For Immediate Release:

HAITI CHÉRIE
Buying Beautiful Haitian Art Supports Rural Village In Haiti: July 20, 21, 22

The Vassar Haiti Project and Christ Episcopal Church in Sag Harbor will present their 6th Haitian Art & Handcraft Sale to benefit the remote village of Chermaitre, Haiti. The sale will be held in the Church’s Upper Parish Hall at the following times:

Fri. July 20  5 pm - 8 pm (opening reception)
Sat. July 21  9 am – 5 pm
Sun. July 22  9 am – 2 pm

The Haitian Art & Handcraft Sale will feature 200 original paintings, including some older, collectible works with a wide assortment of unique and affordable gifts, including silk scarves and jewelry. Many new and exquisite iron sculptures will be premiered, designed by Roosevelt, an artisan from Croix des Bouquets. “By all indications the art we are bringing to Sag Harbor promises to be some of our best ever,” says Lila Meade, Co-founder of the Vassar Haiti Project.

The event is free and open to the public, with affordable and unique handcrafts starting at $5 and paintings at $50. All sales are 50% tax deductible. The sale opens on Friday, July 20th, at 5pm with an opening reception of wine, cheese and hors d’oeuvres. The event is sponsored by Twomey, Latham, Shea, Kelley, Dubin & Quartararo, LLP, Attorneys at Law.

This is Christ Church’s 10th year collaborating with the Vassar Haiti Project (VHP). VHP is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization based at Vassar College, in Poughkeepsie, NY. For the past 17 years they have supported education, health and sustainable development in the village of Chermaitre in mountainous northwestern Haiti. An important part of their mission is teaching college students how, practically and ethically, to make a difference in the world.

Prior sales hosted at Christ Church have been a tremendous success. The first sale, in 2008, raised funds to complete the building of a 6-classroom school. The 2010 sale raised funds towards the
construction of a medical clinic, which has since opened and offers health care to more than 3,000 patients in the rural northwest. The clinic now operates under the guidance of two full time nurses and Joassinvil Gueslin, MD who commutes weekly from Port au Prince to see patients from 43 neighboring villages near the clinic.

“By hosting the Vassar Haiti Project, the sale at our church affects the lives of people a world away from us. We are implored to not give people fish to eat but rather to teach them to fish. Through VHP, we are giving the villagers the ability to support themselves, restoring dignity to their lives,” says The Rev. Karen Ann Campbell, Rector, Christ Episcopal Church.

Dialogue with women leaders in the village during recent trips to Chermaitre led to the exciting formation of a 35-member women’s cooperative, which seeks to develop and nurture skills to make a difference in their community. The cooperative has already produced hand-sewn cloth napkins and ground coffee for sale. The 2012 sale in Sag Harbor helped begin to fund a community center to house this cooperative. The community center building is now finished, and we are seeking to buy furniture and sewing machines so that the women can use the space to create items to sell. One of the biggest short-term goals is to grow coffee beans so as to provide the possibility of a flourishing coffee harvest in the coming years. The Vassar Haiti Project has been supporting the women and has given the funds to plant several thousand coffee trees which will undoubtedly positively impact the sustenance farmers.

“The planning committee of Christ Church has so warmly welcomed us back to the community as if we are family!” says VHP Co-founder Lila Meade. Vassar College students and the generous parishioners work collaboratively for six months to plan this event. “We work hard and celebrate our shared vision to help make the villagers more educated, financially independent and nourished. It takes a village to support a village!”

“Having been on our most recent March Haiti trip, I have seen the wonderful impacts of VHP on the developments of Chermaitre, including the school, church, health clinic, and the women’s co-op,” says Catherine Wu, class of 2021, who will serve on the student executive board next year. “Having conversed with some of the Haitian artists myself, I saw how art is integrated into their lives and how difficult it is for the local artists to produce their art and sustain themselves after hours and hours of hard work. It was amazing to see how talented and capable these Haitians are in creating extraordinary paintings and crafts that show the beauty of Haiti through a unique pair of lens.”

The event is free and open to the public. All are welcomed to the opening reception.

For more information, you can call 845-797-2123 or visit thehaitiproject.org. All artwork can be viewed and purchased online if you can’t make it to the sale.
SUMMARY:

WHO
The Vassar (College) Haiti Project in partnership with and hosted by Christ Episcopal Church, Sag Harbor.

WHAT
Haitian Art and Handcraft Sale

WHEN
Fri. July 20  5 pm - 8 pm (opening reception)
Sat. July 21  9 am – 5 pm
Sun. July 22  9 am – 2 pm

WHERE
Christ Episcopal Church
5 Hampton St. (and Union St.)
Sag Harbor, NY

WHY
To support the villagers in a rural northwest village in Haiti for a better life of education and medical care by selling Haitian art, supporting the artists of Haiti.

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