

My time spent with the Jamaica Basic School has stood out for many years. I couldn't help but notice the students' pride in both their own work and their school. I have been fortunate to travel the world visiting different private and public schools and the excitement from the students of the Jamaica Basic School when showing off their work and their classrooms were exactly the same as any other school I've visited. The stark difference was the resources the students and teachers had available to work with. I remember sitting down next to one of the students to help work through a math problem and noticing his teeth-pocked pencil. It was a third of its original size and clearly well-loved. The young man informed me that it was the only one he had for the year. As we worked together to solve the arithmetic problem, we moved different colored soda bottle tops around his desk as manipulatives. I left the school each day so impressed by the creative and dynamic lessons their teachers had planned to teach them applicable skills for their futures.

During their recesses, we set up fluoride stations in which we used little brushes to painted each students' teeth with a florid treatment. The lack of dental hygiene and their sugar-rich diets had already done tremendous damage to these young mouths. Being a person who is squeamish around teeth, just the thought of a wiggly tooth sends a shiver down my back, I knew I couldn't show my discomfort in the task as it was such a necessary service they needed us to perform. I told myself they were lucky that the majority of their rotting teeth were still baby teeth and they would be replaced by adult ones soon enough. The reality was their adult teeth stood little chance of fairing much better.

The profound impact in these children's lives and the lives of the entire Chantilly community is unmeasurable. The community relies on and benefits from the generosity and commitment of the St. Paul's parish. Seeing the tennis balls we brought fly around the playground or students creating beautiful pictures with the construction paper we brought made me realize how fair a modest contribution can make in their everyday lives. I look forward to being able to return to Jamaica and Chantilly to visit with Ru and Daphne and once again provide support to this wonderful community.

*Karl and Ruth Koenigsbauer*