



# RAYJON SHARECARE

e-bulletin

## FEBRUARY (2016 #01)

- By Heather Smith, Rayjon Sharecare Board Member

### **A Fresh Perspective on Rayjon's Efforts in Haiti**

In November I travelled to Haiti for the first time as part of a monitoring team. I'd like to share some highlights of our busy 10 days.

We were met in St. Marc by these handsome gents (Rayjon Share Care Haiti staff, from left: Wesner, Luckner, Andre, Luc). Under Field Director Andre's leadership they are actively seeking out partnerships with other organizations in Haiti to collaborate and improve the quality of service in rural education, health care, and adult literacy. Building capacity in community leaders and empowering individuals to reach their full potential are key Rayjon aims that are being realized as these men learn new ways of dealing with difficult issues and coordinating programs effectively. Their camaraderie was obvious and it was a pleasure to watch them share ideas and learn from one another.



One of the goals of our team was to better understand the context in which our programs operate, in terms of neighbourhoods and communities served. We

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know we have a great responsibility to ensure that donor money is used wisely, ethically, and for the long-term greater good of the communities with whom we have partnered.

Our evaluation confirmed the value of the Sacred Heart Centre in the impoverished urban area of Cap Haitien. The SHC is the only malnutrition centre offering a day program to treat and monitor some of Cap Haitien's most malnourished babies. Their mothers have a safe place to go where they can receive training in health and nutrition that will help them to better care for their children. They have the opportunity to acquire life skills (such as sewing, literacy, financial planning) that will increase their confidence and ability to provide for their families, and perhaps most importantly, where they can be part of a community that supports and encourages them.



We were able to see firsthand the impact of improved nutrition and access to education and skills for Haitian families. It was especially exciting to see staff taking initiative to improve the existing programs and extend that impact.

Perhaps the biggest highlight for me was the chance to observe the Alpha literacy classes in action. It was hard not to feel overwhelmed by emotion. The pride in the faces of the women (and a few men) who are learning to read and write was immediately evident. To me, Elilya, (pictured here) exemplifies what is at the heart of Rayjon - what we aim to do and how we define success.

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I was watching with interest as Maggy interviewed Elilya: asking her name, asking about her family, where she was from, and about how the Alpha program was affecting her life. Right off the bat Elilya didn't want to answer the questions verbally. She was beaming as she hurried to show us that she could *write* her name and hometown on her slate. I'll be honest and say that my mind was filled with conflicting thoughts... I couldn't help but think that it was unfortunate that Elilya was only now, in her later years, learning to read and write. I mean, it won't have any *practical* benefit for her. She won't be rushing out to find a high-paying job now that she is literate. But Elilya reminded me that "success" means so much more. We chatted with her for a bit and as we were leaving Maggy promised cheerfully, "We'll see you next time!" to which Elilya laughed and quipped "Unless I'm dead!" Elilya didn't care in the least about practical benefit. She had achieved something important to her personally, to her pride. And it was enough. She reminded me of the successes that can't be measured with numbers or dollar signs, or in terms of losses and gains. Elilya is inspired and is inspiring her classmates. Self-dignity is a worthwhile investment. "Quality of life is justice, not charity."

## Upcoming Events:

### Rayjon's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual - Women Helping Women

May 14th, 2016. Doors open at 5:30; Dinner at 6:45 pm

Location: Gourmet Café, UWO Research Park 1086 Modeland Rd

New Live Auction Item: Four-Night Stay at the Elara Hotel, Las Vegas (during the week of Oct 14th - 21st ... suite sleeps 4).

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Evening Theme: "black, white and silver"

Please bring a quality re-gift for our silent auction.

Tickets are limited (130); Available now! Cost \$75 (must be 19 to attend)

Contact Maggy Barnfield at 519-337-0038 or [barnfield@cogeco.ca](mailto:barnfield@cogeco.ca)

To join the mailing list only for WHW notices, please click here: <http://eepurl.com/bOFXfr>

## Rayjon/DeGroot Plant Sale

Mark your Calendars!

Watch for the DeGroots Nurseries postcard in the mail in late May, bring it to DeGroots June 3-5 and purchase beautiful hanging Dipladenia plants for your garden - they flower all summer long and are proven butterfly magnets.

Profits support Rayjon's Haiti projects.

For more information or to volunteer at this fundraising event, call Dianne McKillican at 519-862-1963



Rio™ Dipladenia - 10" Hanging Basket

## 2016 Rayjon Trips

Scheduled trips for 2016 include: perennial Awareness trips to Haiti and the Dominican Republic; groups from Lambton College, Georgian College, and Fanshawe College; Eyeglass clinics in Haiti and Jamaica; project support trips to Haiti and the DR; Project Monitoring trip to Haiti; and Lambton College Nursing Trip to Cap-Haitien, (in partnership with Hands Up For Haiti). Trip organizing and planning is an ongoing activity, so watch for 2017 Awareness Trip planning information in an upcoming newsletter.

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## Thank You!

To our many donors, we must say again a tremendous thank you. With your donation you make a lasting change to the lives of people in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

### To Donate Online:

[www.Rayjon.org](http://www.Rayjon.org)

One time or monthly options

Tax receipt and Record of your online donations immediately available

### Mail Cheques To:

Rayjon Share Care c/o D. Murray, 1923 Park Avenue, Bright's Grove,  
ON N0N 1C0.

### To Purchase or Distribute Rayjon Coffee:

- Coffee - \$10/12 ounces (please call Mary: 519-541-0142) Organic, Fair Trade, 100% Arabica coffee, fine grind or beans, decaffeinated, medium roast or dark roast. Available to community organizations, churches, schools and service clubs to sell in support of communities in Canada as well as in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
- Vanilla - \$3/2 ounces; \$6/4 ounces (please call Brenda: 519-344-3755)
- Beautiful Gift/Memorial donation cards - receipts issued for donations of \$20 or more (please call Karen: 519-542-4247)

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