



April (2019 #03)

Families Feature on Awareness Trip

The recent March break awareness trip to the Dominican Republic included seven adults and eight youth, featuring four parents and five of their children. They visited Fundacion, Bani, Santo Domingo, and Consuelo. Here are the reflections of one of the parent-child family combos.

(Steve) I had researched past Rayjon trips and heard stories from a couple of people who had been on similar trips, however there is nothing like experiencing it for yourself. The awareness trip challenged me to go outside my comfort zone. We visited neighbourhoods and met people I never would have on my own. Although I was apprehensive at times, I was glad we made the stops that we did as I was amazed by the compassion and caring the Dominican people have for others. I was impressed by the many people who have stepped up when others wouldn't to improve the lives of others. The leadership of these people gave me a feeling of hope for the people who live in much worse conditions than what I had ever seen. One particular moment stands out for me. Our DR guide, Jorge, was touring us through a Barrio when he pulled out a bag full of treats and snacks. As we walked around he was calling to each home to see if there were any children that would like a treat. He led us through a few sections of the Barrio handing out this food to all the children he could. As we left the area, he passed a bag to me to help our team further distribute the food at a local school we came across. This kind of selflessness has struck a chord with me as I settle back to my life hoping I can find the same selflessness and courage to help others in need.



[above: Rayjon trippers spending a few fun-filled hours together with children in Consuelo, Barrio 41. The children were shy initially, but that quickly changed.]

(Amy – grade 9) I was really inspired by this trip in many different ways. It made me realize how much we really have. I am really appreciating all the small things in life now, for example: our hot showers, the electricity for 24 hours, garbage-free roads, three meals a day, and clean clothing. In the

Dominican most people only have a few of these things, or nothing at all. I am opening my mind and not taking any of these things for granted. When I was in elementary school we would look at pictures of impoverished countries and hear stories about them, but I never really understood. This trip made me fully understand all of these stories. Before it was only pictures, but now it is all real to me. One thing that really stuck with me was how nice everyone was. All the people we would see always said, "hello" (*hola*) to us no matter what they were doing. Everywhere we went the people would welcome us with open arms. It created a very happy environment even where it was so poor. The kids we met were definitely the happiest and the biggest highlight on this trip. They had barely anything, but still made it to school every morning and were all so happy to meet and play with us. They were so patient as well, because we did not know any Spanish. We sat there and listened to their stories, but only nodded because that's all we could do. This trip changed my way of seeing everything back home, it was a great experience and will forever be in my mind.

Everything You Wanted to Know About ...

If "it takes a whole village to raise a child" then it takes a very large and special community of volunteers and supporters to assist with a vision that is much bigger than the welfare and development of a single child. Fortunately Rayjon is blessed with many such individuals who have a shared vision of a more just and equitable world for all.

For those who are newer to Rayjon, or who perhaps have only been exposed to a less than complete picture of the whole organization in Haiti and the DR, here is a brief summary of everything you wanted to know about the project work organization, but were afraid to ask.

In the Dominican Republic, there is one full-time Rayjon staff member, Georges. He is the project founder and director of the 6 part-time staff involved with the Consuelo Community Development Project.(CCDP). The CCDP Centre is located in the neighbourhood referred to as Barrio (district) 41 and includes a pre-school/nutrition program, garden, women's sewing program, and a pilot aquaponics (fish raising) project. Georges is the Haitian Creole rendering of his name. As Jorge (the Spanish or Dominican translation), he is well known to awareness trip participants as their tour host.

*** *** ***

The project effort in Haiti is larger and therefore, organizationally, is more complicated. Rayjon directly employs two individuals, Andre and Renaud. The rest of the staff are officially employed by our partner organizations (RSCH and C-NEW-C), which in turn are largely (but not completely) funded by Rayjon. Funding also comes from community contributions, other organizations, occasionally local government, etc..

In Cap Haitian, there are 11 full-time and 2 part-time staff employed by the C-NEW-C (Centre for Nutrition and Education for Women and Children, formerly called the Sacred Heart Centre). There are four key programs in this urban community project that seek to empower families to develop health and self-sufficiency: Education (including Adult Literacy - Alpha), Nutrition Program, Life Skills Programs, and the Help-Age Program

In the rural community project in the St. Marc region of Haiti there are 21 staff employed by RSCH. About 9 are part-time, the rest are full-time. Surrounding the city of St. Marc there are many small rural communities in this mountainous region. One of these is the village of Pinson, where the Pinson school is located with its newly completed classrooms. Project activities in the St. Marc area include elementary and secondary education, adult literacy, capacity building and a micro-finance program. The St Marc team includes a Field Director, sector leaders, teachers, support staff and community volunteers. RSCH works closely in partnership with local leaders, especially the Women's Federation.

Andre is the Field Director, the most senior leader in Haiti, responsible for oversight for both St. Marc and Cap Haitian. He reports to Heather, the Rayjon Executive Director, here in Sarnia.

Renaud is the new manager on the ground, day to day, in St. Marc. He reports both to Andre and to Heather ... pictured below: Renaud, Heather, Andre – Q4, 2018.



Spring Eyeglass Trip to Ocoa

Spanning the dates of March 26 – April 2, 2019 Rayjon had a successful eyeglass trip with a team of nine to San José de Ocoa, Dominican Republic. The team, co-led by Jon Wong and Mary Weerdenburg, consisted of six experienced eyeglass team members, plus three new team members who received some training at home before being immersed in their newly learned tasks. The trip was originally planned for Cap Haitian, however, due to the continued violence in Haiti it was quickly rearranged for Ocoa. Our host, Sister Teofila, did an amazing job of organizing our accommodation, clinic site, food, and recruitment of needy patients with very little preparation time.



(Using an autorefractor to measure the patient's prescription requirement.)

In total 416 patients were assessed, and many were given glasses, sunglasses, and instruction on maintaining eye health, depending on their needs. Of those patients needing glasses for both near

and distance vision, many received 2 pairs of glasses if suitable bifocals were not available, or if that was their preference.

We had the privilege of having Dr. Waddy Casado, Epidemiologist and the Head of Public Health for the Ocoa area, present for 2½ days helping at our clinic. He worked alongside our fitters as a translator. Dr. Casado hopes to join the large Rayjon Eyeglass team which will include optometrists, when we hold a clinic in Consuelo, Dominican Republic in November 2019.



(The clinic waiting area.)

Although this trip almost did not come to fruition, it was extremely appreciated by the Ocoa community.



(Another very satisfied “customer”)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

REMINDERS!

Rayjon Yard Sale

Enjoy the Point Edward wide garage sale on Saturday May 11th, and be sure to stop in at 605 Michigan Ave and support the Rayjon entry. The sale runs from 6 a.m. till noon.

Rayjon / DeGroot's Plant Sale

Come and support the Rayjon / DeGroots partnership to raise funds for Rayjon's Haiti projects through the sale of beautiful Dipladenia hanging plants that attract butterflies and hummingbirds.

Date: Friday May 31st until Sunday June 2nd

(Friday 8-8, Saturday 8-6, and Sunday 9-4)

Cost is \$30 per plant. Cash, Cheque. Credit Card or Debit.



Please bring the DeGroot's planter post card that you will receive in the mail in late May to purchase a plant.

Save the Dates!

PastaFest: November 7th, 2019

(3rd Annual) Curling Event: November 16th, 2019

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:

[DONATE NOW](#)

One time or monthly options

Tax receipt and Record of your online donations immediately available

Mail Cheques To:

Rayjon Share Care, PO Box **2482**, Sarnia, Ontario N7T 7T1.

Copyright © 2016 Rayjon Share Care, All rights reserved.

You are receiving this email because you are a Rayjon Supporter.

Our mailing address is:

Rayjon Share Care

P.O. Box 2482

Sarnia, On N7T 7T1

Canada