

## SEEDS OF SELF RELIANCE



Growing Community Through Gardening

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# Seeds of Self Reliance

## Annual Report

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

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## A Message from the Director



### 2010 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Good News from Haiti**—projects boost local economies.
- **Dominican Republic Update**—new volunteers take lead on new projects.

During the winter season, I think a lot about light. The Solstice has passed and the days are getting longer. I think about the light within each and every one of us that should be shining brightly, but that we mostly keep covered up. We are constantly bombarded by dark messages in this society. Many of them are news stories from our main-

stream media. If you watch the evening news or read the daily paper, you can't help but think that we are heading to 'Hell in a Handbasket' with the news of wars, crime, global environmental degradation, disease, and on and on. It is almost like we are fulfilling what we have been bombarded with and what is expected. This thinking extinguishes many peoples' lights, by making them cynical about everything. I try not to despair or

be brought down by what is being reported because that's only one angle of the story. For example, we see the news from Haiti or Mexico, and these are not the Haiti and Mexico that I know. I know the stories of vibrant, caring people who defy the forces outside their control and live a purposeful life. Likewise, here in the U.S. there are donors and volunteers who let their light shine. I feel privileged to know and work with you all.

*John Hayden*

## Good News From Haiti

With all the negative news from Haiti, I am glad to be able to report on some positive happenings. In spite of earthquakes, hurricanes, cholera, and disputed elections I am amazed every time I visit at the resiliency, spirit, stamina and hospitality of the Haitian people. Our partners in Terrier Rouge are doing well in spite of the swelling population and increased demands on food supply and living space from family members leaving Port au Prince after the earthquake (some say a 50% increase). We have made a conscious decision to focus our work

in small towns and rural areas because of the travesty of overpopulated, over centralized Port au Prince. We believe that the future of Haiti lies in developing diverse thriving local-living economies based on sound agriculture and small businesses.

Our work towards building the local agricultural economy in Terrier Rouge is moving forward. The large cooperative farm at IDDH is becoming more and more viable and will be installing a much needed irrigation system with our help. Our support of 'Jaden Florence' (thanks to a tar-

geted donation from Hope Johnson of Shelburne) has resurrected a garden site that involves two local agronomists supervising and teaching local youths sustainable agriculture techniques. The rabbits at Nativity Village are doing well and have great caretakers who have learned about feeding local forages and general care of the rabbits over the past summer.

Other great news is that Peter and Meredith Merritt will be back in Terrier Rouge as volunteers this winter helping to facilitate our work there. Peter will be working with the school gardens, IDDH, Jaden Florence, and *continued on page 2*



Haitian children in Nativity Village, home of our rabbit project.

## Financial Report (2010)

*Bateys in the Dominican Republic were originally set up by the government to house the migrant workers of the sugar cane plantations.*

Thank you for your continued financial support and encouragement. All donations go directly to the projects and programs we are supporting. There is no administrative overhead or salaries taken.

**Income:** Cash donations **\$18,446**

We'd like to thank High Mowing Seeds for generously donating hundreds of dollars worth of seeds each year to be used in a variety of projects in the DR, Haiti, and elsewhere.

**Expenses:** Programs, Travel, Volunteer housing, Supplies **\$16,418**

## Dominican Republic Update

and letting the locals take charge. We still check in occasionally and will lend a hand when needed. For example, last year government ditch cleaning equipment knocked down large portions of the fencing that keeps animals out of the garden and we paid to replace it. You didn't think the government was going to pay, did you?

The community garden in Saman had a good first season with 9 families enjoying access to the land and growing produce for themselves. One plot has been put aside for children and community education and demonstration. With a targeted donation by Jacquelyn Jordan in memory of her father, Dr. David DeHelms, we hope to expand the area of the gardens in 2011 with another

land purchase so that more families can participate in this popular program. There are now chickens laying eggs in a coop near the community center and that is something we hope to expand in 2011.

We are excited to have Maggie Donin and John Smith as community volunteers working on new projects in the DR in 2011. They are supporting the development of a farmers co-op in Joba Arriba, working with a girls gardening group in Cabarete, gardening with teenage Haitian street kids in Puerto Plata (Project Esperanza), and supporting the community garden in Saman. They are going to be busy!



**New farmers cooperative in the DR.** This project is supported by Palo Products, LLC ([drinkpalo.com](http://drinkpalo.com)) and the Emancipation Project.

Our work load at Batey Libertad Community Garden (where it all began) has diminished as our local partners take the lead on administering the garden project. They are doing a great job and the garden is producing large amounts of pigeon peas, corn, bananas, sweet potatoes, yucca, and other staples for the family members. This is right in line with our philosophy of removing obstacles



These locally-adapted chickens are a key part of our Cambridge Rotary Club supported project.

## Cont'd from pg 1: Good News from Haiti

some new laying hen/rabbit projects that are supported by the Cambridge Rotary Club. Meredith will bring her nursing skills back to the local health clinic and I am sure she will be getting her hands into the soil in our gardening projects also. With their fluency in the language and their past experience, they should be even more effective in helping to build Terrier Rouge's local living economy. Read more at Peter and Meredith's work at [www.meredithpeterhaiti.blogspot.com](http://www.meredithpeterhaiti.blogspot.com)