



# LOVE NOTES FROM HAITI

*Stories from the children of La Concorde Orphanage  
and School in Jacmel, Haiti*







## The Story of Weedlens

# Disaster and Desperation

I remember when I was younger my parents were very tender and loving. But my life changed unexpectedly.

January 12th, 2010 my dad, my mom and my siblings were gathered to celebrate my 5th anniversary. We were in the midst of the party when the earthquake hit. That event put an end to the pleasure that my family and I were going through.

From that day on, everything changed. Finding food was like a luxury for my family. I would compare my life to the life of Job in the Bible- even my mom abandoned me. My dad was facing all those troubles alone as he played two roles for his children. He was both father and mother.

To take care of us, my dad took a cooler and walked through the streets to sell juice. It was while he roamed the streets that he learned about this orphanage. There were four of us. The leaders of the orphanage chose two of us- my elder sister, Jeffney (currently attending college through Love Takes Flight), and I. My dad had to go to another orphanage for my other siblings.

When I got here, it became clear that my father was everything to me. But in this orphanage, there were kids experiencing the same things I was. I was so homesick. After some time passed, I felt so comfortable. I was again covered with love and love was among us.

Dr. Rick, Barb and the leaders helped me so much. I don't see what kind of word I can use to say thank you for what you have done for me. May God bless you and help you. You have helped us find joy again. Thank you and love you.

## La Concorde Orphanage

The orphanage continues to grow as the violence and unrest builds in Haiti. We currently house 50 children on-site with additional children in the transition program.

The grounds of the orphanage include both a girls and boys dormitory with bathrooms, a dining hall with kitchen, and staff housing. There is also a play field for the kids, a garden for food supply, a well, and solar panels.

## ROOTS♥for a child

The Roots for a Child Program is a sponsorship program for the children at La Concorde Orphanage. Sponsorship includes clean food and water, safe housing, tuition, adult supervision and guidance, and medical care. The relationship formed between the children and their sponsor is lifelong and life changing.

To sponsor a child at La Concorde Orphanage, use the QR Code here or visit [lovetakesroot.org/sponsor-a-child](http://lovetakesroot.org/sponsor-a-child)



## Marie-Angee's Story

dictated by Frantz-cesca.



When Marie-Angee first arrived at the orphanage, she shared with me some details of her life. She came to us with lots of bruises on her back and was very thin. She had lived a bad life with a woman who mistreated her. Her mother had given her to a family in the hopes she would be fed and educated in exchange for housework. However, she was fed infrequently, did not go to school and treated as a slave. In Haiti, they call it Restavèk.

Marie-Angee escaped and spent around 2 weeks living on the street. Someone who watched for orphans eventually found her and she was sent here.

When she first came to the orphanage, she was sad, but a few months later she started smiling. She started going to school where the teachers help her learn, despite her mental disabilities. The leaders did their best to help her physically and psychologically. Now she feels at home.

You and the orphanages' leaders are taking care of her. I beg you to please keep helping the orphans because with your help they are grateful and safe. You represent their parents. A smile can bring hope to them.

My name is Noseline. I am from Port-au-prince. I now live in Jacmel and go to school at College Mixte La Concorde where I am in 12th grade.

I did not grow up with my parents. I have been in this orphanage since 2012. Here I have a new family and have learned a lot. I know many other kids would like to be in my place. I am very privileged to be here.

No matter what happens in life, there is a reason. For example, we moved from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel. God has shown us great kindness as Port-au-Prince is no longer safe.

I go to school every day and they never flunk me out because I have people who always help me. I know there are many people who can't find food or shelter. Yet I live in a wonderful home for free. I am blessed.

I thank God for the Love Takes Root members who make so many sacrifices to keep us safe and provide us with everything we need. Thank you so much for your help and support.

## A Gratitude Story



My name is Mathana. I am 16 years old. Today, if I grab a pen to write my life history, it's because I have been helped by some people who gather themselves to help others.

I have been in this orphanage since 2012. I had no chance to live with my family although they wanted to stay together. However, they did not have enough money to take care of me and my sister. In Haiti, when you are growing up, food is like a luxury.

Because of the trouble that my parents faced, they decided to find another place where I can have a better life- a place where I can go to school and I can find food everyday. There's a lot of advantages here and I have learned how to live peacefully with others. Now I have more values and I know how good God is.

I think my parents made the best choice for me, even if I miss them sometimes. I will never stop saying thank you to the leaders, especially to the Love Takes Root staff who provide us with all we need. I am so grateful.

## Mathana's Memoir



## La Concorde School



The La Concorde School started as a primary school to serve the children of La Concorde Orphanage. As the orphanage expanded, the school followed suit and a secondary school was built. La Concorde School has grown to employ 10 teachers and enroll 350 students from the orphanage and the community.

In Haiti, public schools have been closed since 2019. Having doors open and students learning is no small feat. It is the dedication of the teachers and families at La Concorde School that drives education forward during these tumultuous times. Haitian gangs control the roads, making food distribution nearly impossible. Food isn't making it on the shelves. Because of this, the students are able to eat only once a day at home and have no meals during the school day. This does not stop them from making education a priority and keeping the school open.

## The Life of Ricardo



My name is Ricardo and I am 10 years old. I lived in Cite Soleil with my mother where we were living in one room together. We ate once a day, but sometimes twice.

When my mom realized from day to day things were getting worse, she sent me to my godmother's house. When I got there, I can say that I was comfortable. She took care of me. I ate twice a day but I did not go to school. One day my godmother decided to bring me to Jacmel where I lived with my grandmother. My grandmother heard about this orphanage and she knew if she brought me here my life would be better. I was 7 years old when I moved here.

In these 3 years I have received so many advantages. I go to school, I eat three times every day, they take care of me, and they care about my issues, especially my health. I have to know my lessons to do my homeworks. Now I can read and write. I want to say thank you so much for what you have done for me.

## Food or a Future?

This is the dilemma Haitian parents are facing-- do we stay a family and give our child the bare essentials? Or do we give them up so they can receive both food and an education to set them up for a successful future? This heart-wrenching question has been posed to our Haitian partners at La Concorde School, and our answer is an unwavering dedication to the preservation of families.

Over the years, LOVE Takes Root has kept the needs of Haitian children at the forefront of our mission. What began as a mission to take an orphanage broken by an earthquake and make it whole once more has become a desire to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and families who continue to be impacted by the aftermath of the earthquake-- gang violence, food and job insecurities, and derailment of medical resources. We now aim to keep families together so no parent at La Concorde has to ask-- food or a future?



# Sponsor a Student

To keep the families of La Concorde School together, we have started the Sponsor a Student Program. This program is in direct response to the Food or a Future dilemma facing many of our families. This program is separate from our Roots for a Child sponsorship program that functions to support the children of La Concorde Orphanage.

\$40/month will provide one student with free tuition, uniforms, books and other school supplies, and one meal per school day.



## Feeding the Children

While food is extremely scarce, we are working tirelessly to find sustainable sources. We use every bit of land available to grow produce, use all leftover bread and purchase chickens from Love Takes Flight businesses, and are working toward hiring fishermen to maintain a supplementary source of protein. Sadly, the fish they are able to catch are quite small (see photos) and can only be considered supplementary.

## Sibling Story

There are seven people in our family, but two of my sisters and I now live at La Concorde Orphanage. My name is Roselove and I'm the oldest.

At home, my mom did not have enough money. Our only meal each day was bread and coffee, unless my mom found work. She went out each day to hope for a job to wash laundry, but she did not find jobs much. We tried to go to school, but were sent home a lot because no money. If we stayed, we didn't have food. Sometimes other kids would share, but our stomachs would mostly hurt from no food.

We love our mom so much. She made so many sacrifices for us. She wanted so many things for us, but the situation prevented it. But now we have food and school and medicine. We have friends and a family. May God bless you. We love you so much.



Roselanden, Rosemica, and Roselove



## A Mother's Love

I am Nadia. I am so happy because I have this opportunity to tell my story.

When I was 4 years old, I had a lot of troubles. That was when my Mom came with me to this orphanage. I immediately felt comfortable. My father abandoned me when I was born, but my mother was trying to do everything for me. She represented both Mom and Dad. With what tiny money she had, she did what she could do for me.

There came a time when she could do nothing for me. She decided to find a better place so I could have a better life. That is when she found La Concorde. When I first got here, I did not know any of the people. However, they represent my second family. They did not let me miss anything. They send me to school and teach me what's good and bad.

I thank the Bastien family because they set up this orphanage, and I thank the Wilkerson family and the members of Love Takes Root for supporting us no matter how hard things get. I thank you so much for what you have done for me.

I would like to ask you a favor- please keep helping us because things are so difficult here in Haiti. Please keep helping this orphanage and school, especially this coming generation, because things may only get harder.

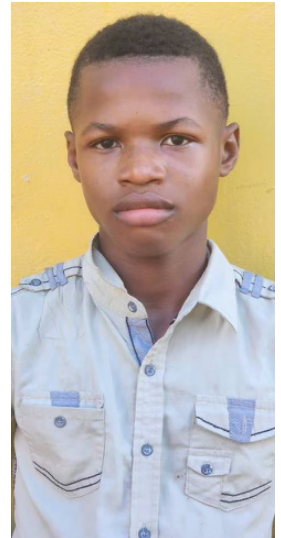
I have so much strength and courage because I have been helped by good people. God loves you so much- please believe in Him. Thank you so much.

I am Junior. I have lived in this orphanage since 2017. I am 14 years old. I used to live in Port-au-Prince. After a few years, my parents decided to find a better place for my sister. I didn't have any idea about orphanages at the time, but my parents soon got me into this orphanage. It was a little bit difficult for them to take care of all the children they had.

When I first got here, I did not want to stay because I was so far from my family. After a while, I felt comfortable like I was at home. I eat three times a day, I go to school, and I have people who care for my health. There are many advantages here. God is great. By the grace of God, I have been helped by the members of Love Takes Root. I can't talk about Love Takes Root without mentioning Dr. Rick and Barb. I don't know what I would do if I was still in Port-au-Prince because there are many problems.

I pray to God every day and ask Him to take care of my family. I don't know what I can offer for what you have done for me. When I hear how hard the kids where I'm from are struggling, I honestly feel so lucky. Because in Jacmel, I have free food, I go to school, and I have people who care for me. I'm blessed. Please keep helping us. Due to your help, lots of us might find again the smile we lost.

## Finding My Smile





# La Concorde Medical Clinic

The atmosphere in Haiti has deteriorated to the point even Doctors Without Borders has pulled out. Our clinic remaining open is top priority. An open clinic ensures the infrastructure is in place when the country becomes stable again. Supplies are limed, but we continue to bring basic necessities as we are able. We are also implementing a monthly zoom meeting between the 4 Haitian clinic staff and physicians from the U.S. to discuss different cases and brainstorm solutions using the limited supplies available.

## Solange's Story



I am Solange. I have been in this orphanage since 2012. I was young, but I remember my leg was broken when I got here. It was here that my leg was treated and healed.

To be honest, my parents had almost no money. What tiny money they had could do nothing for me. In Haiti, it is so difficult for parents to take care of their children. It was their love for me that brought me here. Because they loved me, they knew they had to take me somewhere so I would benefit from all they could not provide for me. Here I have food and I go to school.

I know I cannot be with them, but their love is still with me. I have love surrounding me. I find love, humility and wisdom here, and the leaders teach me to be a friend. They show me the goodness of God.

Thank you is not enough. These words are too light for what you have done for us.

## An Investment in Sustainability

In an effort to provide sustainable food sources, we are working with the Love Takes Flight chicken business to begin the process of breeding chickens for sale. Currently, the business purchases young chickens to raise for sale. This process is expensive and dependent on the availability of young chickens. Breeding our own chickens would be more sustainable, but there would be an initial seven-month timeframe for raising the chickens. This time would cause financial hardship beyond the capacity of the young men who run the business.



Breeding would allow the business to become sustainable, and it would provide an opportunity to raise chickens on the grounds of La Concorde as a steady supply of protein. This supply would allow us to feed the children at the orphanage, and provide an opportunity to start a desperately needed school lunch program to take away pressure from our school families. The chickens would be the responsibility of the young men at the orphanage who would learn a skill that would provide them with food and income for a lifetime. Your investment would provide a second chicken coop, maintenance of the chickens, and feed. Please go to [lovetakesroot.org/contact-form](http://lovetakesroot.org/contact-form) to invest.





## LOVE takes flight

Love Takes Flight (LTF) is an important and exciting part of the Love takes Root organization. Love Takes Flight is a 4-year, transition program designed to help young adults transition out of the orphanage and into Haitian society as successful members of the community. The LTF program focuses on young adults 18-25 who are ready to prepare to “take flight” as adults. While the focus of the Love Takes Flight Program is on the orphanage kids, the program has branched out to also include select young adults from the community of Jacmel.

### Program Highlights:

- We have created a meat chicken business, a tailoring business, a soap business, a graphic t-shirt/uniform making business, and car mechanic business.
- We sponsor higher education and are proud to report that Jeffney, a young female graduate of LTF, is currently attending medical school in the city of Cap-Haitien.
- We opened the BREAD OF LOVE Bakery in Jacmel-- a bread bakery run by our talented baker Luxene and fully staffed by members of LTF (top left photo) that sells out daily.
- We celebrated our first graduates: Saul, Genesse, and Prospere (top right photo).
- We bring in local businesspeople to speak to the LTF teens about the importance of hard work and dedication (bottom photo).







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