



Blue Mountain Project – Newsletter

August, 2005 • Volume 2, Issue 1

A Note from the Executive Director

June was an incredible ending to the Blue Mountain Project's 2004-2005 fiscal year. The Board of Directors, committee members, and 30 additional volunteers traveled to Hagley Gap for the 1st Annual Jamaican Jamboree, followed by the Hagley Gap Health Clinic Dedication Ceremony and Dance on June 25th. Approximately 200 people were in attendance, including Member of Parliament James Robertson, Counselor Dwyer, Mayor of Morant Bay, representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Social Development Commission, Jamaica Association for Mental Retardation, St Andrew Ambulance Society and more. It was a wonderful day of education, empowerment and celebration!

Our new year presents us with both challenges and opportunities as we focus on "HIV/AIDS Awareness" and "Clean Water Under the Bridge." This means that we will be concentrating on educating the indigenous population about the facts surrounding HIV/AIDS, as well as getting clean water to our newly finished clinic and the residents in and around Hagley Gap. Secondly, we will be researching a variety of ways to build a sustainable bridge between Hagley Gap and Mount Charles, an area that is continuously affected by floods caused by heavy rains and hurricanes preventing residents from having access to Kingston for food, water and other necessary supplies.

As you can imagine, this will be no easy task. Here is what you can do to help:

1. Make a financial contribution to the Blue Mountain Project.
2. Participate in the Service Learning Program.
3. Donate one or more of the following items: general medical supplies and educational materials, condoms, high protein foods, water purifiers and general office supplies.
4. Forward this newsletter to your friends and family.

Together we can make a difference in the lives of those living in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica. Thank you for your continued support!

Best Regards,

Denise Cagley-Jefferson
Executive Director

BMP Calendar of Events

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| August 27 | Back to School in Style – In partnership with the Hagley Gap Youth Club, the BMP will be collecting school supplies and fees to help support less fortunate students. |
| September | Literacy Links program begins – Executive Assistant, Damian Anderson, will be teaching basic reading, writing and speaking skills to adult learners. |
| September | Nutrition Program begins – In partnership with Food for the Poor, the BMP will begin offering prepared meals and commodities to people living in the Blue Mountains. |
| December | Faith in Action – A Spiritual Retreat – please visit our website for further info |
| January | Clinic Phase II Launch |
| March | Alternative Spring Break |
| May | May Mester (with Ripon College) |
| June | 2nd Annual Jamaican Jamboree |

Needs of the Community

Each month the Blue Mountain Project has numerous requests for help from Hagley Gap and surrounding communities. Please consider sponsoring one of these requests:

- A 41-year-old woman needs arthritis and blood pressure medication. \$45 per month
- A 16-year girl that needs a prenatal check up and blood tests. \$100
- Two children in the same family have an advanced fungal infection on their scalp and legs. Medication will cost \$125.
- A 66-year-old woman needs blood pressure medication, which costs \$25 a month.
- An 84-year-old woman needs repairs on her zinc roof. Hurricane Ivan caused damage to her home last November and she does not have the resources to repair it. Putting a new roof on her house will cost \$150.

Needs of the Clinic

Saline solution; Yeast Infection Cream; Rolled bandages; Iron supplements; HIV/ AIDS literature; Condoms; High Protein food; Manual Blood Pressure Cuff; File folders for patient records

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Building the Vibe

By: Christine Topinka

I'm standing in the middle of this open-air lot in downtown Kingston. There are people everywhere outside, lining the streets with their Jerk chicken barbeques, cars and friends.

It's Monday night and we came out to one of the outdoor dancehall parties, but it's completely empty inside. Music is throbbing and echoing down the people filled streets and everyone has this rhythmic bob to them, yet on the inside the few stragglers like myself who had made their way in were still scattered along the outer edges of what would eventually be the dance floor.

Glancing at my watch I realize that dancehall parties are a lot different here in Jamaica than they are in the states. For instance, right about now the party would be raging in the states being it was almost midnight and the clubs and bars all shut down about two. In Jamaica though, some of the clubs can run all night and don't even start to pick up until midnight so that they can dance and party till the morning light starts to shine. Being the dance-aholic that I am, I didn't feel the need to wait for a full dance floor and just started to do my thing in the middle. Not too hard to miss the "whitey" on the dance floor shaking her groove thing all by her lonesome.

One of the great things about Jamaica though is they love the happy and spirited. So I continued on my merry way, dancing around people who smiled at me, teasing my Jamaican friends who hadn't made their way out onto the dance floor quite yet, and trying my hardest to drag those bobbbers out on the dance floor with me. Slowly more people found their way in and the spaces along the perimeter were starting to fill up. People still had that rhythmic sway of listening to the music but not many were dancing like me in the middle of the floor. It didn't stop my groove from getting on, I had waited years to come here and actually take part in something bigger and I wasn't going to let lack of people stop me. I was determined to dance to my little hearts content. This attracted an older Rasta man who whenever he was passing would stop to dance with me for a bit, each time showing me another signature move of the Jamaican variety. I learned to sway my knees and do the Jiggy, and also to bounce my elbows in true reggae fashion.

Completely focused now, I missed the constant trickle of people coming in and the center of the dance floor shrinking exponentially. Then at one moment, I looked up and the slow bob of people had stopped. The entire space was filled with people all dancing and moving and grinding. I stopped all motion and just took it all in. Just then my Rasta friend approached me and said, "Ah Mon, the vibe is here, can you catch it?" It was like a slap in the face, how could I miss it? It was in that moment with my Rasta man friend that I got it.

That people come and feel the music, and when everyone is feeling it, then the vibe has been built, collected, and released for everyone to enjoy. Now I am not one of the first ones to go out on the dance floor, instead I wait along the perimeters with the others, feeling the energy being collected and ready for the vibe to over take me.

Needs of the Blue Mountain Project

Internet communication is vital to the development of the Blue Mountain Project. Currently there is no landline that will support Internet connection in Hagley Gap. A laptop with satellite will help us keep in touch and make our time there much more productive.

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Arriving in Hagley Gap, without a clue of what to expect, I was immediately struck by the welcome we received from both the local people and the BMP crew. Our time was filled with lots of hard work while becoming part of a community. What we were able to accomplish during our time makes us proud. The friendships we made with the people of Hagley Gap, the BMP members and each other will be with us always.

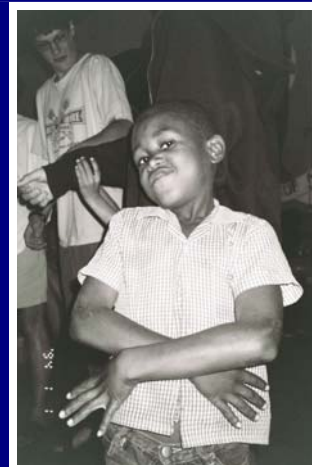
- Hope Boghosian, SLP Volunteer

I first heard about the Blue Mountain Project from Sarah Beamer, who was asking for donations in my Justice and Peace class. I had always heard about such wonderfully life changing experiences from mission trips, and I wanted to be apart of one. So the next day I ran to Sarah with all the donations I collected and asked her if she needed help carrying them not only to her car but to Jamaica. We were both very excited, but we had a lot of packing and organization to get done. Sarah made flyers and I made donation boxes and before we knew it we were on the plane headed to Jamaica, but this story is not my story so much as it is Sarah Beamer's and Denise Cagley-Jefferson's. The goal and the vision rested with these two women in their early twenties who saw an immediate need within the community resulting from Denise's experiences there 10 years prior. The year after Denise returned from her first trip to Jamaica, she met Sarah while participating in AmeriCorps NCCC. From the moment Denise told Sarah about her experience in Jamaica, they began to dream about ways that they could make a difference. During the next eight years they planned and prepared for something they thought would never become a reality. The excitement and anxiousness struck the girls as the plane began to land, and long awaited goals began to become reality as the wheels of the jet touched down...they had made it. Both Sarah and Denise would show that they have what it takes to bring life to a struggling community. This trip would prove to be one that would give us all a new perspective of life as we now know it, and they will never be the same. The memories of the experiences have stayed with me; they new depth to my spiritual life through the joy of serving Christ, "for as you have done to the least of these you have done unto me." In both our first and second trips we experienced life with the "least of these." My first experience brought me closest to feeling the pain of poverty, and taught me the joy of living with Christ and reaching out to him which outweighs any personal discomfort immeasurably.

- Jared, SLP volunteer

The BMP would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their dedication and support:

Jessica Adams, Summer Intern
St. Andrews's Episcopal Church Youth Group
Food for the Poor; Lumber Depot
Island Car Rental Ltd.
National AIDS Committee
James Robertson, Member of Parliament
Devirel Dwyer, Counselor of St. Thomas
Jamaica Association for Persons with Mental Retardation
St. John Ambulance Association



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