

Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center

Red and Blue Book of Philanthropy

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Dear Friends,

In 2014 we kicked-off the Haitian-American Community Philanthropy Campaign, a project aimed at recognizing the transformative and powerful impact of community philanthropy. The campaign's slogan is "**Haitian-American Philanthropy begins with me and you!**" An integral part of this campaign is the acknowledgement of those who give and the different forms of giving throughout the Haitian Diaspora. Thus, *The Red and Blue Book of Philanthropy*, whose first edition coincides with our 15th anniversary.

The Red and Blue Book of Philanthropy is also a celebration of those who have contributed to the bright journey of the Haitian community and especially to those who have supported Sant La. Funders, sponsors, event donors, client donors, all, *The Red and Blue Book of Philanthropy* is our thank you for your generosity, time, compassion and vision.

It is our hope that the publication will document and track the engagement of the Haitian community in Philanthropy, an engagement that will continue to grow impressively with your support and participation.

On behalf of the entire team, I **Thank You** for your commitment to our mission.

Forever Sant La,

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The Face of Haitian-American Philanthropy

Less than 50 years ago (circa 1977), Haitian “boat people” settled in South Florida, creating diverse, vibrant and culturally rich communities throughout Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. The Haitian population of South Florida is estimated at about 400,000, according to a 2014 Migration Policy Institute report. Haitian enclaves throughout South Florida have evolved into more complex landscapes where assimilation into mainstream culture has intersected with deliberate attempts to retain and nurture the cultural identity of the homeland. Haitian-Americans are also fully integrating into South Florida’s cultural mosaic, demonstrating a voracious appetite for greater civic participation. This trend is evidenced by the number of Haitian-Americans elected to local and statewide political office; the number of Haitian-Americans who are civically active and serving on mainstream boards; Haitian-Americans building faith and educational institutions; Haitian-Americans strengthening and widening media networks, including wide-ranging radio, television and social media outlets; and Haitian-American entrepreneurs engaged in the evolving information technology and biotech sectors.

South Florida’s Haitian-American community enjoys an active civic life teeming with multiple organizations. Hometown and student associations as well as Diaspora coalitions are relevant examples. Professional associations such as: the Haitian American Nurses Association (HANA), the Association of Haitian American Social Workers, the Haitian Lawyers Association (HLA), The Association of Haitian Educators of Dade (AHED), the South Florida Chapter of the Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad (AMHE), the National Association of Elected Officials, (NAEO), Haitian American Professional Coalition (HAPC), the Haitian Association of Engineers and Scientists (HAES), and the Haitian American Chamber Of Commerce (HACCOFF) are also testaments to the community’s active civic life. The community also boasts museums and cultural venues, including the Little Haiti Cultural Center, the Manno Sanon Soccer Park, the Haitian Museum and Archives and The Haitian Heritage Museum.

Social service organizations also play a critical role not just in providing services but in also helping to create more informed and engaged citizens who are called to actively participate in state, local and national debates.

As the profile of the community has evolved, the needs identified in the early days of settlement have also evolved. Issues of employment security, food and health security, educational achievement, domestic violence and human trafficking, juvenile delinquency and immigration continue to pose major challenges for many Haitian American families. For many, the path out of these challenges requires the support of community-based organizations and churches. Community-based social service agencies continue to be the source of legitimate and trusted information where many in need of support seek guidance and assistance.

Any effort to understand the Haitian community of South Florida must include an understanding of Haiti's economic and political conditions. With a strong sense of obligation and duty to the families still in Haiti, many Haitians and Haitian-Americans continue to send remittances home. The plethora of money transfer agencies in South Florida symbolizes the strong bond between Haitian-Americans and the families and communities they left behind. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that the Haitian Diaspora is 954,000 strong and that Haitians living abroad are sending over \$1 billion dollars in remittances to Haiti (MPI: May 2014 Haitian Immigrants in the United States.) The International Development Bank has determined that these remittances represent over 30 percent of Haiti's budget.

In addition to supporting relatives and family members through remittances, many Haitians are also community investors. *The Jean-Ricot Mareus Scholarship Fund* is an example of Haitians investing in the community. The scholarship covers two years at Miami-Dade College for Haitian students who have financial need but are not eligible for financial aid. Other Haitian-Americans have formalized their philanthropy by creating charitable organizations to provide support to women, children and to remote communities. Some of these organizations focus on specific geographic areas in Haiti. For example, *Mandodo Foundation*, created by Ed and Jeff Lozama to honor the legacy of their late mother, focuses on Southern Haiti. *Little Flowers Foundation* and *Haiti Cherie Heritage Foundation* work in Petit-Goave and Grand-Goave respectively, focusing on education. Children in Cayes-Jacmel and Jacmel benefit from the philanthropy of Bobby and Tamara Philippeaux, who organize annual distributions of school supplies and holiday gifts. *The Lambi Fund of Haiti* is a philanthropic initiative of a group of Haitian Americans who wanted to support development in Haiti's rural communities.

PRODEV is a Haitian-led foundation, dedicated to providing education for under-privileged children in Haiti. *A Day with Santa* is an initiative spearheaded by the Beliard Family of Cap-Haitien in an effort to provide local children the opportunity to experience the magic of Christmas. Many of the professional associations listed previously also organize missions to different parts of the country either around health, education, housing, agriculture or infrastructure projects.

The earthquake of January 12, 2010 played a critical role in reigniting the spirit of philanthropy in South Florida's Haitian community, particularly among first generation Haitian-Americans. Many became reacquainted with Haiti and felt compelled to get involved. Others created their own not-for-profit initiatives focused on alleviating the impact of poverty on Haiti's poor and disenfranchised populations. In a 2012 report assessing South Florida organizations' involvement with earthquake survivors, Sant La identified over 100 organizations engaged in humanitarian work in Haiti, including faith-based and regional associations.

The take away is that philanthropy in our community is also evolving. In the past, the community engaged in crisis philanthropy and disaster philanthropy, that is giving in response to appeals addressing a crisis, such as refugees in need of help, families in distress or for funeral services or in response to natural disasters in Haiti. Today, Haitian-Americans are increasingly engaging in discretionary philanthropy, that is choosing to give because they are invested in the work being done, and they have access to the information needed to discern a good philanthropic investment from a bad one. The new Notre Dame d'Haiti Church is a glorious example.

Sant La's challenge is to harness this spirit of giving and build a movement; a movement which will also begin to track charitable giving, demonstrating to the world that Haitians and Haitian-Americans give, have the capacity to give and understand the transformative power of their philanthropy. This annual publication, *The Red and Blue Book of Philanthropy* is a step in the movement-building process. In each subsequent publication, we will feature the good work of organizations and individuals engaged in philanthropy in South Florida, in the cities throughout The United States with large or small Haitian enclaves, in Haiti and throughout the Haitian Diaspora.





Lessons in Giving

By Edwidge Danticat

When I was applying to college in the 1980s, I remember being shocked to learn what my parents' combined income was. Let's just say that it was in the lower five digits, and not enough, it seemed, to feed, clothe, and house a family of six.

My father was a cab driver and my mother worked in factories in the garment district in Manhattan, where she earned minimum wage. Yet you'd never know that, in part, because of their generosity. In addition to supporting several families in Haiti—paying school fees, medical bills, and financing the occasional wedding and funeral—they contributed regularly to my uncle's church, school, and clinic in Port-au-Prince. All of this made my parents seem rich to me, even though I knew I was never to speak about it. Whenever my parents practiced what one would now call philanthropy, if I ever pointed it out, they would quickly shut me down.

My three brothers and I were even ordered to practice giving among ourselves. As children, if one of our godparents gave one of us five dollars, we'd all immediately do the math in our heads. The recipient of the five dollars would keep two and the other siblings would each get one.

My brothers and I also learned from our parents that giving does not only involve money. My father, a church deacon, mentored many young men in our church. "The best thing you can do for your life is to get an education," he would always tell them, just as he had always told us.

All this was done quietly, with no chest pumping, no look at me, no look how great and generous I am. People in need have a little bit of their dignity chipped off every single day, my father used to say. That's why whenever my parents ever gave anything to anyone, they always made it seem as though it was their privilege to do it, and that in accepting their gifts the person was doing them a favor.

These days, it's very hard to give the way my parents did. Discreet and humble giving can seem like small giving or not giving at all. I will break my parents' rule and share a personal story of giving.

After my daughters were born, I asked my mother-in-law what we could do in their name for the children in the small southern Haitian town where she spends most of her time. She said the children needed livestock as a kind of piggy bank, particularly goats. So our family used some of the money that had been given to our daughters as babies to buy some goats for the children in a school we were supporting.

Each time the goats had kids; they were supposed to be passed on to another child. One Christmas when we went back to host a Christmas party for the children, some of the children brought their goats for our daughters to see. And right then and there, one of the goats gave birth. To twins. I saw this then, and still see it now, as a lesson in the duality of giving, the type of giving that is never one sided, but becomes a kind of rebirth for both sides.

A few years ago, three days after my uncle lost his wife of fifty-six years, we were sitting outside his house in Port-au-Prince when a woman walked by and squeezed two gourdes, the equivalent of twenty cents, into his palm. This woman was a water seller and it had taken her perhaps most of the day to earn that amount.

"For the funeral costs," she told my uncle.

"Mèsi. Mèsi," my uncle kept thanking her as though he had just received a fortune. Getting those two gourdes and other priceless gifts he had received from others over the years, is what guided his own way of giving, he said. Of course you want to give as much as you can manage to give, he said. But the spirit in which you give counts just as much as what, or how much, you give. You want to always give just as you might want to receive, if the tables were turned. With honor, respect, and humility.

The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, Edwidge Danticat is the author of numerous, critically-acclaimed books, including Claire of the Sea Light; Brother, I'm Dying; Krik? Krak!; The Dew Breaker; and Breath, Eyes, Memory. She has been published in The New York Times, The New Yorker, and elsewhere.





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A Message

from Bernard Fils-Aimé

For many of us, the journey to America transitioned through the Bahamas, where the Haitian migrants generally defined themselves as either the *Vyewo* or the *Just-Come*. And of course, the underlying cultural drivers that determined survival were individual resilience and community solidarity. It was expected that a *Vyewo* would assist and facilitate a *Just-Come* as much as the *Just-Come* needed to strive to survive at first and ultimately become self-sufficient to meet a fundamental tenet: Send money home!

Thus grew the concept *Vyewo Bare*, one who, because of the failure to ever show solidarity with those left behind in the home country, reaches the end of the rope and returning home is no longer an option...“*li bare!*” This is to say that indeed, in our own winsomely unsophisticated ways, we are a community of philanthropists!

Today, it is high noon in our communities: overwhelmed parents competing with the streets to raise children; economic despair; violence; and a public school system that continues to fail the poor. Philanthropy has never been more needed in our communities. However, we may have to go beyond this old “philanthropic impulse” that leaves untouched the core elements driving this American society steeped on extreme inequalities. The growing, prosperous Haitian-American middle class has a moral obligation to build and sustain the organizations that seek to empower young girls on their journey to adolescence and adulthood; affirm the rights of urban and farm-workers for a living (not minimum) wage; expand access to free medical care or highly affordable housing for all; and strengthen our public schools.

Philanthropy, then, is about solidarity and survival – we must keep alive the values that make it not only possible to survive and succeed as a community, but more importantly to sustain and institutionalize the social infrastructure for continued progress. The alternative is to become “*yon Vyewo Bare wi.*”

—Bernard Fils-Aimé is the President of Trilogy Foundation and a Board Member of HELP (Haitian Education & Leadership Program)

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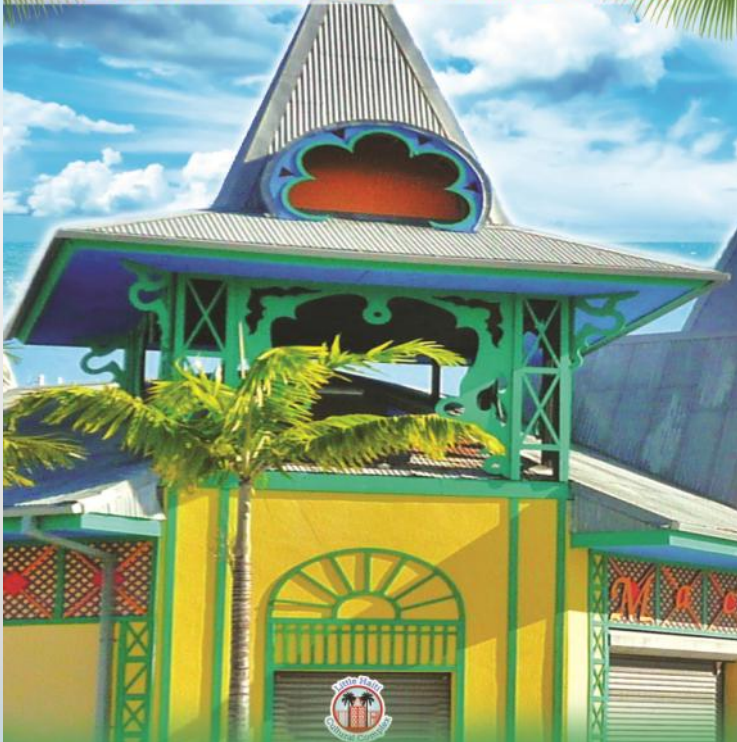
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South Florida Professional Associations and Social Service Organizations

Haitian Heritage Museum
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Haitian Hometown Association Resource Group
Haitian Lawyers Association

Haitian Medical Association
Haitian Support Group
Haitian Youth and Community Center
Little Haiti Citizens on Patrol
Little Haiti Cultural Complex
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Haitian Philanthropy: Why Should Haitians Give?

By *Leonie Hermantín**

While visiting a Haitian elementary school that served poor children, I was strolling in the school yard when I was attracted to a group of four 7-year-old girls deeply engrossed in conversation. I was captivated by one of their classmate's engaging rendition of a Jean de La Fontaine fable, *La Cigale et La Fourmi* (the Cricket and the Ant). In this cautionary tale about frugality, the ant worked hard all summer, saving, scrimping and storing food for the coming winter months while the Cricket spent its days singing. When winter came, the Cricket went begging for food. The Ant did not share her goods and reminded Cricket that since he had been singing all summer he should now dance.

To my great surprise the girls began to discuss the fable, opining that the Ant had been too mean, arguing that no one should be allowed to starve. When I reminded them that the cricket had not worked all summer, they remained adamant that no one should be allowed to starve. "We would give him a warning," they said, "but we would never let him starve." These 7-year-old girls are children for whom scarcity is not an abstraction. They have known hunger intimately and have endured in their short lives seasons of drought, hunger and malnutrition. They remember too well doing without and are already unwavering in their beliefs that sharing is the best and only strategy for survival in the wake of adversity.

It has been said by many that as Haitians, philanthropy is not within our traditions. Some have argued that our generosity, the alms we give, and the tithe we dutifully share are linked exclusively to rituals of faith and service; it is not about giving to each other, it is about giving thanks to God, the Saints and the Spirits. This unexpected encounter on a school yard, in a poor neighborhood, in rural Haiti, clearly belies such widely held beliefs.

The evidence is clear in rural and urban Haitian communities that strategies of mutual support and charity are deeply ingrained in our traditions. From the mutual aid strategies called *Kes vet*, set up by grassroots organizations that come to the assistance of the elderly and the sick in their midst, to the traditions of *konbit*, communities would not have survived without mutual support and solidarity. Moreover, while we grew up in a country without formal safety nets, many of us know that our personal and collective successes were made possible by acts of generosity from friends, acquaintances and strangers alike.

Why should Haitians give? We should give because we remember. Why should Haitians give? We should give because we must uphold our own traditions of giving. Our *konbit* is about community building, about protecting the vulnerable: struggling families, the elderly, victims of fraud, the unemployed, immigrants in search of direction. We should give because we care, because they represent us. We give to reward those who have honored our trust, who have not forgotten the weakest and who continue to uphold our traditions of mutual aid and solidarity.

We are like those little girls on the school ground, offended by poverty and unassailable in our beliefs that our philanthropic largesse defines and empowers us as a community. Why should Haitians give? Giving is what keeps us strong when the cyclical droughts weaken.

—*Leonie M. Hermantin is a Community Development Consultant who works with Haiti based NGO's on projects that provide capacity building support in development, sustainable project development, Diaspora outreach, and bottom up community driven development.





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Why I Give

By Marie Bell

I am grateful for my life, for my health, and for the fact that I can put food on the table. There are so many that are not able to feed their families and God forbid they are also facing health challenges. I have been given much.

I like to share my good fortune and help those whose situation is less fortunate than mine. Gratefulness and sharing will always come back two-fold. It is so easy to make a difference in someone's life. Sometimes it can be as simple as donating a thanksgiving turkey or ham, or donating a Christmas present to a child. Sometimes it's even enough to say a kind word.

This is why I give, but people are philanthropic for different reasons. They give in order to build better communities, for a sense of well being, for spiritual reasons, and/or for social justice. Being philanthropic is a way to connect with humanity. If we want to see better communities, then we need to get involved. It feels good. Give the gift of giving and pay it forward.

—Marie Florence Bell is a public affairs consultant with many years of experience working in both the policy and political arenas.



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- ✧ Founded on December 6, 2000 and launched start-up planning activities.
- ✧ Kicked-off our service on June 16, 2001.
- ✧ Established a community resource with breakthrough performance, collaboration, accountability and transparency.
- ✧ Recognized as a trusted and credible voice in articulating Haitian community issues, challenges and aspirations.
- ✧ Conducted successful advocacy for government policies/ investments in health and education that benefit the Haitian community.
- ✧ Published a series of "White Papers" about local Haitian community issues that have augmented the body of research about South Florida's Haitian community.
- ✧ Commissioned two demographic reports about the Haitian community in Miami-Dade County from renowned research institutions.
- ✧ Produced two ground-breaking community documentation projects: Little Haiti in Pictures and Miami's Haitian Pioneers
- ✧ Created a flagship weekly television talk-show, Teleskopi, which informs and engages the viewing audience and has aired for the past ten years with an over 350,000 household audience.
- ✧ Set up an Organizational Endowment at Miami Foundation to secure our future.
- ✧ Establish a Scholarship Fund for undocumented academically deserving Haitian students.
- ✧ Launched a Community Philanthropy Campaign.
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