sixty-four. *Zanmi Beni*, the name chosen for the community, means "Blessed Friends" in Haiti Creole. Indeed, all who are associated with the children of *Zanmi Beni* feel blessed to be a part of this beautiful and hopeful place.



THE ZANMI BENI CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

Zanmi Beni is committed to ensuring that each child they support reaches their full academic potential by providing a safe space, staff, and the social support that's needed to ensure success in the classroom and beyond... just as we would do for our own children. **They need our help.**

This is a devastating time for the children of Zanmi Beni. They have been unable to leave the campus for over a year, some of their beloved caregivers have contracted COVID-19, and they are fearful about the virus and are sad because they miss the frequent visitors to campus and leaving to go out into the world for school and outside activities.

The staff has valiantly tried to keep up with their schoolwork but it is very difficult. Many of the children struggle with academic issues and without experienced teachers or classrooms and supplies, we are very concerned that the children are falling even more behind.

The Zanmi Beni Education Center

Ground was broken on the Education Center in January, 2020, and construction is now wrapping up. Funds are needed to put in place an excellent academic program.



GIVING CATEGORIES

Technology for smart classrooms (internet, computers & tablets)	\$2,500
Student Support (teachers, tutors, educational materials & software)	\$1,000
Classroom and Library Furnishings	up to \$500