



Dear Faith in Action Friends:

Our History:

Hello. We are Jeff and Debbi Gischia. We answered God's call to come to Haiti in 2001. Bill and Char Baker were instrumental in bringing us here. They also introduced us to Tom Braak.

The first time we met Tom was when he showed up to our home in 2002, just passing through to Marquette. Bill and Char had told him about us, given him our address, and as you know Tom... his spontaneous spirit landed him on our doorstep to very excitedly tell us about what he was doing in Haiti. At that time, I believe he was going around planting trees - the Johnny Appleseed of Haiti we called him. Through the years, we kept in contact and updated about what he was doing and eventually about Faith In Action.

The first time we actually worked a project with Tom was in 2010. We had moved from our parish that was "twinned" with a parish in Haiti and were ready for our personal mission to go down a different path. The Holy Spirit was leading us in a new direction. Just a family of seven, we created Hands for Haiti. But we needed some projects to do! So we reached out to our dear distant friend, Tom. We brought teams to Haiti and were involved in many projects with FIAI including helping earthquake refugees, building a home, working in the tree nursery, delivering trees to some mountain communities, distributing water filters, working on the infamous red truck, and construction of the anticipated FIAI compound and guest house.

In 2013, the Holy Spirit again moved things around. While at Tom's house in 2012, we met a nun living down the street and became interested in her projects. We had some lengthy conversations and felt a strong connection to her mission. A few months after meeting her, she received word that after serving in Haiti for around 15 years, her order was calling her back to the states. She was worried about what would happen to one of the programs that she had worked hard to start. We felt the Lord had put us together at that precise time for a reason and we agreed to take over her TiManje Food Program (Little Food Program.) We also became very acquainted with the two Haitians that were her "right hand" men.

Tom, at the time, had many teams coming down to help him. We had learned a lot from Tom and how things worked in Haiti and felt pretty confident we could begin projects on our own. We adopted Joanes and Fresnel from Sr. Judy as our two managers and began our own projects.

Our Current Programs:

Now, in 2019, along with various random projects, we have grown into four main programs.

- TiManje Food Program – feeds 70 school children from the mountains until they graduate HS.
- TiJaden Farm Program - along with farming techniques, farmers learn budgeting, saving, and disciplined planning. We currently have 9 farms.
- TiLekol Mon Mountain School Project - we are finished with our first school of 260 students and will soon begin a second one.
- TiKlinik Health Clinic - a health clinic in the mountains. We are staffed with a nurse, pharmacy and secretary and currently see about 200 patients a week.

What does this mean for Faith in Action? Being so close to the people in this organization, we became concerned...

for Tom who has put his heart and soul into a vision that started with literally a seed;
for the employees that depend on FIAI for their income that sustains their livelihood;
for the people of Haiti that very much need FIAI's programs;
for the many people, you who have supported this organization throughout the years.

God has skillfully orchestrated all of our involvement in this vulnerable country of Haiti. So we ask the question, "Where do we all fit together?"

We have asked the Holy Spirit to lead us as He has since the beginning. He prompted us to meet with the Faith in Action board and to begin to pursue options. We love the programs FIAI has been involved in and wish to continue them. We believe He is bringing us together in a new and exciting way! This is not the end of Faith in Action. It is a new beginning... a way to put your beloved ***Faith in Action*** by now using your ***Hands for Haiti***.

Joyfully,

Debbi Gischia



Debbi Gischia, President
Hands for Haiti