

# *Stories of Sisters of Charity Ministries Responding to People Experiencing Homelessness*

## **VINCENTIAN FAMILY 13 HOUSES PROJECT IN HAITI**

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, a Congregation in the Vincentian tradition, have joined forces with the Dominican Sisters to build 13 Houses for 65 people living in inadequate housing, thus creating stronger and healthier communities and transforming lives. This project involves their wider work in disaster relief in the Caribbean nation.

The family in the picture saw their home crumble to the ground by the earthquake in 2010 but were grateful to escape; however, others they knew were not so lucky. For the past 10 years, this family has remained homeless, jumping between living with different friends and relatives. Often the family was too large to stay together. Over a year ago, someone they knew in Cuvier, where the schools of the Sisters of Charity is located, offered the family shelter in a dilapidated dwelling – one could not dignify the structure by calling it a house. Pastor Jordany, the school’s director, got to know the family and their circumstances and invited the children to come to the school where the tuition and uniforms were provided for free. He also placed them on the top of the list for the “13 Houses” Project. Having a home built for them was a dream they could have never imagined. For the first time in 10 years, the family could all be together without fear of eviction or being displaced.

The projects of the Sisters of Charity goes beyond just housing. The family has also been able to take advantage of the Sisters’ emergency services during the pandemic, which included food, face masks, soap and sanitizer. They were also gifted with two goats in our Pay It Forward program which gives them a source of food and income. The beneficiaries of the “13 Houses” project have access to some (if not all) of the Sisters’ other 8 programs. For example, women will have a chance to send their children to our school, work in the garden, learn a trade through the sewing and cooking schools, find emergency food when there is a crisis, or obtain a loan to start their own business.

We know, in fact, from the women who have already gone through our programs, that their participation has been life-changing for them and their families. It has given them hope for the future, confidence in themselves, and has empowered them to not only strive to better their own lives but to help uplift their community.