



**ESPERE**  
Sant Sante Mantal  
Community Counseling Center

Annual Report  
2016

## A letter from one of our founders, Erika Childs Charles

Greetings,

2016 shaped up to be an eventful year around the world, and Espere was no exception. I am pleased to share this report so that you can see the exciting things that we have accomplished this year, and the impact of our efforts in the communities we serve.

This year has been **a year of growth**. We have added **new** mental health workers dedicated to volunteering their time and occasionally their own expenses to further our mission. We've grown in geographic areas that we serve stretching from Port-au-Prince all the way to the southern corner of the island. These additions were a necessity to meet the ever-growing demand for services from counseling requests to workshops that promote self-care for other organizations' staff members. Our biggest challenge was finding ways to continue our mission with our meager budget and limited resources, but because with dedication and personal sacrifice, we were able to serve more people than we ever have before in orphanages, school, hospitals, churches, hurricane shelters, and homes.

**Espere is run on passion** - passion of our Haitian mental health workers to improve the mental health and wellbeing in their own country; passion of our donors from around the world whose contributions help us serve the most vulnerable and fight against the damaging effects of the stigma so strongly attached to mental healthcare.

We look forward to this coming year with determination to build on the successes of this past year so that we can continue our mission of strengthening families and communities through increased mental health awareness and support that brings peace of mind and hope to those we serve.

Sincerely,



Erika A. Charles, M.A., M.Ed.  
Founder | Director



Erika receives a plaque on behalf of Espere from OFATMA Trauma Hospital.

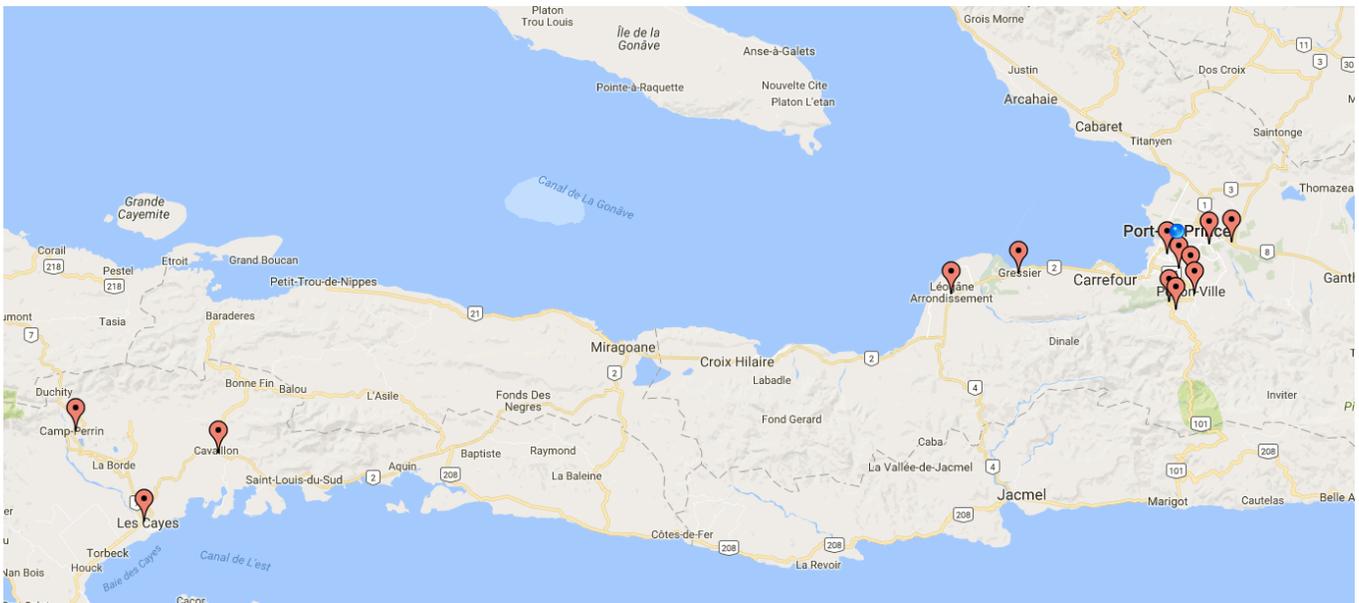
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# Who We Are. Where We Work

## Our Mission:

A mental health center in Haiti dedicated to *strengthening individuals, families, and communities* by providing counseling, community outreach support, education, and



*Hope.*



Some team members pose with certificates recognizing their hours volunteering with clients in 2016.

## Our Team

The majority of Espere's work is carried out by our team of Haitian volunteers who are passionate about decreasing the stigma and providing mental health support in their own country. Our team of 12 volunteers is made up of diverse experiences and skillsets. We have licensed psychologists, students of psychology, social work, communications, linguistics, medicine, and law. Some come with accounting experience; others share insights they have learned as school teachers and administrators. Because of the collective knowledge shared among our team, we are able to address a wide spectrum of needs and build strong therapeutic relationships between our clients, therapists, and lay mental health workers.



Individual Counseling

Our experienced counselors offer a confidential, supportive environment for children and adults ages 3 and older. In 2016 Espere counselors met with over **18 individual clients**, including adults, teens, and children.

Our clients come to us for support through various life challenges including relationship issues, employment difficulties, and life transitions including “aging out” of orphanages, births and deaths of family members, and many kinds of other losses including the loss of homes, jobs, belongings, and a sense of safety. We counsel people battling symptoms of trauma, depression, anxiety, and other mental and emotional challenges.

Espere counselors provide clients a safe, confidential space in our office, or in various locations throughout the community where they can share and process their thoughts and feelings. We use a variety of therapeutic theories

## In Espere's Counseling Program,

our clinical team offers a wide range of counseling services to address different mental health and community outreach needs. Our clients can participate in individual or group counseling services in either office or community-based settings including homes, schools, medical clinics, churches, and orphanages. These services can be offered in Creole, English, or French.

and methods including interventions based in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Play Therapy, EMDR, and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. Our counselors receive supervision, consultation, and ongoing professional development from professionals in Haiti and abroad. Careful considerations for culturally-aware and culturally-sensitive practices are a top priority as we work with each individual client.

The results of our work are inspiring as we watch physical, emotional, and mental transformations occur. Mothers overwhelmed with trauma and depression now have the strength and motivation to start their own businesses where before just getting out of bed was a challenge. Children fighting the effects of abuse and neglect are exceling in school, making friends, and learning to trust others again.



### Group Counseling

Group counseling can be catered to match the needs of a particular age group. Groups are offered at our office or a location convenient to our clients. In, 2016, Espere mediated group counseling for over **121 people**.

Our groups provide a venue for people to have their emotions, thoughts, successes, and concerns heard, validated, and supported by those in attendance. Group topics this year have ranged from stress management, orphanage life, teen empowerment, to groups addressing complex trauma. Our counselors use a variety of tools and strategies that allow participants to express verbally, as well as through art, dance, drama, and play. Our group counseling participants have expressed feeling emotionally stronger, better able to handle new challenges that come into their lives, and a sense of belonging and unity as they learn that they are not alone in their suffering, and begin to help and be helped by others within and outside of their group.



In our **School Program**, Espere offers both individual and group support for children and teens in a number of schools in Haiti. Trauma and other mental health problems can greatly impact a child's ability to succeed in school including difficulty concentrating, behavioral problems, and changes in school performance.

Our team members can teach emotional intelligence and regulation skills as well as other therapeutic techniques to help the child feel successful in school. Additionally, for adolescents, our mental health workers provide psychoeducational tools to manage stress, increase self-esteem, improve relationships, and gain confidence to prepare for the future.

**At one school in particular**, 2-3 hours outside of Port-Au-Prince by public transportation, Espere has enjoyed a multi-year partnership, counseling students and training staff. In 2016 at this school, Espere facilitated **2 ongoing support groups** for children and teens and counseled **21 individual students**.

Political instability such as riots in the streets, and lack of safe reliable transportation has forced us to pause this partnership until we can assure safe transportation of our staff. However, Espere has also trained some of the school staff as lay mental health workers so their students can have access to full-time mental health support and we know that the lessons and support that Espere shared with students and staff stays with them even today.

In past years, school staff participated in Espere's Mental Health Certificate program (see more on that below). We have been able to stay in touch with those staff members and offer continuing support as new challenges arise. In this way, Espere has helped ensure that school staff themselves have the capacity to support the mental health needs of young students.

In 2016, Espere partnered with **4 schools**, reaching **137 children and adolescents**.

Esperé has been partnering with

**OFATMA Trauma Hospital** since 2014. In

2016 alone, Esperé staff counseled over **80 patients** in the trauma hospital, helping them cope with the challenges surrounding hospitalization.



The link between physical and mental health is inseparable. Symptoms of mental health problems often involve medically-unexplained complaints of headaches, muscle pain, and digestive problems. Research also indicates that mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety can develop during a hospital stay, increasing healthcare costs and time the patient remains in the hospital. (WHO, 2013; Pring, 2012; Fulop, 1990).

Espere counselors provide mental health services at OFATMA Hospital's trauma unit in order to provide patients improved comprehensive care and recovery. We offer psychoeducation and counseling as we sit at the bedside of patients recovering from gunshots, motorcycle accidents, amputations, and other surgeries often related to cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. We support clients as they process their "new normal". We listen as they try to manage the fears, worries, sadness, and anger related to trauma, grief, and loss. Our counselors also offer support to family members who, themselves, are trying to process their own emotional reactions to the event causing their loved one to be in the hospital while performing their responsibilities of caretaker of the patient as well as family members back at home. Reports from patients, family members, and hospital staff show that this mental health support results in a reduction of trauma, depression, and anxiety symptoms, increased coping skills, and an overall improvement of health and well-being.

Despite the importance of the program, Espere counselors have often been unable to visit the hospital due to lack of funding for transportation. On Giving Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 generous supporters of Espere raised funds that ensured that in 2017 we will have the means to go to the trauma hospital every week! We hope you will join us in 2017 to see how this important program grows.

Espere offers different types of mental health

**Training and Education**, including mental health certificate programs for prospective and current mental health workers and tailored trainings and seminars on specific mental health topics to individual groups and organizations.



#### Certificate Program

In 2016 Espere's **Fifth Certificate Program Class** completed their course of study, graduating **5 new mental health practitioners**. The 12-week course aims to offer theory and practical skills on basic mental health and social care training topics.

Namely:

- Introduction to Mental Health
- Developmental Psychology
- Learning and Developmental Disabilities
- Children's Mental Health
- Trauma
- Self-Care for Social Services Workers

Espere offers an advanced Mental Health and Social Care Training Certificate Program for those who complete this course.

## Trainings and Seminars

Espere offers training that meets the needs of organizations and groups working within the social services field in the Port-au-Prince area including orphanages, nutrition centers, schools, and other community—based programs. Each presentation provides a background on the importance of mental health in addition to specific mental health and social care topics that are relevant to the group or organization.

This year, Espere partnered with **5 different organizations**, and educated **133 participants** on mental health topics, such as:

- Developmental Disorders in Children
- Trauma
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Women's Health
- Children's Mental Health
- Mental health in the classroom
- Psychological First Aid
- Active listening



## Hurricane Matthew Les Cayes Response



**Hurricane Matthew** was a Category Four hurricane that crossed Haiti's southwestern peninsula on Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and was the largest hurricane to hit Haiti in 50 years. We know that tens of thousands of people have been displaced, and hundreds of homes have been damaged and destroyed. In the cities, towns, and villages of Les Cayes, those most affected by the hurricane are still taking refuge in makeshift shelters in places such as schools and soccer stadiums, and open fields at times housing hundreds of people.

Relief leaders identified psychosocial support as an immediate need alongside food and water, even while many people are still in temporary shelters. In the short term, trauma can stop people from acting to meet their needs; in the long term, people can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental illnesses after life has physically returned to normal. Research by Leah James, Ph.D., and Soulaje Lespri Moun (SLM) after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, found that respondents who displayed PTSD symptoms of avoidance (avoiding activities, thoughts, or feelings associated with a traumatic or hurtful event) were less likely to prepare for subsequent tropical storms or other disasters. They observed that other psychological factors such as perceived risk and vulnerability, depression, and lack of trust for sources of disaster information were significant in regards to disaster preparedness.

Despite multiple challenges, Espere has made **3 trips** to the region of Les Cayes, visiting **7 sites** to assess mental health needs, share some immediate relief supplies (such as water and rice). The team is providing immediate



group trauma counseling to people who now find themselves living in makeshift shelter communities. In these early stages, Espere has facilitated group counseling sessions with more than **61 individuals.**

“Welcome to Port-Salut” Photo of sign taken days after the hurricane by Espere staff.

# Children with Special Needs and their Families

In 2016, thanks to faithful sponsorship, Espere provided support for **4 children and their families** in the special needs outreach program. The children and their families live in different areas of Port-au-Prince and all have different needs varying from Cerebral Palsy, to Down Syndrome, to more generalized Developmental Disorders.



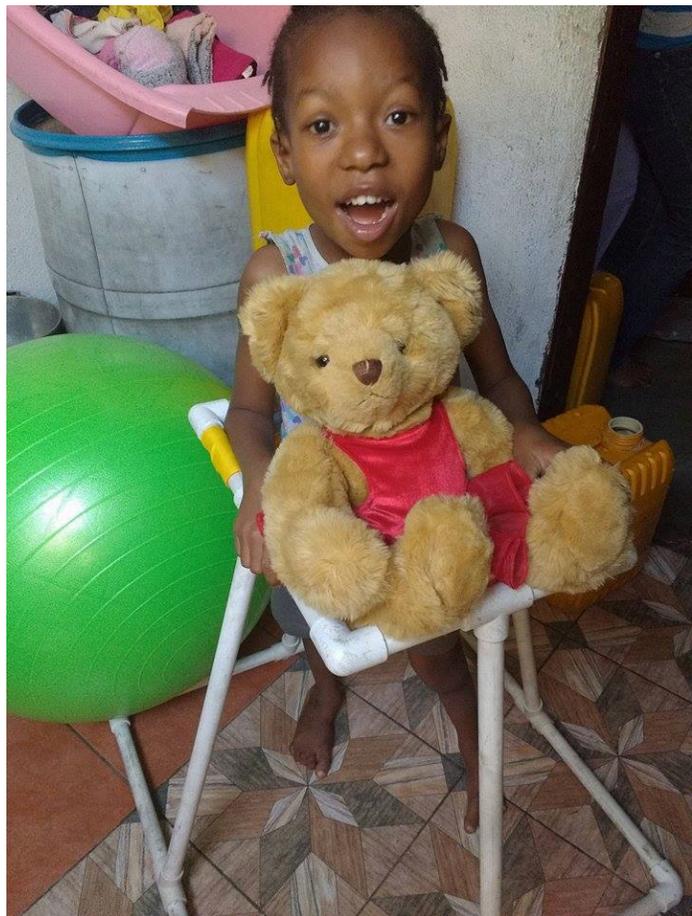
Each family has a dedicated mental health worker who develops an individualized support plan to meet their needs. This includes accessing **disability equipment** (such as leg supports and molds, wheelchairs etc.), accessing **therapy services** (such as physical, speech and occupational therapy), accessing **nutritional support** and accessing **educational schools** which are suitable for children with special education needs. This support also included relief days after Hurricane Matthew, when some families experienced damage to their homes and lack of important supplies for their children.



A significant part of the work is also education for the family. This includes teaching what disability the child has, addressing the cultural myths that often surround developmental disabilities and working with the family to face the challenges that are associated with raising a child with special needs in Haiti.

There are also two mothers from the families who have been enrolled in a small business training program which will start in March 2017. This will teach them the basic concepts behind running a small business and will give them the knowledge to move forward in applying for a small business loan.

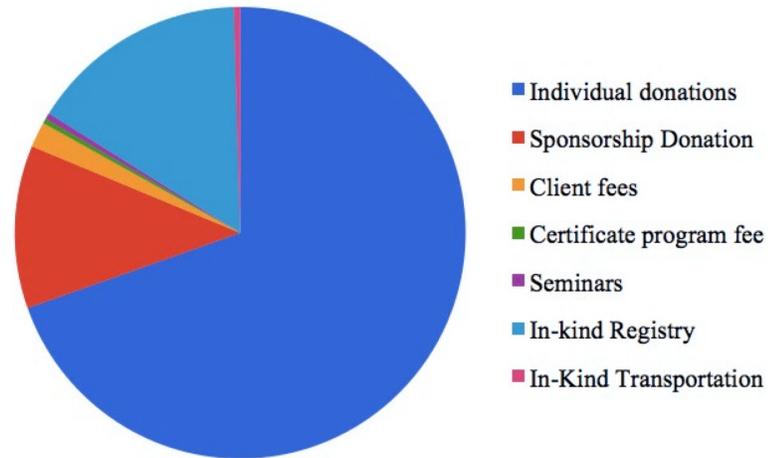
Thank you to those who steadfastly join us in supporting these children and their families.



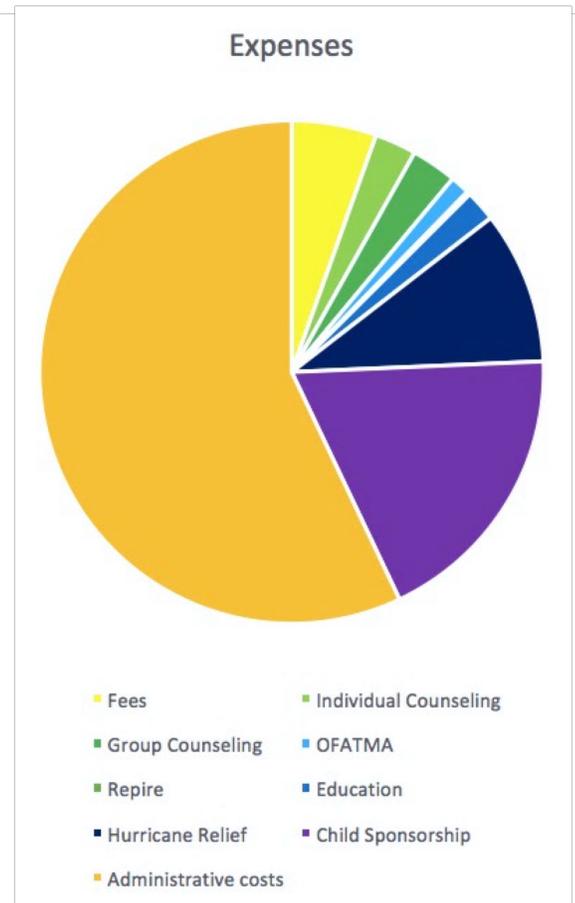
## Financial Summary

### 2016 Financial Summary

<b>Income</b>	
Individual Donations	\$10,645.00
Sponsorship Donation	\$1,783.00
Client Fees	\$279.10
Certificate Program Fee	\$53.73
Seminars	\$67.16
In-Kind Registry	\$2,397.86
In-Kind Transportation	\$68.66
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,294.31</b>



<b>Expense allocation</b>	
<b>Fees</b>	
PayPal Fee	\$282.76
GoFundMe Fee	\$75.40
ATM Fees	\$167.16
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$525.32</i>
<b>Program Costs</b>	
Individual Counseling	\$257.94
Group Counseling	\$282.24
OFATMA	\$120.00
School Program	\$20.00
Education	\$193.72
Hurricane Relief	\$947.27
Child Sponsorship	\$1,799.01
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$3,630.18</i>
<b>Administrative costs</b>	
Rent	\$1,777.27
Internet	\$1,200.00
Car	\$1,747.27
Website	\$113.95
Registration Fees	\$665.47
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$5,503.96</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,659.46</b>



# Income

In 2016 Espere received \$15,294.31 in income, a total that continues to grow from year to year. Of this, \$10,645.00 came from individual donors, \$1,783.00 came from Child Sponsorship donations for our children with Special Needs, \$279.10 came from client counseling fees, \$53.73 came from enrollment in our Mental Health Certificate program, and \$67.16 came from fees from our Mental Health Seminars. We also received \$2,397.86 in donated goods such as therapy tools and relief supplies, and \$68.66 in in-kind transportation from OFATMA Hospital.

# Expenses

In keeping with income, expenses continued to increase in 2016. \$525.32 went to transactional fees, \$3,630.18 were for program costs, and \$5,503.96 went to administrative costs such as office rent, internet access, and car costs. Due to our constricted budget, all of our team members are working as unpaid volunteers. Their time - totaling over **446 hours with clients**, and over **1,112 hours in administrative office work** – was unpaid, and contributes essentially to the success of Espere.

# Surplus (Deficit)

Espere ended 2016 with a surplus of \$5,634.85 This surplus is comprised largely of the \$2,397.86 in in-kind donations, given late in the year, which will be distributed in 2017 in our various programs. Office rent is paid in January, so an end of the year surplus is necessary to be ready for that expense. All surplus funding will be carried forward and spent in 2017.

# Thank You for Joining in Our Work

Our donors make it possible for Espere to carry out the vision of spreading hope, strength, and peace of mind. In fact, in 2016 individual private donors accounted for 70% of Espere's income, 86% when you include the donations of goods like therapy tools and relief supplies. This funding enabled us to:

- Support over **433 clients** in our various programs.
- Partner with over **9 organizations** for maximum impact.
- **Respond** quickly and specifically to the needs of people most devastated by Hurricane Matthew, **the largest hurricane** to strike Haiti in 50 years.
- **Coach and support our staff** of Haitian mental health workers as they fight mental health stigma, provide support in their own country, and guide this young organization in how to be most effective in this context.

Through the challenges of a prolonged election cycle, critical car problems, and even a hurricane, you, our donors were there supporting 433 adults, teens and children through our different programs. You were there supporting our staff as together we learn to provide meaningful services in these unique circumstances. Mesi! Thank You!



Thank You!  
2016



**On our cover:** Therapy with Ernesto Jean Baptiste (practicing the techniques we learned from Occupational Therapist Volunteer Courtney and Physical Therapist Volunteer Ashley at Respire).

**Back cover:** One of our outreach clients was so tired after therapy that she slept through Santa's visit!



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