

275 Parsells Ave., Rochester, NY 14609

August 1, 2018

Dear Mission Officers of Mercy Schools
and College/Universities:

Mercy Focus on Haiti (MFOH) hopes that the summer is giving you some respite from the heavy work of the past academic year, and some time to prepare for the upcoming year.

With that hope in mind, we thought it might be helpful to remind you of the benefits to your students of their going on an Immersion trip to Haiti sometime in the first months of 2019. Those who have gone on such trips in the past tell us it was “a life-changing” experience that gave them a deeper sense of merciful solidarity with some of Earth’s most vulnerable people and helped them realize the one humanity we share with our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

However, we recognize a recurring dilemma. On the one hand, because of its weak executive government, some measure of civil unrest frequently afflicts Haiti, especially in and near Port au Prince. However, the US State Dept. has recently eased its travel warning. On the other hand, if a Mercy school or college/university hopes to take its students on a MFOH Immersion trip to Haiti in 2019 – presuming that no unusual unrest is occurring then – now is the time to begin planning.

Recognizing both the benefits of such a trip and the civil realities in Haiti, MFOH assures you that in addition to regular contact with the US State Dept., MFOH maintains close contact with our longstanding and knowledgeable partners on the ground in Haiti. They regularly advise us on road conditions and related matters. With all this in mind, we offer you the following information.

In March 2018 you received a letter describing, in detail, what a MFOH Immersion Experience entails. As you know, the fee payable to MFOH is \$1100 per traveler, based on a traveling group of ten (10) students and one school or college representative. This fee has seemed manageable for the Mercy secondary schools. However, some Mercy colleges/universities have found it difficult to assemble ten (10) student travelers. So, here’s a suggestion:

- Two Mercy colleges/universities could join together on a single Immersion trip: ten students, two school representatives -- with the added benefit of students forming friendships with students in another Mercy college/university.
- Andrea (Andi) Healy, the Coordinator of our MFOH Immersion Experiences (andijhealy@aol.com; 1-267-549-6857), will gladly help arrange these pairings by providing the necessary contact information for Mercy colleges/universities interested in such collaboration. Dr. Moya Dittmeier of the Conference for Mercy Higher Education is also willing to help.

We can all learn so much from our Haitian families and partners in northern Haiti: their resilient joy, their care for Earth and ecological know-how, and their abiding trust in our merciful God. So please do get in touch with Andi Healy, even in a tentative or preliminary way, if you’d like to explore this opportunity in 2019.

All of us in Mercy Focus on Haiti wish you wisdom and energy as you prepare for the upcoming academic year. We also ask you please to pray for our beloved people in Haiti.

Sincerely yours in Mercy,

Mary

Mary C. Sullivan, RSM A Member of the MFOH Immersion Committee