



# FLM HAITI

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY MINISTRY OF HAITI  
EDUCATIONAL & MEDICAL MISSION

NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2021

## Steadfast

Longtime supporter of FLM to keynote annual banquet

By Ervin Dyer

In the 1980s, a young man attending Pittsburgh's Lincoln Avenue Church of God, Robert Toliver had a life-changing experience.

It was where he decided to become a minister and became acquainted with a people and a place so far away from the world he knew. That place was Haiti.

Today, that same young man remains connected to Haiti and FLM and will present the keynote address at the organization's annual banquet on Oct. 22, 2021, encouraging others to give to support people recovering from political strife and natural disaster.



Robert Toliver

Not too long ago, a young Toliver sat on a few pews from the Rev. Leon Pamphile and his wife, Rozelle, immigrants from Haiti who were making a new life in Pittsburgh. Pamphile taught high school French, studied at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and served as youth minister at Lincoln Avenue Church of God.

He became a mentor to Toliver, who admired his youth minister and his wife for their passion and friendliness.

"They really impressed me as people of integrity," Toliver said. "The honor in which they lived and served was attractive."

In addition to the gospel, Pamphile also shared with Toliver the news that he had recently launched FLM Haiti to

provide education and health care in the community in Haiti where he grew up. When Toliver learned of Pamphile's new mission, he glowed learning of the country and its history.

"I didn't know a lot about Haiti," he said. "But [the Pamphiles] helped me to connect to it." Toliver recalled how the Pamphiles described the goals for helping their homeland, and never felt burdened by the responsibility.

Toliver grew up in Penn Hills, a community just outside of Pittsburgh. After high school, he worked as a computer operator in the Army, completing his four-year service in 1981.

After the military, he came home and began to attend Lincoln Avenue Church of God, where he stepped forward to become a pastor. Soon, he earned a pastoral studies diploma from Anderson University in 1987 and then studied at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

At Lincoln Avenue, as he discovered his gift for preaching, more and more opportunities came to share the word and, in April 1993, he was called to lead Brownsville Community Church of God in Summerville, S.C.

Though hundreds of miles from Pittsburgh, Toliver stays connected to his philanthropic roots through steadfast monthly support of FLM Haiti.

"I haven't been to Haiti yet," he said. "But I'm committed to the support because of how I've grown to love and respect the Pamphiles and I know the ministry is close to them."

Toliver also gives because he trusts that FLM is faithful with its resources, and he believes in its mission: to help the Haitians help themselves.

Like much of the world, he is saddened by recent political events and natural disasters in Haiti. His prayer is that good people will respond, and that Haitians hold on to hope.

In fact, being steadfast in well doing is part of the message he will deliver during his keynote address at the banquet.

"In Haiti, Pittsburgh, or anywhere, life is fluid," Toliver said. "Recently there has been the pandemic, racial strife, but with God there is always hope. The best we can do is to be faithful, steadfast, and share encouragement."

Toliver will soon be home to remind FLM supporters and friends to do just that. ●

**"I haven't been to Haiti yet, but I'm committed to the support [of FLM]."**

**— R. TOLIVER**

For more information, please visit [flmhaiti.org](http://flmhaiti.org) or call 412-784-0342



Golando (top center, left) surrounded by students in Haiti

## Q & A: “Haiti is a place where my faith grows.”— Pastor Molly Golando

By Ashana Cotton

**D**uring a heatwave in early August, between her sermon prep and babysitting, we caught up with the **Rev. Molly Golando**, or “**Pastor Molly**” as she prefers to be called. The longtime FLM Haiti board member and mission-trip leader also pastors the United Presbyterian Church of Randolph in upstate New York. Since 2008, she’s traveled to Haiti, sometimes three visits a year, to support local teachers, counsel children and lead U.S. educators in mission to FLM’s school in Thomassin. Here, the grandmother of two shares what she’s learned from Haitians; how she tried (and failed) to dodge God’s call; her must-have Haitian dishes, and more.

*This interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

**Q: How and when did you begin your mission work with FLM and in Haiti?**

**A:** My story starts with Susan Robinson’s (FLM Board member) husband, Pastor David Robinson. I was on staff at his church from 2000-2006. He was very influential in getting me involved in Haiti. Unfortunately, he passed away before I had a chance to travel with him to Haiti. But I took my first trip in 2008 in his memory. I returned in 2009. I started to work at the school and began to fall in love with the country and the people. The Haitian people give back to me a thousand times more times than I could ever give them.

**Q: Tell me a bit about the work you do in Haiti.**

**A:** I go for the children and to conduct teacher training. We bring enrichment to the kids in our school. I love to work with kids, particularly those in middle school. Their teachers are gifted, but we try to bring in things they can’t get at their own school. The last time we were there, before the pandemic lockdown, we taught the students meditation techniques, drawing, and other skills to help them cope with emotional trauma. We’ve also taught social justice.

**Q: How does faith inform your work in Haiti?**

**A:** It informs everything. Haiti is a place where my faith grows. It’s one reason I keep coming back. If I could share a quick story.

I remember sitting next to a young girl on a flight to Haiti. When I asked what she was going to do in Haiti, she said, “I’m bringing Jesus to Haiti.” My reaction was gee, Jesus is already there. He’s alive and well in Haiti.

**Q: Did you always know that you wanted to be a pastor?**

**A:** Absolutely not, but becoming one was the most wonderful thing that I’ve ever done. I did everything in my power, though, to not be a minister. I was a music teacher first. I later got a job at a small church teaching Christian education. That’s when I felt a really strong call to be a pastor. I was praying and I said, God, I will do anything. Just don’t call me to be a pastor. I felt the heavens laughing and God saying, “gotcha”. It took me 20 years from my call to be ordained in the United Methodist Church as a deacon. And through the years, I just said, God, call somebody else, but God said, “No, I want you.”

**Q: Do you have any favorite Haitian dishes?**

**A:** Since we’ve been going to our (FLM) guest house, I’ve eaten pretty much everything. The folks in the kitchen have a way of fixing oatmeal that’s amazing. I’ve tried to make it like them but can’t. My other favorite is the black beans and cornmeal. Oh, and the goat stew.

**Q: For those who have not yet traveled and served in Haiti, why should they come and what will they experience and discover?**

**A:** I say, come to experience the faith of the Haitians. It will just astound you. I’ve witnessed their happiness, even in the midst of their struggles, their joy, and community support. And come to see God at work like you’ve never seen before. When you have nothing, there’s nobody to turn to but God. We, on the other hand, rely on so many things and can forget how powerful and awesome God is. That’s what you can experience in Haiti. ●



Golando with friends in Haiti

*Ashana Cotton is a sophomore and honors student in North Chesterfield, VA. She produced this story during her summer communications internship with FLM Haiti.*



## FLM Champions

This year, FLM Haiti launches its **Champion Awards**, a recognition of education and medical mission team members whose service to FLM and the people of Haiti has been exemplary. The individuals are chosen by FLM's executive board and will be recognized at the annual banquet in October. The 2021 Champion Awards celebrate the accomplished work of **Dr. Lynn Moran** and **Dr. Tyra Good**.

**Moran** will be presented with the David Robinson Medical Champion Award, named for a Pittsburgh pastor whose compassion helped to launch FLM's medical clinic, which is also named in his honor. Moran has a doctorate in pharmacy and her career has included work in hospital, pediatric and clinical pharmacy. She coordinates much of FLM's pharmaceutical outreach, providing hundreds each month with health-sustaining medicines.

**Good** will be awarded the Maggie Hill Education Champion Award, named for a Boston educator and spiritual leader who gave years of generous service to help build FLM's education efforts. Good is an associate professor of education at Elms College in Massachusetts and executive director of its Center for Equity in Urban Education. For FLM, she's taught and strengthened the pedagogical practices of more than 200 Haitian teachers.



Lynn Moran

### Lynn Moran

**"The work I do in Haiti is special because ...** of the people I meet there who, no matter how difficult their lives may be, have a smile for me each morning when the pharmacy window is opened. Myself and the team I work, give these patients the opportunity to leave with medications to improve their health.

My work there makes a difference in the lives of men, women, and children more than in any other setting in which I practice.

**When we keep people healthy, we give them ...** the opportunity to achieve much more of what God has called them to be and to do. I am forever grateful that God has called me to this wonderful opportunity as a healthcare practitioner to help a small number of the wonderful people of Haiti." ●



Tyra Good

### Tyra Good

**"The work I do in Haiti is special because ...** I believe that it is an extension of doing God's work. I always say that #GOODGirlsDoGodsWork. It allows me to serve as well as learn with and from the Haitian people. The mission and work that I do in Haiti are a perfect alignment of my

purpose and passion of being a global educator who seeks to connect the brilliance, hopes, and dreams of marginalized populations to educational resources to ignite the #GOODWithin them so they manifest God's purpose in their lives.

**When we educate people, we give them ...** reassurance of God's love and promises as declared in Jeremiah 29:11. We serve as vessels to provide inspiration, hope, knowledge and resources they can use to empower themselves. We are "helping Haitians help themselves" through cultivating a global-learning ecosystem as a path toward self-sufficiency. They give us their trust, love and knowledge, and an opportunity to serve and build together because in unity we have strength (L'union fait la force). ●

## Love in Action

### A virtual and in-person event, "The Power of Love in Action"

FLM Haiti's annual banquet and art sale is **Friday, Oct. 22, 2021**

at the Double Tree Hotel, Monroeville, 101 Mall Boulevard, Monroeville, Pa., 15146.

**Reception** begins at 5:30 p.m. **Banquet** at 6:15 p.m.

**Donation: \$60 • Please mail a check to:** 1064 Premier Street, Pittsburgh, Pa., 15201 or **pay online** at [www.flmhaiti.org](http://www.flmhaiti.org)

**For more information, call 412-784-0342**

## Father's Day, 2021

**It takes a village of supporters to do the work of FLM.** In June, as a Father's Day salute, we highlighted these three fathers, who are among the many who are special to our organization. ●

FLM HAITI celebrates Father's Day

Read about **Evans Frejuste**

Visit: <https://www.flmhaiti.org/flm-blog>

FLM HAITI celebrates Father's Day

Read about **Matthew Moran** and daughter Amelia

Visit: <https://www.flmhaiti.org/flm-blog>

FLM HAITI celebrates Father's Day

Read about **Steve Defusco**

Visit: <https://www.flmhaiti.org/flm-blog>

## In Brief

### Boston Fund-raiser

**FLM Boston** is planning a virtual fund-raiser for **Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021**. It will take place from **7 to 8 p.m.** The program will honor **Maggie Hill**, an early and longtime supporter of FLM who passed away in 2020. Pastor Katani Sumner, vice president of FLM Boston, said “it’s only natural to have the fund-raiser be a celebration of Mother Maggie and her commitment to FLM. She did so much for Haiti and we’re here because of our love for her.” **For more information:** [flm.haiti.boston@gmail.com](mailto:flm.haiti.boston@gmail.com) **or call** 617-899-1496 ●

### Stepping Up

“**Hope on the Move**,” FLM Haiti’s **annual 5K Walk**, was a successful virtual and live event this past spring. On **Saturday, May 15, 2021**, more than 100 people joined us on Facebook live and onsite at Pittsburgh’s Highland Park, where participants walked, biked, or ran a distance of about 6,000 steps or close to 3 miles. **Roland Ford**, an exercise and fitness coach, opened the program with a lively warm up. It was a great time to get fit while helping others. Board member **Allegra Battle** provided live commentary and interviews with onsite walkers, while board members **Birdy Reynolds** and **Ervin Dyer** hosted the virtual component. **A big thank you to Cornerstone TV Network for serving as a sponsor.** ●



"Hope on the Move" 2021: Ready to pedal for the cause

### Good Notes

- Last month, **we served 8,550 hot meals** to our school students. This month, our projection is **11,800 meals**.
- **More than 90 percent of the funding raised to support FLM goes to strengthen local community.** FLM employees 125 Haitians: executive directors, school administrators, teachers, doctors, nurses, literacy inspectors, security personnel, custodians, and more. ●

**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS**