

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Susan Barnett

773-881-6558

sbarnett@mothermcauley.org

Students of Mother McAuley build biodiesel processor to help Haitian school

The McAuley EcoMacs

Back in late November when Mother McAuley Science Chairperson Dr. Roz Iasillo proposed to the students in the newly formed EcoMacs Club that they should build a biodiesel processor, no one could have predicted the events that would follow and how significant this project would be to the students of two schools, thousands of miles apart.

“The goal of the EcoMacs Club was to build a biodiesel processor that would run on solar energy, use natural resources and send it to the Lakal Pa Nou School in Pichon, Haiti,” said Iasillo. “A school with 280 students in grades 1-6, which has no electricity.”

The ten students who make up the EcoMacs Biodiesel Team include (sitting, left to right)



(standing, left to right) Eileen O'Donnell, Mary O'Donnell, Ana Vazquez, Jenna Krukowski, Kim Schmidt, and Katherine Kezon. Dr. Roz Iasillo (stage, left) is the EcoMac Club moderator and Thornridge teacher Brian Sievers (stage, right) has assisted throughout the project.

After a few weeks of planning and research, the EcoMac Biodiesel Team set to work and spent their Christmas vacation building the processor. The students contacted local businesses seeking donated supplies to build the processor, a \$2000 endeavor. A few of the generous donors include Huen Electric, Home Depot, Meyer Drum, FSI Industries, Jim Murphy (President of Carbon Green), Den Hartog Industries, Frank Calandra from The Caulking Company, and Freezing Systems and Services.

The Earthquake

With weeks of work under their belt and the end of the assembly portion in sight, the McAuley Biodiesel Team received the news of the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti. A project that they hoped to send to Haiti in April now had an added sense of urgency.

“Now with this unexpected event, the sooner we can get it there the better, because they really need our help,” said McAuley senior Mary O’Donnell.

McAuley students learned that the Haitian school was saved from the wrath of the earthquake by a large mountain range which separates Pichon from the epicenter of Port au Prince. Uplifting news to the group of young EcoMacs; Haiti, the people of Pichon and the students of Lakal Pa Nou School have become close to their hearts.



Students from Lakal Pa Nou School in Pichon, Haiti

As news from Haiti continues to improve, further plans will be made on when McAuley’s biodiesel processor can be sent. No matter what the timeline ends up to be, these young women have learned much more than just the steps in building a biodiesel processor. These students have learned how their work goes beyond the streets of Chicago and will impact the people of Pichon, Haiti for generations.

Operation Haiti

“Who would have thought that an entire country could be without the infrastructure for electricity at the same time that a group of teenage girls in Chicago would build a solar-powered biodiesel processor that can produce electricity without any infrastructure?” - Dr. Roz Iasillo, Mother McAuley Science Chair and moderator of the EcoMacs

Additional Sources of Information

Mother McAuley website: www.motherscauley.org

Youtube.com: search McAuley Biodiesel Project

TrueHero.com: [Mother McAuley HS - Solar-Powered Biodiesel Processor for Pichon, Haiti](#)

Facebook.com: Mother McAuley Operation Haiti Biodiesel Project

Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School

Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School is a Catholic educational community committed to providing a quality secondary education for young women. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1846, Mother McAuley offers young women a comprehensive, faith-based college preparatory education enhanced by technology and programs in fine arts and athletics.