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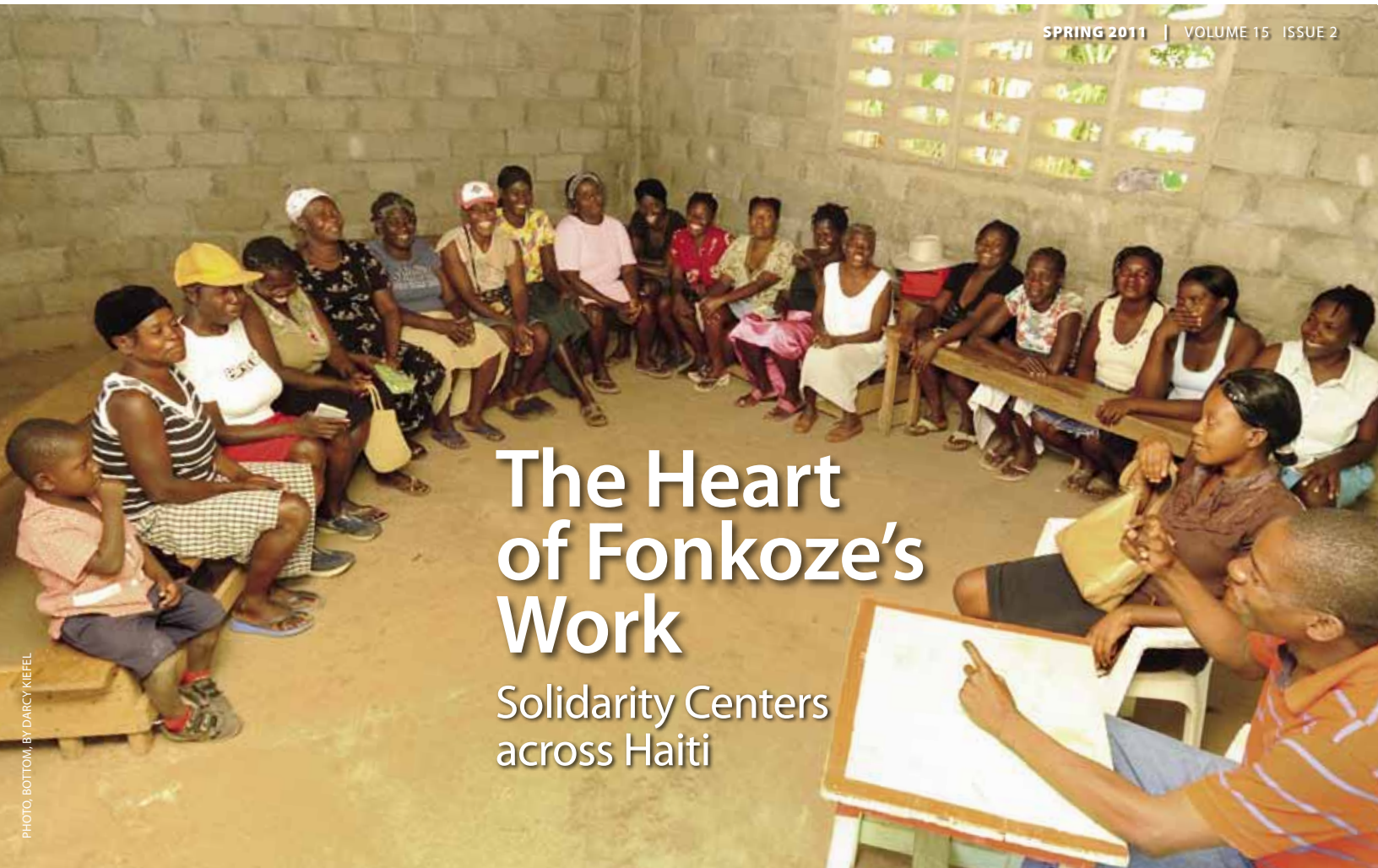


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# Nouvel Fonkoze

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## The Heart of Fonkoze's Work

Solidarity Centers  
across Haiti

What happens in  
Solidarity Centers is  
often about what clients  
do together, not what  
Fonkoze does for them.

**O**ften when we think of Fonkoze, the bank on which Haiti's poor can rely, we think of the forty-four branches across Haiti. This network is crucial to Fonkoze's work, allowing us to provide financial services in some of the most remote parts of the country, close to the markets where our clients live and work. It is Fonkoze's network of nearly 2,000 Solidarity Centers all across Haiti, however, that truly form the heart of Fonkoze.

Members spend most of their month putting credit to work in their micro-enterprises, taking care of their families and putting food on the table. But, twice a month they come together with other members in center meetings of 30-50 clients.

Centers meet close to where our clients live to minimize the disruption to their lives and livelihoods. Often our staff must travel two hours, by motorcycle,

**Members of a Solidarity Center gather in a house for their bi-monthly meeting.**

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## Father Joseph's Letter

Dear Friends of Fonkoze:

In my lifetime, I've seen and experienced many things. As a child growing up in rural Haiti, in Fondwa, my world was a mountain community where peasant farmers eked out a living from the land and mothers sold food at the rural market. I was one of the lucky ones sent to school, and my world expanded.



Today, most of us — even students in my rural community — have access to a global community and endless information (of course, that's dependant on generator power and a working laptop). We hear of amazing advancements made across the globe, and we mourn the news of others' struggles in far away lands. We understand we are not alone.

One common thread — one clear message — is evident: we need one another. In my home of Fondwa, the community works together in the face of tremendous challenges to improve our lives. Throughout Haiti, we experienced the support of the world in the wake of last year's earthquake. At Fonkoze, the very essence of our work is one of solidarity.

Fonkoze provides mechanisms throughout rural Haiti to harness and strengthen solidarity and local communities. You will read in this newsletter the ways this plays out:

- Haitians living outside of Haiti are building important investment networks through Fonkoze to support their friends, families, and hometowns;
- Fonkoze staff doggedly support the most marginalized rural women as they make the brave decision to change their lives;
- Donors in the U.S. continue to forge partnerships in their own communities and in Haiti to make the work of Fonkoze possible; and most importantly,
- Thousands of Fonkoze clients gather regularly across rural Haiti in Fonkoze Solidarity Centers in a show of grassroots development.

We need one another — Diaspora, donors, staff, clients and members — to continue the mission of Fonkoze. Together, we weave a strong basket that carries the hopes of the Haitian people.

Sincerely,

Joseph B. Philippe, CSSp

### FONKOZE BRANCH OFFICES

<i>Creole / French</i>	Mibalè / Mirebalais
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Leyogàn / Léogane	
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# Tools and Education to Swell the Diaspora's Support of Haiti

The story of Haiti's past and the hopes of Haiti's future extend beyond the borders of western Hispaniola, the island it shares with the Dominican Republic. Lasting change can only come from Haitians themselves. In Haiti, Fonkoze is working tirelessly to provide the tools and services to make the dreams of a nation come alive. In the US, Canada, and around the world, Haitians of all backgrounds are doing the same.

From the first days of Fonkoze, there was a vision that the Diaspora, Haitians living outside of Haiti, must be involved in achieving our goals. Many members of the Diaspora are doctors, lawyers, accountants, nurses, and engineers, the skills that Haiti badly needs. Regardless of whether they are skilled or unskilled, rich or poor, the more than 2 million Haitians living abroad are a powerful force for rebuilding their home country.

In 2007, Fonkoze and partners like the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Fund for Agriculture Development, initiated our largest outreach to the Haitian Diaspora yet. Fonkoze — working with Katleen Felix — built a database of nearly 350 Haitian Hometown Associations, groups dedicated to communes and villages in Haiti, through the US, Canada, the Caribbean and Europe. The result has been a tremendous resource for the entire Diaspora which can more easily bring different hometown associations together for conversations and projects.



As with so many around the world, the past few years have hit the Diaspora hard. Many Haitian families in the United States have experienced a financial earthquake, just as their family and friends in Haiti were in an hour of greatest need. Foreclosures, unemployment, and rising education costs have stunted the dreams of thousands of families. Yet many took money from their credit cards, cashed out 401k plans, and cleaned out their savings accounts to send money to Haiti and help earthquake survivors.

Fonkoze has also committed itself to helping Haitians living in the United States manage their financial futures. Alongside Appleseed, a non-profit network, we developed a series of five brochures in English and Haitian Creole which teach important lessons about insurance, mortgages, credit and debit cards, and sending money to Haiti.

In 2011, Fonkoze is working to build more financial literacy training for the Diaspora and to host more seminars than ever before. Through Zafèn and education, we're encouraging investment in small businesses that are viable in Haiti, require small amounts of capital and minimize risk, while providing jobs and profits. With the support of the Inter American Foundation, Fonkoze and the Haitian Hometown Associations Resource Group is piloting a revolving fund to match investment of the Diaspora for replicable, sustainable businesses in Haiti.

Every year, the Diaspora sends nearly two billion dollars to Haiti in remittances, payments to send nieces and nephews to school, repair houses, and put food on the table of their loved ones. Many



Members of the Diaspora participate in a Fonkoze/Appleseed led training-of-trainers session on financial literacy at Long Island University.

Haitian families depend on this money, so Fonkoze has always sought ways to make each transfer as inexpensive as possible. It's not uncommon for a sender to pay 10% or more of each transfer in fees. Through agreements with socially responsible transfer companies and the development of its own system, Fonkoze offers some of the lowest possible prices. Through its 44 branches across Haiti, we are able to payout the money as close to where the recipient lives as possible. •

As with so many around the world, the past few years have hit the Diaspora hard. Many Haitian families in the United States have experienced a financial earthquake, just as their family and friends in Haiti were in an hour of greatest need.



being taught to every member of Fonkoze. Many clients not only brought this valuable knowledge back to their families, they told their friends and neighbors.

More importantly, this is the first time many women have ever become leaders of their peers. By participating in Fonkoze's democratic process they are learning the essential skills they need to make real change from the grassroots. As Father Joseph declared when he founded Fonkoze, our mission is to build the economic foundation for democracy in Haiti. Core to this mission is giving women the education, power, and solidarity that they need to overcome any challenges they face.

What happens in Solidarity Centers is often about what clients do together, not what Fonkoze does for them. Solidarity centers are diverse, powerful factories for change. Fonkoze's education program, built on the teachings of influential Brazilian educator Paulo Friere, trains literate members of Solidarity Centers to teach those who cannot read and write. Clients work together to overcome illiteracy and gain essential business skills.

It has been said many times that Haiti's future will be brighter as all Haitians work together to build their country. The power of solidarity, of coming together to achieve the common goal of a better life, is profound. Through Fonkoze, women across Haiti are striving to achieve the goals and dreams of their lifetime. This is how nations are built, everyone doing their part and working "shoulder-to-shoulder" in every remote corner of Haiti. ●

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

boat, horse, and foot, from the nearest branch to reach the meetings. Clients not only repay their loans, they receive education classes, and access health screenings and services. They work together to discuss what is happening in their lives, solve tough problems they are having with their families and in their community, and support each other in the difficult climb out of poverty.

These meetings of women, who otherwise are scattered across remote areas of Haiti, are also the perfect platform to deliver essential services and information, like during the cholera epidemic in the fall of 2011. Fonkoze staff at every center meeting delivered emergency information and supplies to help fight cholera. They taught lessons like how



to purify water to avoid contracting the disease, what to do on the long journey to a health care facility, and how to handle those who die and their belongings so that others don't become sick.

In places where there is little or no government, and no other way for women to organize, the effect of Solidarity Centers on the entire community can be profound. Women bring home information about subjects like cholera or children's rights to their families, friends, and neighbors and become ambassadors in the most dire circumstances.

After the earthquake, Fonkoze developed a brand new education module on disaster risk reduction for families that is

# Fonkoze USA's Development Partners Looking to the Future

BY CHARLES GRAVITZ | CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, FONKOZE USA



In addition to supporting the work of Fonkoze, Fonkoze USA also supports Development Partners; smaller groups who rely upon us to process their tax-deductible donations, adhere to U.S. regulations, and provide due diligence. During my recent visit to Haiti, I met with representatives of several of these groups.

One of the most compelling visits was with the *Daughters of Mary*, a religious community that runs schools for marginalized children. Since their Motherhouse was located next to the National Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, most of their leadership was killed or injured in the earthquake. Their central office collapsed, as did their Mother House, and all of their schools were destroyed or badly damaged. The only structure left intact now serves as their temporary Mother House: a build-

ing with only eight bedrooms and two bathrooms and yet houses up to 100 people. Despite their hardships the Daughters of Mary are looking to the future. Their dream is to rebuild their Mother House and schools.

The *Association of the Peasants of Fondwa* is a grassroots organization that envisions a new rural Haiti populated with sustainably and holistically developed communities that promote the civil and human rights of the poor. While the earthquake destroyed its university, orphanage, primary/secondary school, and health center the spirit of its members lives on as embodied by its University students determined to make Haiti a better place.

*Foyer des Filles de Dieu* provides a safe and loving home to 65 girls while preparing them to be self-sufficient adults with the ability to earn a living. The week of my visit was the first time since the earthquake that many of the girls felt secure

enough to sleep inside in their bedrooms instead of in an open air dining area.

*Visitation House Projects* honors the memory of Antoine Izméry a Haitian businessman and pro-democracy activist assassinated in 1993. It provides accommodations for visitors and U.S. parishes working with social, economic and political justice delegations, runs a neighborhood cyber café, and maintains a soccer field that serves as a playground for the children of the neighborhood. Until recently this field contained a tent city for those who lost their homes in the earthquake. The soccer field will soon be restored to its

former glory, including the UN Declaration of Human Rights inscribed in Creole on its walls.

*Haitian Health Allies* works to improve the lives of individuals, mostly women, affected by HIV/AIDS in the Jakmel area.

*Kay Lasante* operates a health clinic in a very poor neighborhood outside of Port-au-Prince. Founded by Bishop Thomas Gumbleton and members of the House of Grace Catholic Worker House in Philadelphia, *Kay Lasante* has strong donor support and a dedicated Haitian staff of doctors, nurses, and administrators.

*NA Sonje Foundation* offers a place that encourages understanding based on respectful and equal relationships between people of different cultures.

All of these Development Partners can be supported through your contribution checks made out to Fonkoze USA (or via online or credit card contributions) by specifying the group for which your donation is to be restricted. ●

# The Enormous Challenge of Overcoming Catastrophic Poverty

BY JAMES KURZ WITH REPORTING BY STEVE WERLIN

**A**t the moment, Fonkoze has 1,234 participants in *Chemen Lavi Miyò* (CLM). Most have more than a year left in the program, but some will graduate this fall. Scaling from 150 participants in the first round to 250 clients in the second and finally to 1,000 with the help of The Mastercard Foundation has taught us many things about the depth of poverty Fonkoze is targeting.

We've written many times in this newsletter about these women and their families. Not only are they extraordinarily poor, they are also often deeply troubled. They lack even a basic level of confidence and trust. In some of the worse cases, they suffer from a disability or need serious psychological counseling.

On paper, the interventions Fonkoze makes are relatively straightforward. We rebuild their house so that it is durable and sheltering, see their children are enrolled in school, teach them important skills and lessons, introduce assets into their life so they can build a business, provide a small stipend for food in the first six months,

among other things. In reality, every family's situation is different and dire, and needs special judgment and attention. The economic and social facts that have kept our CLM members in extreme poverty are both stubborn and complex. Our case workers need to work very hard.

Nearly all of our participants struggle with the men in their lives, an example of a typical thorny complication. As they have always been catastrophically poor, they have bounced between men who have promised to take care of them, only to have them leave. This leads to many pregnancies and no income to then feed the children. One client who had her fourth child just a month ago, Beverly, recently told her case manager



**Top, Members of a Village Poverty Reduction Community hold a vote. Bottom, Case manager Bonison helps CLM client Guerline LOUIS learn to write her name in Boukan Kare, Haiti.**

that the man she is living with “is already pressuring me to have another child with him.” Things are looking up though as she makes strong choices.

“I have two girls already, and I'd rather take care of them,” she said.

Though each situation is different, there's nothing casual or informal about weekly client visits. Case workers follow a set of procedures that have been honed over four years of experience. There's even a laminated checklist they bring into the field outlining the ten-step process.

One of the most important of these steps is the discussion of the weekly issue. In the course of designing the program, Fonkoze identified ten lessons that we be-



PHOTO, BOTTOM, BY BEN DEPP; TOP, BY STEVE WERLIN

lieve are most critical for our members to learn as they attempt to change their situation. These lessons involve changing behaviors in key aspects of the lives: nutrition, management of drinking water, hygiene, pre-and-post natal healthcare, and others. Each week the case managers discuss one of them.

We do a lot for our participants over the course of 18 months, but achieving success demands something greater, a sustainable and deep support system. They need support that is always there for them, not just during once weekly visits. Our clients don't have cell phones, which leaves them with their neighbors and villages.

That is the purpose behind the Village Poverty Reduction Committees. Together with the CLM members we build a list of potential members, making sure to add key locals like school principals, veterinary workers, business people, and elected officials when possible.

The committee members become resources, helping CLM participants protect and manage their assets, aiding the resolution of conflicts with their neighbors, and providing emergency assistance. The committee works together to help some of the poorest in their community become productive and healthy, an outcome that is in the interest of the entire village. The process builds a sense of responsibility for the most vulnerable.

Among those in CLM, some will exceed expectations and other will be harder cases. Even when they graduate, life will be hard for some; rural Haiti is an unforgiving place. With Fonkoze, however, they are slowly escaping the most virulent type of poverty and are building the tools they need to step forward most days. It takes the efforts of many working together, but the future looks much brighter. •

## Spotlight on Our Donors: Matt and Margaret Balitsaris

BY FRANCIS WU

**M**att and Margaret Balitsaris, long-time supporters of Fonkoze, first began making trips to Haiti in the late 1980s and were “bitten by the Haiti bug,” so to speak. Through their work with a major NGO in Haiti, the Balitsarises noticed that gaps remained in the work

to be done in Haiti — significant gaps they felt could be filled by smaller grassroots organizations that were more agile, nimble and less hampered by bureaucracy.

In the late 1990s, Matt and Margaret learned about two other, smaller organizations doing work in Haiti — Partners in Health and “a couple of ladies who started a bank.” Those ladies were Anne Hastings and Leigh Carter of Fonkoze. Of course, once involved, Matt and Margaret realized those “two ladies” were working with a truly Haitian bank founded by Fr. Joseph Philippe of Haiti.

As the Balitsarises became more involved with Fonkoze, it became apparent to them that Fonkoze provided much more of the answer to addressing the needs of the Haitian people: filling the many voids left by a failed state government; working at a grassroots level to draw Haitians back into a functioning society; and providing a comprehensive approach to governance. According to Matt, “What Fonkoze has accomplished, in light of the natural disasters, political turmoil, and other systemic problems in Haiti, is extraordinary.”

Matt and Margaret have been avid supporters of Fonkoze since 1997 to pres-



**Fonkoze donors and long-time Haiti supporters Matt and Margaret Balitsaris at home.**

ent, and for the past several years Matt has been and continues to be a Fonkoze USA Board member. Last year, in the wake of the earthquake, Margaret initiated and hosted an event in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to raise awareness of Fonkoze and the Haitian people. In

organizing the event, Margaret solicited roughly a dozen friends, who in turn called upon their friends, both in-state and out-of-state, to plan, coordinate and attend the event. A Haitian gospel choir (the same that performed at Fonkoze's New York event earlier this year!) performed at the Bucks County event at the behest of a NY-based friend. Another friend provided the venue — a wonderful barn located in the countryside — free of charge. In addition to charging attendees a modest ticket price, the group sent personal letters to their friends and acquaintances asking for sponsorships of the event. Much of the food and drink was provided as in-kind donations from local vendors. Altogether the event was attended by some 250 people and raised roughly \$50,000 that was matched dollar-for-dollar by The Entrepreneur's Foundation of Austin, TX.

It is precisely this type of community connection — and friends telling friends — that has been so instrumental in raising and spreading awareness of Fonkoze and its mission. Our hats go off to Matt and Margaret Balitsaris — many, many thanks for your support of Fonkoze over the years! •



**Fonkoze**

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## A Lasting Legacy for Haiti

Today's natural disasters and life struggles remind us more must be done to support those in need throughout the world. Many of us over our own lifetimes make substantial commitments to Haiti and to the Haitian people. But our dream is for a better Haiti where all can participate in the development of their country, where rural economies thrive, where families have education, health and adequate shelter. We all want to see resources brought to bear in solving the challenges faced by those just an hour or so from our own borders.

By making bequests and other "planned gifts," you can continue to be a partner with Fonkoze and make an important difference in Haiti.

Fonkoze has lived up to its title as "the bank on which the poor of Haiti can rely." A Haitian institution, Fonkoze will exist for its clients and members for the long-term. While some of its programs are self-sustaining, Fonkoze will always require financial assistance from people like you to continue its important work.

By making bequests and other "planned gifts," you can continue to be a partner with Fonkoze, knowing together we are making an important difference in Haiti. You can leave a lasting legacy towards grassroots economic development in Haiti. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Fonkoze USA Shoulder-to-Shoulder Society, please contact Leigh Carter, Executive Director, at 202-628-9033 or [lcarter@fonkoze.org](mailto:lcarter@fonkoze.org).

### Fonkoze Financial Services CEO to Speak at the Global Microcredit Summit

Fonkoze Financial Services CEO Anne Hastings will author a paper for the Global Microcredit Summit to be held November 14-17, 2011 in Valladolid, Spain. The Summit will bring together more than 2,000 participants from over 100 countries.

Confirmed participants include H.M. Queen Sofia of Spain, Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus and Sir Fazle Abed of BRAC. Registration rates increase July 1, 2011. For more information go to [www.globalmicrocreditsummit2011.org/](http://www.globalmicrocreditsummit2011.org/).

### Fonkoze USA Delegation to Haiti

**September 24-29, 2011**

Fonkoze USA will host its annual delegation to Haiti this September. Join us for an incredible, in-depth view of Fonkoze's work in Haiti.

- Learn how Fonkoze is helping women entrepreneurs in the poorest country in this hemisphere as they struggle to climb the staircase out of poverty;
- Understand the economics and realities of life in the rural countryside of a developing country in the midst of disaster recovery;
- Experience firsthand the successes and challenges of grassroots economic development in post-earthquake Haiti; and
- Meet Fonkoze clients and staff, and learn about their lives, their businesses, their hopes and dreams for a new Haiti.

The trip costs \$2,000 for all in-country activities including travel, hotels, activities and meals. It does not include airfare to and from Haiti. Please contact Leigh Carter at [lcarter@fonkoze.org](mailto:lcarter@fonkoze.org) or 202-628-9033 for information and an application. Your completed application and a \$250 non-refundable deposit to Fonkoze USA will be due by August 1, 2011.