

Mercy Focus on Haiti
c/o P.O. Box 621
Gwynedd Valley, PA 19437

March 21, 2018

Mercy Focus on Haiti
Gros Morne, Haiti Immersion Description and Budget

Dear Mercy Secondary School and College/University Personnel:

Mercy Focus on Haiti (MFOH), a ministerial endeavor of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, is pleased to provide you with a detailed description and budget for our MFOH Immersion Experiences in Gros Morne, Haiti. MFOH is happy to offer Immersion Experience in Spring 2019 for students in Mercy secondary schools and colleges/universities. The 2018 Student Immersions in Haiti are now all settled and underway.

To accomplish our goal of mutual learning, service, and friendship, we will work in advance to identify the immersion and service interests of your students, and then match them with the current needs and wishes of the Gros Morne community. While participants are in Gros Morne they will learn the virtues, skills, and culture of the Haitian people and serve the people in ways the Haitians desire. The Haitians will learn from the Immersion participants some knowledge of their culture, and some skills we in the USA may take for granted. We in MFOH look forward to working with your school or college/university to create a two-fold learning opportunity that could foster skills and friendships to last a lifetime.

The large Haitian commune of Gros Morne (GM) is located in the northern department of Artibonite and is within the diocese of Gonaives. The town of GM is about five hours north of Port au Prince, the capital of Haiti. The climate is tropical, the population of the commune is estimated to be about 300,000, and over 80% of the population lives in rural areas. The rainy seasons are April to June, and July to November (with less rain in June and July). The four dry months are December to March. The commune of GM includes the town, the eight communal sectors that compose the commune, and 24 chapels located throughout the commune. This large mountainous area is where the Immersion Experience will take place; the area has been served for twenty years by the Religious of Jesus and Mary with whom the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas are now collaborating.

The Haitian projects in Gros Morne which Mercy Focus on Haiti now serves and supports in financial and other ways – in addition to the Immersion Experiences -- are the following:

--- **Agronomy:** reforestation, vegetable gardening, raising small animals (hens and goats);

--- Basic needs support for **Maison Bon Samaritain**, a residence for twenty-five elderly or infirm men and women who are homeless and without any family resources;

---Support of the **Micro-Business Programs** of two Haitian women's groups: one that makes embroidered greeting cards for sale, and one that caters meals for groups that can afford to pay for them;

--- A new program called **Chemen Lavi Miyo (CLM) – “Pathway to a Better Life”** – a program in which 400 ultra-poor Haitian women and their families (who currently live on \$1.25 a day or less) are each assisted and weekly accompanied toward a better life. They are helped to improve their dwellings, learn to use a water filter, have resources to feed their children, send them to school, develop two micro-industries on which they can depend for future income, and, most of all, are empowered to acquire confidence, self-esteem, and hope.

. From the moment an Immersion group arrives in Port au Prince, MFOH members with experience in Haiti will accompany and direct the group throughout the visit. MFOH will arrange all the following:

- **In-country transportation.** Gros Morne is 5 hours northwest of Port au Prince, the capital and airport location. The group will use the same bus driver MFOH has used in the past for pick up at the airport and travel in country. It is basic but has served us well.
- **Lodging.** On the air travel days, it is best to collect the group in Port au Prince and spend the following or previous night at a nearby, reliable motel or hostel chosen by MFOH (specific details will be provided as we get nearer to each 2019 trip). For the duration of the trip the group will stay in Gros Morne at “The Guest House”. This large house was built in 2011 for American doctors visiting Alma Mater Hospital in Gros Morne. The safe, secure house includes 15 beds with mosquito netting, with two or three persons to a room, sheets and towels, electricity, shared bathrooms with sinks, toilets and showers, cold water, purified drinking water, a gathering room, dining room, and kitchen.
- **Meals.** Meals will be provided in the motel in Port au Prince. In Gros Morne an abundant and nutritious breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served, family style, by the kind and talented staff.

During the planning period, MFOH will collaborate on all orientation, instruction, and the details of specific service projects during the visit. All projects and activities will be in Gros Morne, and at the sole direction of the MFOH Immersion Experience Coordinator who will supply the needed materials. The projects may include tree planting, farming, painting, gardening, repair work, arts and crafts with children or the residents of Maison Bon Samaritain (a residence for the most vulnerable men and women in the community).

It is necessary that a Mission Office Representative from the secondary school or college/university accompany its student group to and in Haiti. It is also the representative's responsibility to arrange for and organize air travel to and from Port au Prince and compile a 7 day/24 hour Emergency Contact Information list to be disseminated to MFOH, to school or college/university members in the States, and to the MFOH leadership in Haiti. The school or college should also either provide travel insurance or require each traveler to obtain his or her

own coverage. Medical evacuation costs must be included. Proof of such coverage for each traveler must be provided to MFOH at least thirty (30) days before departure. No exceptions.

The necessary arrangements, waivers, permissions, and insurance will be explained well in advance of the trip.

Cost. The total payment to MFOH per traveler will be **\$1,100.00**. This figure is based on ten (10) student travelers and one school representative traveling with the group. It covers:

1. Transfer between Port au Prince Airport and the motel in Port au Prince.
2. Accommodations in Port au Prince upon arrival and the night before departure.
3. Interpreter and transportation to, from, and in Gros Morne.
4. Accommodations in Gros Morne.
5. All meals in Haiti.
6. An MFOH Coordinator accompanying and directing the group throughout their stay in Haiti.
7. A small donation to the ministries being visited/supported by MFOH.

The total is payable to MFOH at least thirty (30) days prior to departure for Haiti.

Mercy Focus on Haiti will, early in the process of planning the trip, provide to each Immersion traveler a detailed document, **“Important Considerations before Travel to Haiti”** (on clothing, passports, immunizations, phones, etc.).

Please contact Mrs. Andi Healy with any questions or suggestions you might have regarding MFOH and the Immersion trips to Gros Morne, Haiti, and to seek to schedule an Immersion Experience: cell # 267-549-6857 or e-mail: andijhealy@aol.com.

The school planning to participate in a MFOH Immersion Experience shall be expected to execute an “Agreement for Participation in Volunteer Missions” with Attachment A (both documents accompany this letter) which shall govern all aspects of the MFOH Immersion Experience notwithstanding any other communications, oral or written.

It is the deep hope and prayer of the Sisters of Mercy and of the members of Mercy Focus on Haiti that the Immersion visits to Haiti will be for each participant the source of a greater understanding of others in the human community and of a stronger commitment to generosity and mercifulness.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Andi Healy
Coordinator, MFOH Immersion Experiences