

# MISAOTRA

"Thanks to you!"

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Fall 2009

## CRMF Literacy Students Celebrate World Literacy Day Personal stories, rising interest in computer literacy highlight event

### A Community Event

On September 8, ONG St. Gabriel and CRMF once again participated in the celebration of World Literacy Day. This year's theme was the ability of literacy to empower people and promote social development, both major components of our programs. The team chose an urban slum in Toamasina, where one of our literacy centers is well established, as the location for the Literacy Day events.

The events drew a diverse crowd. Leaders at regional, district, commune and village levels spoke about the importance of literacy. Current and former students from our literacy programs participated as well. Some shared their stories about the impact that literacy has had in their lives. There were also competitions to develop songs and cultural dances. It was truly a celebration.

### Publicity leads to increased interest

Local television and radio stations covered the ONG St. Gabriel/CRMF celebrations and programs with enthusiasm. This contributed to a heightened interest in the computer literacy center. Following the celebrations, people had to be turned down from classes that were already at capacity. A group of university students, some who had previously attended classes at the center, returned to offer their thanks and inquire about classes for friends. While thrilled by the growing interest, the center now struggles to balance the demand for learning with the limited space and equipment available.

### Stories of Success

Both the traditional and computer literacy programs have generated stories of hope and changed lives. A grandmother described how being able to read and sign her name has enabled her to better provide for her grandchildren. She enrolled in classes after hearing a radio announcement. As a result, she now has increased access to food, clothing and education for her family.

One young man, a bank employee, explained that he



Performers at the CRMF 2009 Literacy Day celebration.

wanted to learn computer skills for a better position at work. However, he was unable to afford the classes. He subsequently learned about our center and completed courses there. Soon afterwards he received both a salary increase and a new role at the bank.

See *Literacy Day*, p. 3

### \*\* UPDATE \*\*

As we went to press, it was announced that a government power-sharing deal was reached in Madagascar. This was welcome news, as the country has remained in turmoil since a coup d'état in March. The deal involved the current President André Rajoelina, ousted President Marc Ravalomanana, and two past presidents. Details are still evolving. See President's column, page 2, for more information.

From the President's desk

## Counting our blessings



I said a silent prayer of thanks when I read recently that progress had been made towards setting up a transition government in Madagascar. The country has been paralyzed politically and economically since André Rajoelina — with the help of a segment of the military — unseated elected President Marc Ravalomanana last March. It now appears that Rajoelina, Ravalomanana and past-Presidents Didier Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy have reached an accord that will pave the way to new elections and recognition of the island nation by the international community once again. It has been a blessing that the projects of CRMF have continued in spite of the upheaval. We are elated to learn that the Peace Corps is returning to Madagascar thus paving the way for us to advance our plans for improving healthcare among the poor.

At this time of Thanksgiving, I extend thanks to you, our friends and donors, for your continued support. I also thank God that I live in the United States where the kind of upheaval that has plagued Madagascar in 2009 would be unthinkable.

### MISAOTRA

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#### MISSION

Caring Response Madagascar Foundation is a public charity. Its mission is to respond to the needs of the poor of Madagascar, particularly in the area of Toamasina/Tamatave.

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## Fire Destroys Foulepointe

### CRMF provides immediate emergency aid



Debris smolders in the aftermath of the fire.



A young girl picks through remains.

In August we received the sad news that the town of Foulepointe had been devastated by a fire. CRMF has had a presence there since 2007, when a grant we sought from the American Embassy helped to finance a project to build pit latrines. A cooking fire ignited a car in the town, and the fire spread quickly. Over 75% of the town was destroyed. The ONG St. Gabriel team in Madagascar and CRMF in United States responded immediately. Brother Edwin led a group to Foulepointe to distribute clothing and soap, and assess critical needs. Since many people had no cookware, CRMF provided emergency funds to purchase spoons and pots. These were distributed in conjunction with the Red Cross. More than two thousand people were left homeless. CRMF funds have also helped to provide supplies for temporary housing, the installation of ten latrines for the resettled families as well as hundreds of containers of filtered water. Though rebuilding is a slow process, the supplies and services provided by CRMF and ONG St. Gabriel have helped the people of Foulepointe meet their basic needs during this difficult time.



People line up to receive cookware provided by a CRMF donation.

**Literacy Day, continued from p. 1**

Another literacy student had longed for a position in her church's healing ministry but she was unable to complete the program because she could not to read. She proudly described the results of completing the literacy program, "After three months of the accelerated courses I can read and write, thanks to CRMF. I thank them very much for helping us with Malagasy."

It is clear that while our students come from different backgrounds and have different reasons for taking classes, they are united in their desire to learn. They apply their new skills to better their lives and the lives of those around them. We are proud of their efforts. We are also grateful for the services of the wonderful teachers whose work in our literacy and computer centers make these success stories possible.



Crowds gather under the CRMF banner



Sharing personal stories



Celebration through dance

## **SANITEC: The latrine construction plant is nearing completion!**



Track is laid inside the kiln building.



The chamber kiln for firing brick is ready.

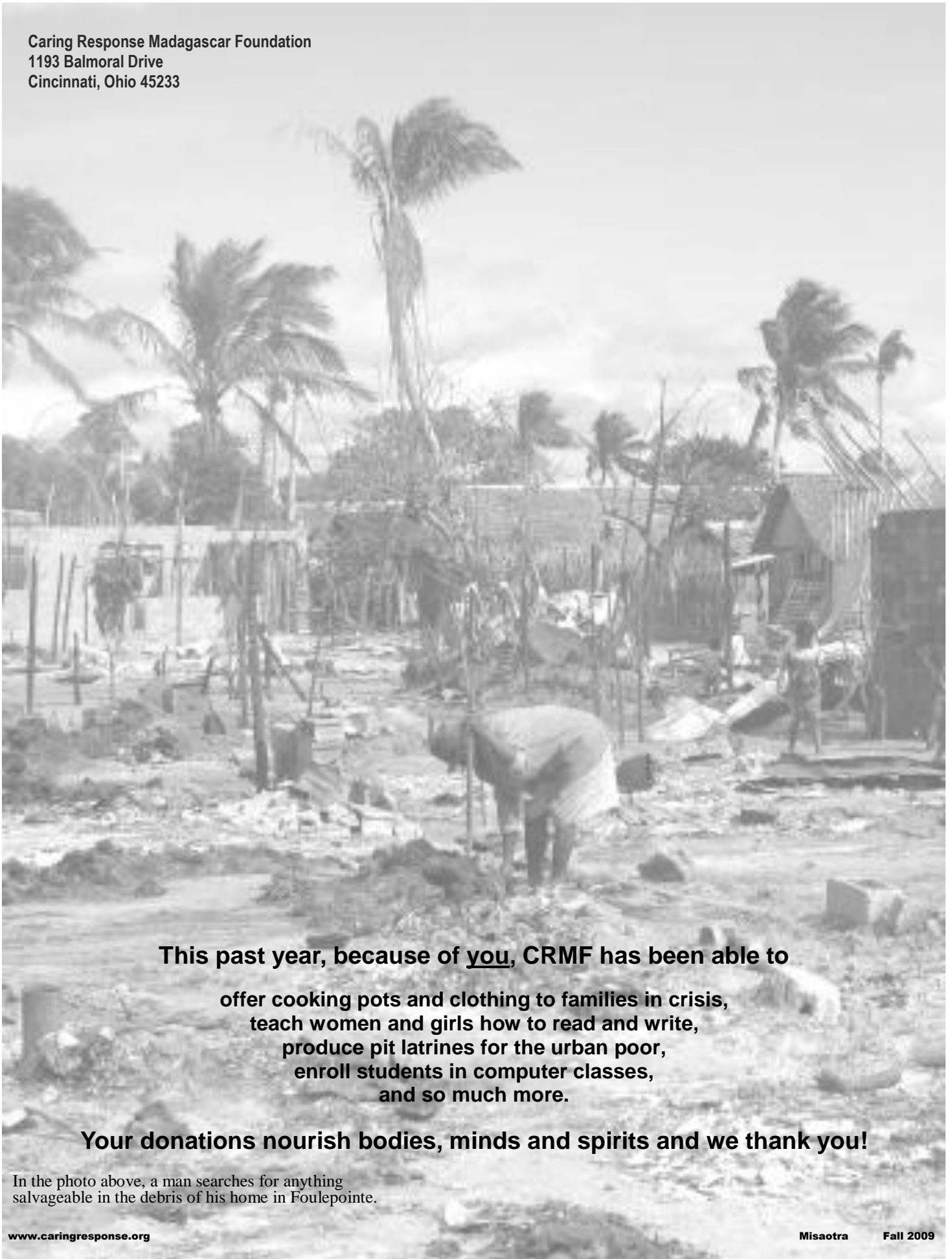


A new road to the plant has been completed.



A rainbow appears over the nearly finished complex .

Caring Response Madagascar Foundation  
1193 Balmoral Drive  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233



**This past year, because of you, CRMF has been able to  
offer cooking pots and clothing to families in crisis,  
teach women and girls how to read and write,  
produce pit latrines for the urban poor,  
enroll students in computer classes,  
and so much more.**

**Your donations nourish bodies, minds and spirits and we thank you!**

In the photo above, a man searches for anything salvageable in the debris of his home in Foulepointe.