

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING APRIL 30 IN GRAND HAVEN

Bring friends and family to meet the Larakers and learn about their exciting year of challenges and accomplishments on LaGonave. Share in the fellowship and food at the pot luck dinner Saturday evening in the Grand Haven Community Center, 421 Columbus St., at 5:30PM. Please bring your own table service and a dish to pass.

Where do the poorest of the poor live?

Answer: Where nobody else wants to live. In Anse a Galets that area is called the “saline” (sall-een) or salt flats created by the tides. In our country waterfront property is prime real estate. But on LaGonave there are no architects to design elegant homes with the necessary foundations for this location. Since nobody really wants to live on the saline, this land is available for squatter’s rights.

Homes on the saline are often constructed of woven sticks which are held together with a mud-like mortar. Roofs are either thatch or sheet metal. Some homes are merely scrap materials held together with wire or twine. The more “affluent” of the area have been able to use cement blocks. Each family stakes out their territory, carefully marking the boundaries with a fence of twigs. Dirt floors are swept smooth with a sisal broom.

The real challenge is that high tides and storms cause frequent flooding in this area. Suddenly the surface that was hard and dry in the tropical heat becomes slippery and mucky, sucking the shoes right off your feet.

Children of the saline have little chance of ever going to school. Public and private schools in Haiti cost money and more than 70% of the saline children will never have the funds for a basic education.

When Pastor Joe and Pat Larakers arrived in Haiti in 2001, they made it a point to visit all the Haitian churches and pastors in the village of 12,000 people. Joe says, “We came to know and love one pastor in particular who has dedicated his life to serving the people on the

saline. His name is Pastor Foglas Dezias. Even though he has the money to live in a better



part of town, he has chosen to live on the saline in the community he serves.” One of the many ways he has helped his people is by starting a school for children who would otherwise be illiterate. WISH has helped Pastor Foglas build his one-room school building as well as a new church. He squeezes about 35 children into the school each morning.



WISH helped Pastor Foglas build this one-room school. His original school was made of basket weave walls with a tent roof of rags.

Children of 1st Evangelical Free Church in St. Louis contributed money to be used to feed the children on the saline. Other groups have since become involved in this feeding program. WISH has employed a crippled lady to cook a nourishing lunch of rice and beans each day. She is so delighted to have a good-paying job doing something she loves. WISH is delighted to be part of this ministry of “children feeding children”.



CONTAINER REACHES HAITI

Joe Larakers was happy to report that the container finally reached Haiti the last week of February. It is in the process of being cleared through Haitian customs. Once released, the very challenging work will be transporting all of its contents safely to the island.

KEEP PRAYING

DR. HECK TO OPEN DENTAL CLINIC IN MARCH

It is wonderful to report that Dr. Jack Heck of Port Huron, Michigan will once again be working in the WISH clinic in March. His 2003 mission was cut short when he had a medical emergency on the island. He is now well and looking forward to a busy two weeks, assisted by, yours truly, Jane Howard. We welcome your prayers for a safe and successful trip.