

## Visit from Haiti's Orphanage Project ESPWA (Hope)



The St. Helene home for orphaned and abandoned children played host to two very welcome visitors last week. Kieran Tansey and Leo Quinn from Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA (Hope) were with us for six days to carry out essential works around the orphanage site. This was the fourth trip to Kenscoff for Kieran, the first for Leo and the sixth time that volunteers from Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA had visited in just two years.



Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA is a fully-registered Irish charity dedicated to supporting vulnerable children in Haiti. It was established in 2011 and 100% of donations to this Irish NGO go directly to their projects in Haiti. ESPWA is the Haitian Creole word for hope and Kieran and Leo set to work with great enthusiasm to bring just that to the hundreds of children living at Kenscoff.

After 30 years, many places in the orphanage badly needed a facelift. A concrete path was laid to improve vehicular and wheelchair access at the complex, hurricane debris was removed and new washing facilities were provided at Kay Christine, home to over 30 residents with special needs. It was an ambitious work programme, given the short time frame involved, but all works were completed on schedule and to the great satisfaction of everyone involved.



The remedial works for Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA's latest visit were identified in consultation with Gena Heraty, with whom the organisation has established a strong and effective working relationship. Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA believes in building relationships with local partners in Haiti and this was evident in the respectful on-site exchanges and in the friendly after-hours banter!



Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA also believes in empowering the people of Haiti to foster independence and sustainability. This has been put into practice by employing local labourers and training them in basic construction skills on a short-term but recurring basis. The latest crew had 11 members with natural 'foremen' emerging as confidence increased. Six days of employment for 11 men converts to a significant cash injection to a local economy still reeling from Hurricane Matthew.

Kieran and Leo were full of praise for the hospitality extended to them at Kenscoff, while Gena was equally positive about the team's commitment and the significance of their contribution to day-to-day life at Kenscoff. She said, 'As always, Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA did a super job. Apart from the regular crew, we also had some of the young lads in the orphanage helping out. These young lads were very interested and it was very clear that they have learned a lot from Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA these past two years. Everyone here really appreciates the high quality of work and the commitment of Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA to NPFS Haiti'.





The final working day ended with a quick visit to three houses occupied by the younger children, where sweets and apples were distributed to the delight of all. A spontaneous 'thank you' song was sung, which spoke for everyone – for your good work, for your regular visits, for your much-appreciated moral support, we say a huge and heartfelt 'mèsi anpil' to all at Haiti Orphanage Project ESPWA. We look forward to seeing you again in 2017.

