



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends of the *What If Foundation*,

2022 is a year we'll always remember as the heartbreaking year our dear friend and colleague Lavarice Gaudin passed away unexpectedly on November 11th. Lava, as we affectionately called him, led Na Rive for over a decade. He was a compassionate and visionary leader fueled by a deep love and hope for his country. His humanity, his devotion to the children and the Ti Plas Kazo community, and his indomitable drive and ingenuity to make miracles happen, have been, and will always be, an inspiration. His kindness and big smile will forever be lodged in my heart.

While leading Na Rive, Lava spent his days focused on improving the lives of as many people as he could and worked tirelessly with his team to ensure the food and education programs continued in the midst of great turmoil. As the political, economic, and security crises in Haiti deepened in 2022, they caused fuel shortages, business and school closures, increased hunger, violence in the streets, high inflation and steep uncertainty. While not always able to function at their fullest capacity, Na Rive never wavered nor stopped working to bring relief and hope.

Within the heartbreak of this year, we are ever more determined to focus on our mission and support our partner Na Rive, as they continue to provide critically needed programs and a sense of hope to the community.

With gratitude for your support,



Catherine Lelong

Board Chair

What If Foundation





Father Jean-Juste and Lavarice Gaudin



Lavarice Gaudin and Margaret Trost

A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

I remember the day Lavarice took my hand and led me to the front of the new Father Jeri School. It was 2016 and after many years of planning and work, construction had just been completed. It was my first time seeing the beautiful three-story building all painted and ready for students. We stood in silence for a while with big smiles on our faces taking it all in.

"It will be a beacon of hope for the community, Margo. Just as Father Jeri envisioned." Lava said. "A place where lives will change and leaders will be born. It wasn't easy to create, but we found a way over, around, and through every obstacle."

Lava's determination to make possible what might seem impossible to most people has always inspired me. He was a deeply courageous leader who led from the heart and worked tirelessly to create positive change in Haiti. He loved the Father Jeri School and was so proud of its students and teachers.

"Education is the most important force for change," Lava said. "There is nothing better than education. With education, over time, you cannot lose. We keep the progress going, even though we're in this challenging, tough time. Na Rive loves doing what we do in Haiti. Whatever we do, we make sure we do it with love."

The grief of losing such a dear friend and leader so suddenly is only starting to be felt, but my experience over the years has shown me that we will move through this time of transition with perseverance and keep this important work alive. *What If* and Na Rive have navigated through many challenges over our 22-year history – the coup in 2004, the great loss of Father Jeri in 2009, followed by the catastrophic earthquake in 2010, devastating hurricanes in multiple years, ongoing political and economic crises that have led to so much suffering and the current state of emergency throughout Haiti, and now Lava's passing.

I deeply trust our partnership and its shared vision and commitment to serve the children, to lead with heart, and to live the wisdom of the Haitian proverb Father Jeri taught me so many years ago, *piti piti na rive*. Little by little we will arrive.

Lavarice and I talked often about how the foundation of *What If* and Na Rive is love, and that love is the most powerful force in the world. Now that he is no longer physically present with us, the love he poured into his work in Ti Plas Kazo and the difference he made remains and will be a continuous source of inspiration.

Thank you for your love, ongoing support, trust, prayers, and for being a part of the *What If Foundation*.

With appreciation and hope,

Margaret Trost

Founder, *What If Foundation*

FOOD

Na Rive's community food program, Lamanjay, has been serving meals to hungry children for 22 years. In 2022, the meals were as needed as ever. Growing unrest and insecurity combined with a sharp rise in food prices made eating daily even more difficult for families, increasing the level of hunger and malnutrition. Na Rive brought critical nutrition to the community in three ways.

COMMUNITY CAFETERIA

There were times in 2022 when the insecurity in the streets made it unsafe for the Community Cafeteria to operate, but on most weekdays, the Na Rive cooking team courageously served up to 600 hot, nutritious meals to children and families who live nearby.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA

It is rare for schools to provide food to their students in Haiti, but at the Father Jeri School a hot meal is served, supporting not only nutritional needs, but also student bonds that nurture a powerful sense of community. Over 500 meals were served to students and staff on school days this year.

FOOD PANTRY

This food pantry supports families who have been displaced or live too far to travel to/from the Community Cafeteria, a journey that is becoming increasingly dangerous. Families receive bags of rice and beans to cook at home. In 2022, over 200 meals/week were provided to families who visited the Food Pantry.



"I like how nice people are here, and I love seeing some of my friends, and eating a hot meal. It makes me feel happy." -- Riber Jean, five years old.

EDUCATION

Haiti's education system was severely impacted by the rise in insecurity and widespread unrest, but Na Rive did all it could to support the students and provide a safe, nurturing environment for learning and growth.

"The Ministry of Education has mandated for all schools in Port-au-Prince to remain closed due to the violence, therefore students haven't been able to get started. My number one priority is the safety of students, teachers, and staff at the Father Jeri School and the community food program. I'm working around the clock with our partners and staff to be prepared for the return of students to school, while we are doing everything we can to stay safe."

--Lavarice Gaudin, Na Rive Program Director

FATHER JERI SCHOOL

The dedication of teachers and staff made it possible for Father Jeri School students to complete the 2021/2022 school year and take their state exams, despite the challenges with insecurity and transportation in the city. Then, in August 2022, all schools in Port-au-Prince were forced to close for nearly three months.

When schools finally opened in November 2022, the Father Jeri School welcomed over 500 K-12 students. In one of our last phone calls with Lavarice before he passed away, he shared his excitement about state exam results that had just come for 9th graders. 100% of the Father Jeri 9th graders had passed, an enormous accomplishment given the stress and anxiety the students and faculty faced daily.

SUMMER CAMP AND VOCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Unfortunately, due to the political unrest and violence in the streets, Na Rive decided to pause both these programs this summer in order to ensure the safety of students and staff. However, the team at Na Rive remain committed to the value of providing these programs and hope to be able to open enrollment again in 2023.





UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2022, six young women received scholarships to attend college in a variety of fields including medicine, dentistry, counseling, and engineering.

"I never thought I would be able to graduate high school and I am so thankful for this opportunity to continue my education. There has been so much tragedy around me, at times I felt like giving up. But the teachers and Director at the Father Jeri School didn't let me. They believed in me and encouraged me to keep going. They made me feel safe and hopeful that I could keep learning and make a living for myself. Today, I know I can help others cope with the challenges of living through this very difficult time in Haiti."

--Noel, studying counseling at the University Notre Dame of Haiti

HOPE

The programs and the team at Na Rive create a palpable sense of hope in the community, especially in hard times when sources of support are even more scarce. It's not just the provision of meals, classes and exams that benefit the children and families in Ti Plas Kazo, but also the care with which they welcome and support every person who arrives to the programs and the sense of constancy their presence builds, day after day.

Whatsmore, your kind donations make this labor of love possible and are a reminder that the people in Ti Plas Kazo matter and are not forgotten. Your generosity waters the seeds of hope.

"When dark times lie ahead, we must carry on with hope and love in our hearts. The programs we run here are key for the community in so many ways and, especially in times of upheaval, they provide a constant place of relief and welcoming for the children and families in Ti Plas Kazo. Our programs provide opportunity, support, and are a beacon of hope."

--Lavarice Gaudin, Na Rive Program Director



2022 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In order to protect our program partner in Haiti we make our financial information available upon request.

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Since 2000, the *What If Foundation* has partnered with the Haitian community organization Na Rive to provide food and educational opportunities to underserved children in Ti Plas Kazo, Port-au-Prince.

By pairing the local expertise and leadership of Na Rive with the financial resources provided by our donors, we work together to make a difference in the lives of some of the world's most impoverished children, providing hope and opportunity for a brighter future.

We are a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization established for the benefit of children in Haiti. All donations are 100% tax deductible as permitted by law.

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