

# Hens for Haiti - Recent Highlights



POULAYE

March 2011

By: Christina Newman

## Back in Haiti, On the Job!

Following Christina's graduation in December 2010, founding members of Hens for Haiti returned to Haiti to move the project forward on the ground. Christina and Cameron spent two weeks talking to merchants and business owners about their egg needs. From this, they were able to spread the word about the project throughout Gros-Morne and gain a better understanding of how to market the product.



Cameron returned to the states while Christina stayed behind to continue construction of the facility and organization of operation details. Over the past few months, progress has been steadily moving forward including raising of the storage and guardian houses, construction of the main facility foundation, nest boxes and water systems. The head mason himself was surprised at the size of the facility, "I



didn't know it would be big like this. It's really going to be a great thing for the town."

Anyone involved in the project; from donors and managers, to carpenters and neighbors in the community are anxiously awaiting the start of production. With Christina on the ground to manage workers and facilitate funds, the Poulaye is expected to become operational by summer 2011.

Tasks still remaining include completion of the large facility, installation of solar electricity, purchase of hens and feed, training of employees and formation with egg merchants. Christina plans to leave the operation in capable hands after production is underway.



## Members

**Christina Newman**  
Founder,  
On-site Manager

**Cameron Varano**  
Public Relations

**Sherley Codio**  
Secretary

**Fabrice Marcelin**  
Webmaster

## Contact or Donate

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## From the Field

March, 2011

Three Cups of... Coffee?: Greg Mortenson spoke at Virginia Tech a few years ago about his work and the challenges he faced in constructing his first school. He commented on how long it took him to raise money to build an elementary school for a rural mountain town. When he finally gathered everything he needed for the school and went back, he couldn't access the community by road. He was forced to raise more money and build a bridge before he could get construction materials to the site for the school building. Well, I'm about to call Mr. Mortenson and ask him how he dealt with it all...

A few weeks ago (mid-February), I jumped on the 4-wheeler and headed to the project site to check on the work of the foundation. Apparently there had been more rain the night before than I thought and the river was fairly high. But not only was the river high, it had eaten away at the road - so much that the entrance up the bank on the other side was now a 4ft drop directly into the water. Needless to say, I wasn't going to make it to the project site by moto that day, and neither were the remainder of the needed construction materials. After about a week, we were able to temporarily "fix" the road for large trucks to pass, but this will not be a permanent solution. Each time there is heavy rain, the river will wash out the road and we will once again have the same problem. The only stable resolution would be to correctly engineer the road entrance and install gabions to protect the sides of the bank from the force of running water.

Similar to the situation faced by Greg Mortenson, I feel the project is at somewhat of an impasse. As we are excited that construction is coming along, what good would it be to have an operating business if nobody could access the product we produce? Ideally it would be the government providing necessary roads and public services, but that is not available. The community of Kanpech is separated from the downtown area because of unreliable road, and they are willing to do something about it. If our organization found the money to purchase gabions and hire an engineer, the community of Kanpech would donate labor to fill the baskets with rocks.

When I left Gros-Morne in 2008 with the intention of finding money to fund the hen project, road access was not an issue. It was just this past year when erosion control was done on the opposite bank, that water was forced towards Kanpech. Without proper planning, correcting one problem only caused another. Backed by the community, I press forward and am now looking for possible funders of road preservation.



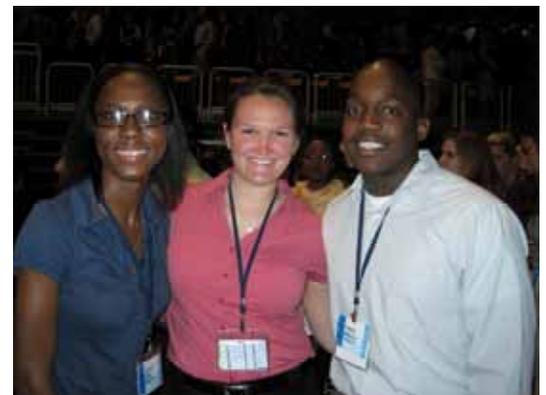
Many thanks to all back home.

Kembe, Christie

## FEEDING THE POOR, ONE EGG AT A TIME

The majority of the Haitian population rely on food imports and subsistent farming for their nutrition resources. Each day over 1 million eggs are imported to Haiti from the neighboring Dominican Republic. An egg-laying facility (Poulaye) is under construction in Gros-Morne, Haiti to not only provide a convenient source of protein, but local employment, and education in animal husbandry and business development.

**Hens for Haiti** was established as a student organization at Virginia Tech in January 2009. Before the development of this organization, founding members spent extensive time working with the people of Haiti to address the problem of food security and create a plan for alleviation. When the Poulaye project was first proposed in October 2007, fundraising began through grants and university efforts. Hens for Haiti has received several large donations and grants including an Outstanding Commitment Award at the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) in 2010. However, the group is still searching for another \$15,000 to meet their fundraising goal of \$60,000. All money raised and all profit from egg sales after the facility starts production will go directly to the project for further improvements and expansion.



Members at CGIU 2010 in Miami: (Left) Sherley Codio, Christina Newman, Fabrice Marcelin



[www.HensforHaiti.org](http://www.HensforHaiti.org)