



Taking the plunge for CLWR

Even an air temperature of -26C was not enough to deter Rev. Jacob Quast from plunging into Rainy Lake this past New Year's Day. Rev. Quast was taking part in the Fort Frances, Ontario, Lions' Club annual Polar Bear Swim. Joining him in the water were his daughter Julia, 12, and son Liam, 9. Members of his congregation, Church of the Lutheran Hour, came out to cheer everyone on.

Sponsors contributed \$400 in support of Rev. Quast's display of bravery, half of which he generously donated to Canadian Lutheran World Relief. This was his second appearance in the Polar Bear Swim. In 2009, he raised funds for a food rescue program in Yellowknife, NWT.

In speaking with Rev. Quast yesterday by phone, he indicated that he's ready to make it three years in a row. If you happen to be in Fort Frances next New Year's Day, he'd love more company.



Rev. Jacob Quast and his children, Liam and Julia participated in the Fort Frances Polar Bear swim to raise funds for CLWR.

Haiti: seeding recovery in the countryside

By Maria Halava, ACT Alliance

In the early morning sunshine in the commune of Petit Gôave, 68 km southwest of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, hundreds of people wait. A distribution of seeds by ACT Alliance will take place any minute.

People have come from mountainous areas surrounding Petit Gôave, areas significantly hit by the earthquake. Most arrived in Petit Gôave hours ago.

The Lutheran World Federation, an ACT member, is distributing maize and bean seeds to the most vulnerable people in the area—the elderly, people from single parent households or families with many children. They are all members of a farmers' association and were selected by that association to receive seeds, LWF agronomist Plancher Rolnick says.

When distribution starts, people are called by name to come forward in groups of three. One group is given 50kg of beans, which is to be shared among three families, and 50kg of maize for nine families.

Yvès Raymond, a young farmer from the mountains, is among the first to get seeds. At noon, he leaves for home. "I left home by midnight and arrived here at 5am," he says. After queuing for several hours, he now has four measures of bean seeds and one of maize. He faces a long walk home under the blazing sunshine. Like everyone else, Yvès Raymond will plant his seeds in June, after the heavy rains. In this way, he will be able to harvest the crop in August-September.

Joseph Galnave Norre, coordinator of a farmers' association, says that for most people the crop will only cover the needs of their families. "Those

who get some surplus sell it at the market. Some people even go to Port-au-Prince to get a better price.”

Haiti’s food security situation was fragile long before the earthquake. Decades of insufficient food production left Haitians highly dependent on imports. Since the earthquake an influx of people from Port-au-Prince to rural areas has meant rural dwellers are forced to share their food with those who have fled the capital. Sixty percent of the population lives in rural areas and under the poverty line of less than two dollars a day. Keeping food production going is extremely important for farmers.

In Petit Goâve, people are relieved to get the seeds from ACT. “My parents do not have jobs at the moment, so we have had to find other ways to survive,” Lidor Roseline, a 16-year-old girl says. The family with four children is living in a temporary shelter as the family home was damaged in the earthquake. The maize and bean seeds given by ACT are used only for subsistence, as are the other vegetables the family grows.

In rural areas, many farmers lack cash to buy seeds and food prices have already gone up since the earthquake. “Seed distribution is very welcome here, since it will give people a good harvest,” Joseph Galnave Norre, from a farmers’ association, says.

Aid work is not always trouble-free. The distribution was initially planned to take place a week earlier but problems with logistics forced its postponement. People who arrived in Petit Goâve in vain last week are now worried that there won’t be enough seeds for everybody today. “This time we made sure that the truck with the seeds was already in place when the distribution was about to start,” Plancher Rolnick says. By the end of the day, 1300 farmers have received seeds. The last 200 still need to wait until the next morning.

After the distribution, ACT will see that the seeds are shared equally among the designated families. Meanwhile, it will keep distributing other items in different parts of the country as it has done since the earthquake.



A family begins the trek back to their farm carrying seeds received from the Lutheran World Federation. Photo: Maria Halava/ACT.

Employment opportunities with the LWF

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is searching for a logistics officer to be posted in Haiti to assist with the post-earthquake reconstruction program and for a finance manager for its program in the Democratic Republic of Congo. For more information about either of these positions, please visit the CLWR website: www.clwr.org.

CLWR Awareness Builder Training Event

Saturday, June 19 (10 am – 2 pm)
Reformation Lutheran Church
456 Krug Street, Kitchener, ON

Light lunch will be provided. Pre registration appreciated. Please call 1.800.661.2597 or email blorch@clwr.mb.ca to register.



We invite you to follow
CLWR on Facebook.

CLWR News Briefs are produced by Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). CLWR reports stories for the benefit and interest of its readers. News stories do not necessarily reflect CLWR policy or positions.

Donations can be made in the following ways:

- Through your local LCC or ELCIC congregation
- At www.clwr.org
- Toll free at 1.800.661.2597 (CLWR) OR in the Winnipeg area 204.694.5602
- By cheque or money order to:
Canadian Lutheran World Relief
302-393 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg MB R3B 3H6

Do you have a story to share? Send it to blorch@clwr.mb.ca, including your name and phone number.

To unsubscribe, reply to this email with "Unsubscribe Weekly Briefs" in the subject heading