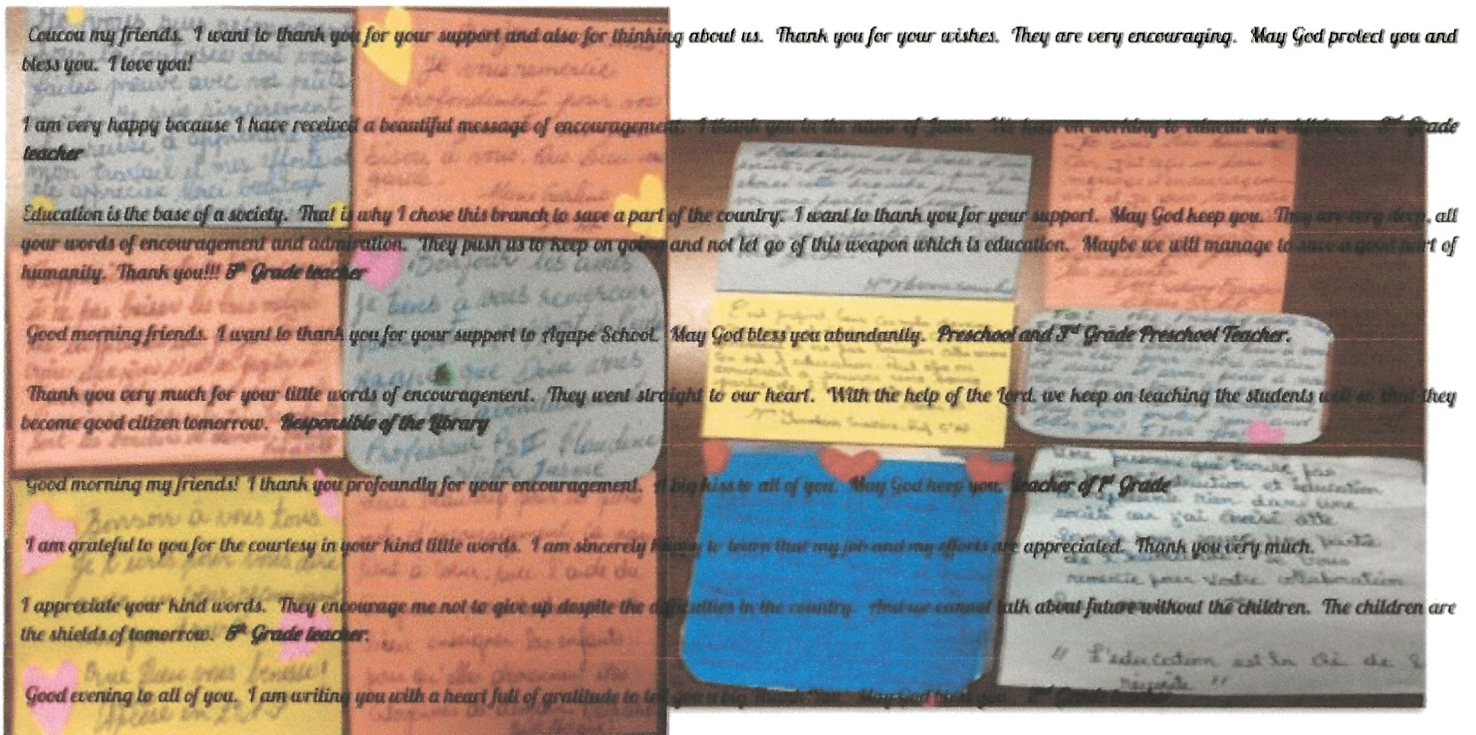


# 2023 Annual Report

## Friends of Ecole Agapé

Hello to all the friends of Agape School. I really appreciate your words of encouragement. We keep on working for the advancement of our school. Thank you for your support. May God protect you. **2<sup>nd</sup> grade Preschool teacher.**



A person who do not find some instruction and education does not represent anything in a society. That is why I chose this field to save a part of humanity. I thank you for your collaboration. **Louis Marc, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher.** "Education is the key to success"

*"If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family (nation)." African Proverb (Fanti Ghana)*

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

### FRIENDS OF ECOLE AGAPE, INC.

The year 2023 has been an extremely difficult year for Haiti and for Ecole Agape. Haiti is in crisis. Violent gangs grow in power and number and continue to block humanitarian efforts and access to the country's main fuel terminal. Hospitals have had to reduce their capacity or close their doors, despite this year's cholera outbreak. Most schools have closed intermittently and some for the entire school year. The cost of food and gas has skyrocketed.

Haiti's political landscape continues to be unstable. Haiti failed to hold planned elections in 2019 and again in 2023, leaving the country without a legislature. Haitians are frustrated and desperate for change.

#### ECOLE AGAPE STUDENTS AND THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR.

The Official Haitian 2022-23 School Year began on September 5, 2022 and ended June 30, 2023. Despite several closings due to protests and gang activity, Ecole Agape was open to students 129 days or approximately 68 percent of the school year. Twelve (12) sixth graders were honored in a graduation ceremony on July 11.



Students did not wear their school uniforms for security reasons. When school was in session, classes included computer training for the fifth and sixth graders and an evening session for teenagers learning to read and write. Older students attended a workshop on the use of the tablets downloaded with books in French, English, Spanish and Creole. The nurse conducted sex education classes, teaching the students about their bodies, hygiene, puberty, menstrual cycles, reproductive organs, and safe sexual behaviors.

Thirty-three students attended Saturday sewing classes using materials sent by Friends of Ecole Agape. Seamstresses, Claudine and Dorothy, taught students sewing skills: hand stitching, sewing, pattern design and clothing design. As the students progress, they will be taught embroidery, crochet, and the use of the sewing machines.

#### THE SCHOOL YEAR FROM SEPTEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 2023

School opened September 25<sup>th</sup> with ten (10) brave teachers and students who dared venture into the streets. The next day twenty-one (21) teachers and more students arrived despite continuing gunshots in the street. By mid-November, the school was at full enrollment and a dozen extra plastic chairs had to be purchased for the new students enrolled in the preschool. More students than usual had to repeat classes when the 2023-2024 school year began because they could not get to school safely.

The Dominican Republic closed its border to Haiti in September. The roads were blocked by gangs stopping the delivery of agricultural and food supplies. Food for the Poor has resumed the delivery of rice and beans to Ecole Agape, while Friends of Ecole Agape has increased the food budget in response to the escalating food prices. With the rising food insecurity, staff sent food to families via students whenever it was safe.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ECOLE AGAPE STAFF

The staff responded to the chaotic neighborhood landscape and increasing gang violence. They staggered the times of daily classes so no large group of students would be arriving at the same time. Staff were available to students who were able to attend and stayed after hours to help students make up missed assignments. To increase security at Ecole Agape, a security guard was hired to oversee the safety of students and personnel.

He developed a safety protocol, instructing them on how to respond when there are shootings outside of the school. His presence has been a calming influence on the students and staff. Additionally, he assists the staff with attendance and record keeping.

Staff training included the preparation, distribution, and supervision of teachers' planning books as well as homework plans to reinforce the educational objectives. The teachers met with parents at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

Every May 17<sup>th</sup> is Teachers' Day, a national holiday in Haiti. On this special occasion, the students thank educators for guiding and motivating them. At Ecole Agape, students honor their teachers by creating cards, bringing fruits and other gifts.

May 18<sup>th</sup> is Flag Day, a national holiday in Haiti. Ecole Agape students parade about the school with Haitian Flags to celebrate.

In December, the Librarian organized a competition for the most beautiful letter to Santa Claus. Poignantly, some of the children asked Santa Claus for peace in their neighborhood and country instead of toys. The Director of Food Services prepared a luncheon and the staff distributed toys to the students.



#### **FRIENDS OF ECOLE AGAPE INITIATIVES: JANUARY THROUGH MARCH**

Friends of Ecole Agape hosted its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Chili Cook Off on January 28, 2023. Twenty-three chefs participated, while Windham Golf Course donated the prize money for the top three chefs. Storrs Therapeutic Massage provided massage, donating the proceeds to Ecole Agape. Curtis Brand provided the musical entertainment.

In February, eight tablets with 1,000 "open source" books downloaded in French, Spanish, Creole, and English were sent to Haiti. Friends of Ecole Agape purchased the tablets to be sent to Ecole Agape and contributed to the salary of a Haitian man who translates French into Creole. The Wicks demonstrated the digital library app that can be installed on iPads and Samsung tablets and discussed its potential with the tablets to members at the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### **APRIL THROUGH JUNE**

Friends of Ecole Agape approved the funds to purchase a generator, solar panels, batteries, and a water filtration system for the school. However, the purchase of this equipment was deferred because of the violent protests and the amount of gang activity near the school. A barrel containing eighty (80) menstruation kits with instructions in French and Creole, 32 Solar Lights, fabric pieces, and a variety of school supplies was sent in June.

#### **JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER**

Friends of Ecole Agape hosted their 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Barbecue and Concert on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Chef Ken Tierney and Sous-Chefs Connor and Ryan Tierney prepared the entrees, and Friends of Ecole Agape provided water, soda and a variety of side dishes and desserts. Businesses that donated food included Dog Lane Café, Price Chopper, and Fenton River Grill. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, UConn students from the School of Pharmacy manned the food tent and assisted with parking. Patty Tuite provided the sound system and organized the musical lineup: Curtis Brand, Karen Lussier, Hugh Blumenfeld, and the Patty Tuite Band.

Attendees wrote personal notes to teachers and students at Ecole Agape for the opportunity to win a Cornhole Game. The Barbecue loyalty award goes to Bill Ahoo, who at age 106, has never missed a barbecue & concert. He usually goes for the chicken. Google his name to find out why.



In September, Jeannette Picard organized and manned the Friends of Ecole Agape booth at the 20th *Celebrate Mansfield* Festival, generating awareness and interest in Ecole Agape and Haiti.

## **OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER**

In October, Susan Moynihan translated the personal notes from the Barbeque and emailed them to Ecole Agape students and teachers. In November, Marie Michele emailed back the teachers' responses:

Education is the base of a society. That is why I chose this branch to save a part of the country. I want to thank you for your support. May God keep you. Teacher

I appreciate your kind words. They encourage me not to give up despite the difficulties in the country. And we cannot talk about the future without the children. The children are the shields of tomorrow. 5th Grade Teacher.

A person who does not find some instruction and education does not represent anything in society. That is why I chose this field to save a part of humanity. I thank you for your collaboration. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

Coucou my friends. I want to thank you for your support and also for thinking about us. Thank you for your wishes. They are very encouraging. May God protect you and bless you. I love you!

I am very happy because I have received a beautiful message of encouragement. I thank you in the name of Jesus. We keep on working to educate the children. 3rd Grade Teacher.

They are very deep, all your words of encouragement and admiration. They push us to keep on going and not let go of this weapon which is education. Maybe we will manage to save a good part of humanity. Thank you!!! 5th Grade Teacher.

Good morning, friends. I want to thank you for your support to Agape School. May God bless you abundantly. Responsible for the Preschool and 3rd Grade Preschool Teacher.

Thank you very much for your little words of encouragement. They went straight to our heart. With the help of the Lord, we keep on teaching the students well so that they become good citizens tomorrow. Librarian

Good morning my friends! I thank you profoundly for your encouragement. A big kiss to all of you. May God keep you. 1st Grade Teacher.

I am grateful to you for the courtesy in your kind little words. I am sincerely happy to learn that my job and my efforts are appreciated. Thank you very much.

Good evening to all of you. I am writing you with a heart full of gratitude to tell you a big Thank You. May God bless you. 2nd Grade teacher.

In November, all shipments of barrels to Haiti ceased due to gang disruptions.

Our 5<sup>TH</sup> Annual Appeal was mailed to 957 persons/families. Thanks to you, our generous donors, the appeal raised \$27,000. Our renewed canister campaign brought in \$565.54.

The sense of community that volunteers bring to our events is the foundation of our success. We thank those who have been so generous with their time, talent, and treasure:

**INDIVIDUALS:** Bob Jennette, Bruce Vissoe, Dennis Foran, Ted Busky, Tony Rash, Peter Fish, Neil Moynihan, Bill Lukas, Sue and Vinnie Audette, Leila Bowen, Betty Ann Marsland, Joan Flower, Mary Ann Hayward, Mary Jo Tryba, Carol Manning, Joan Doiron, Ann Nuttel, and Mary Lynn Darling.

**MASSAGE THERAPISTS.** Melanie Morrissette, Taylor Seymour, Sandra Mason, and David Palmer.

**ST PHILIP THE APOSTLE CHURCH.** St Philip the Apostle Parish Center and Ann Phillips, Secretary

**UCONN SCHOOL OF PHARMACY** students have manned the food tent and assisted with parking.

**MUSICAL TALENT:** Mike McDonald and Radio Waves; Curtis Brand, Jon Hand, Mike South, Mark Campbell, Bruce John, Dennis Collin; Jim Merick; Karen Lussier; Hugh Blumenfeld; Patti Tuite and band members- Jan Jungden, Peggy Ann Contos Harvey, Mark Annuli, and Judi Tompkins; Seldom Heard band members- Howard Drescher, Lee Terry, Tom Terry; Kevin White, Frank Busse, A J Belanger; Quiet Corner Fiddlers -Bernie Schrieber, Jane Schrieber, Joan Sinder, Alan Filo, Saul Ahola, Wendy Barrett, Dennis Knowlton, Jennifer Owen, Jesse Owen, Missy Joyal, and Don Schofield.

We thank you for your kindness and your generosity in 2023. Your participation at our events sustains us when we feel burdened or overwhelmed with the conditions in Haiti. You give us the hope we need to continue our work in Haiti. We hope to see you at our Barbeque in September, 2024. You have made a difference in the lives of the students at Ecole Agape, their families, and Haiti.

Friends of Ecole Agape is in its 8th year. We invite your feedback. We value your opinion.

**Please contact or visit us at:**

**[www.friendsofcoleagape.org](http://www.friendsofcoleagape.org);**

**[friendsofcoleagape@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcoleagape@gmail.com);**

**<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofcoleagape>; <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofcoleagape> or write to Friends of Ecole Agape, Inc. P.O. 303, Ashford, CT 06278.**

**We invite you to join us. Please consider sharing your talent and time. If you would like to know more about Friends of Ecole Agape, please call one of our members.**

**Friends of Ecole Agape, Inc:** Co-Chairs: Anne Rash and Jane Moynihan; Co-Secretaries: Judy McChesney and Lillie Tierney; Treasurer: Larry Grasso; Co-Chairs of Social Media and Technology: Sheila Appleton and Rikke Wassenberg; Event Manager: Ted Hill. Finance Committee: Anne Rash, Larry Grasso, Ted Hill. Members: Saud Anwar, Yusra Anwar, David Barrientos, Catherine Belanger, Judy Belek, Mary Anne Brennan, Leila Bowen, Lorraine, Cloutier, Judy Donnelly, Mary Ertel, Rabbi Jeff Glickman, Mindy Glickman, Leigh Gwara, Lucy Hill, Judy Melichar, Cindy Moeckel, Susan Moynihan, Mary Patrone, Jeannette Picard, Mary Romney, Marie Ann Smith. Emeritus Members: Kacee Erhard, Diane Giggey, Barbara Pivarnik, Mary Wehrle, Dick Long, Dr. Tom Gorin, Paul Wicks, and Elizabeth Wicks.

Friends of Ecole Agape, Inc.  
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements  
For the Years Ended December 31, 2022 & 2023

Receipts	2022	2023
Donations	\$ 59,717	\$ 51,843
Attendance fees: Fund raisers	5,375	5,456
Haitian Crafts	1,454	137
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>\$ 66,545</b>	<b>\$ 57,436</b>
Less: Fund raising expenses	4,045	3,142
<b>Net Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 62,501</b>	<b>\$ 54,294</b>
Investment income	\$ 336	\$ 2,946
Program expenses		
Teacher & librarian salaries	\$ 11,102	\$ 12,326
Secondary school tuition	1,000	-
School supplies & books	1,735	5,030
Nutrition program salaries	2,119	2,182
Food	6,995	20,900
Other program support	3,070	690
Program administration costs	480	460
<b>Total program expenses</b>	<b>\$ 26,501</b>	<b>\$ 41,588</b>
Other expenses		
Postage & Office Supplies	\$ 1,187	\$ 959
Insurance	240	120
Legal & filing fees	50	-
<b>Total other expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,477</b>	<b>\$ 1,079</b>
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>\$ 34,619</b>	<b>\$ 14,572</b>

Friends of Ecole Agape, Inc.  
Statement of Financial Position  
December 31, 2022 and 2023

Assets	12/31/22	12/31/23
Cash in bank	\$ 126,601	\$ 40,690
Undeposited cash on hand	839	2,235
CDs & bonds	16,774	120,407
Accounts receivable	1,875	1,080
Angel t-shirts, bags & blankets	2,424	2,352
Haitian crafts	841	770
Solar lights	1,288	550
Computer Tablets	2,870	-
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 153,512</b>	<b>\$ 168,084</b>
Liabilities & Fund Balances		
Book fund	\$ 95	\$ 95
Sec. school scholarship fund	700	1,200
Internet service fund	90	280
Shipping cost fund	140	-
Solar light fund	60	450
<b>General fund balance</b>	<b>152,427</b>	<b>166,059</b>
<b>Total liabilities &amp; fund balances</b>	<b>153,512</b>	<b>\$ 168,084</b>