

# HAITIAN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

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rebuilding Haiti, child by child  
Haitian Educational Initiatives

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022



# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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2022 was another year of extreme violence, hunger and dislocation for the people of Haiti. Violence by and among warring gangs paralyzed much of the country and proved beyond the control of civil authorities. Gangs seized control of port terminals and major roads, preventing the distribution of fuel and forcing the closure of schools and businesses nationwide. Families in Port-au-Prince were forced to shelter in their homes to avoid random and widespread paramilitary violence and kidnappings. Malnutrition and disease, including cholera, proliferated.

Jacmel, in Haiti's south and the center of HEI's operations, was spared the extreme violence that became a daily occurrence in the nation's capital. Nonetheless, the closure of schools and the disruption to transportation forced our Haitian partners to temporarily suspend aspects of our programs both in downtown Jacmel and nearby Cayes-Jacmel. The Board decided to maintain salary payments to our Haitian staff members to sustain them through a period of severe food shortages and privation, as well as to enable resumption of services to our children in both locations when conditions permitted.

Gang control of fuel distribution infrastructure partially ended in the fourth quarter of the year, and schools have been able to reopen. Our afterschool, weekend and feeding programs have also resumed and we are cautiously hopeful that the Jacmel region will see relative stability in the year ahead. However, the inability of national actors to forge a political solution or bring rampant violence under control suggests that 2023 will bring continued hardship to our students and their families.

Committed to providing a measure of stability to children who desperately need our help, we will return to our donors in 2023 for your support. Our students want to go to school, to make a life, to help their families. If Haiti is to have a better future, they will be essential to it. We thank our donors for staying by their side.

The HEI Board has been very fortunate to attract members with considerable skills in education, program development, fundraising and governance. Nelson North retired from our Board after years of leadership in HEI's fundraising efforts. We thank him and will seek his continued advice. And following the retirement last year of Bill Duncan as Treasurer (and my role as Interim Treasurer), we are delighted that Daniel Drake has joined us as Treasurer. Dan brings extensive managerial and financial experience following a long career with Turner Construction, the nation's largest contractor.



Very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "James H. Whitcomb, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**JAMES H. WHITCOMB, JR.**

President

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM OUR FOUNDER

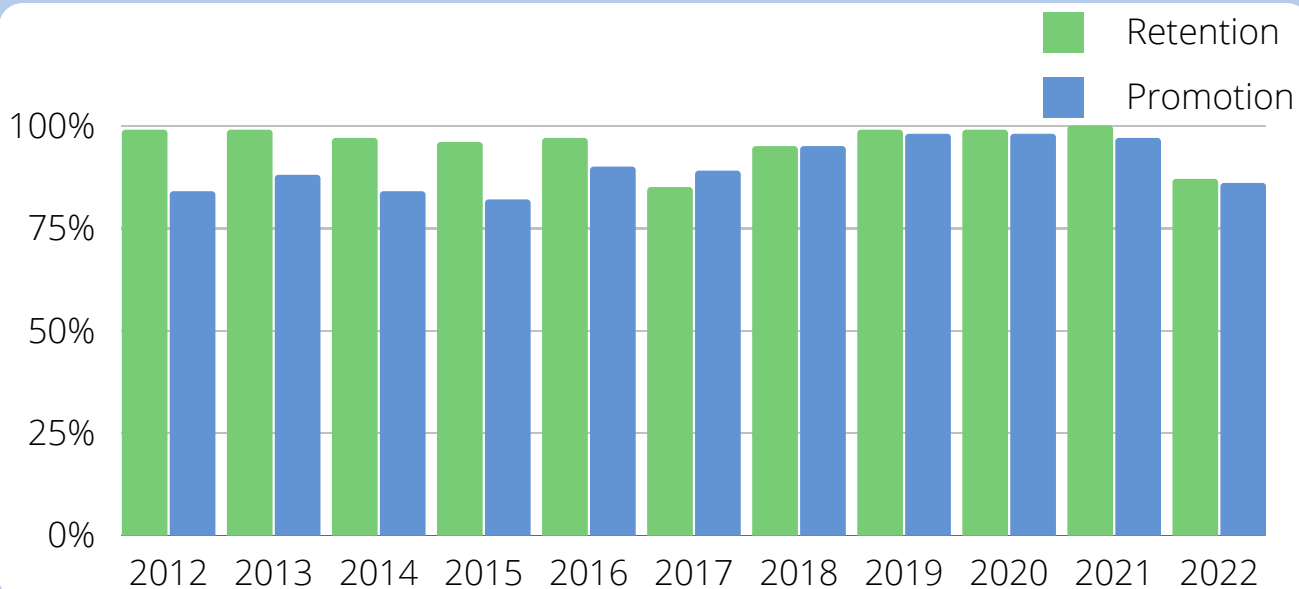
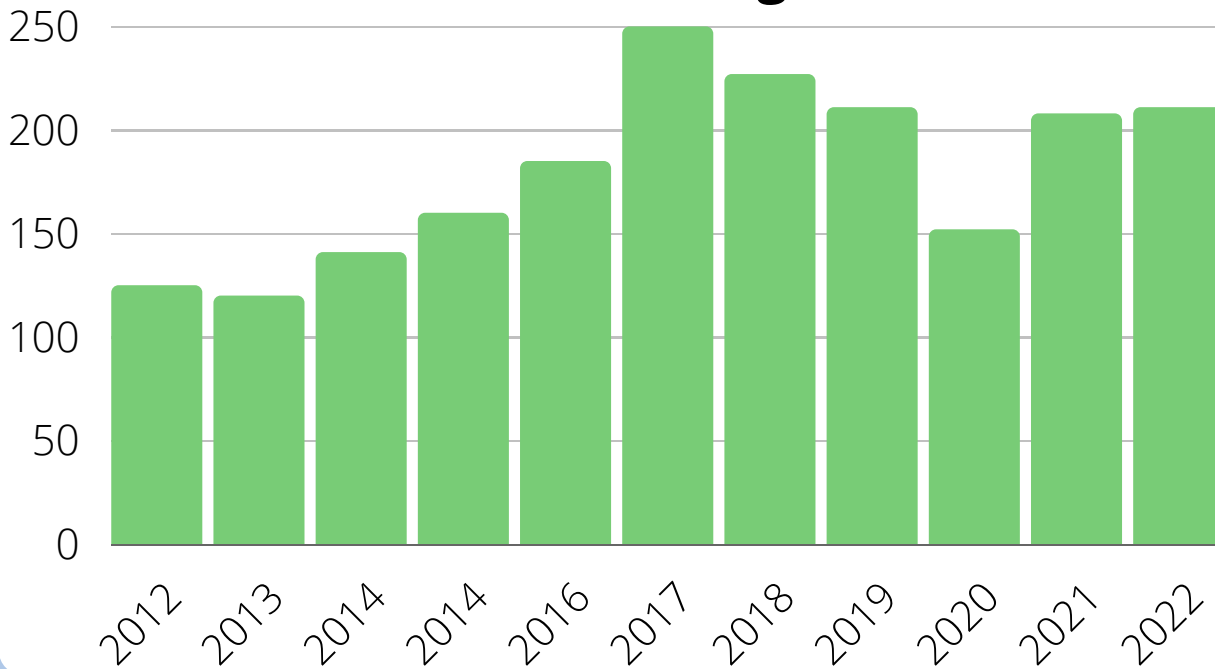
HEI's partnership and program models continued to function in 2022 despite the collapse of the Haitian government, protests against gang activity and lack of services, a 62% increase in food costs, and food and fuel shortages. Our partners resolutely kept their doors open, staff employed, and services running even if schools closed intermittently and materials were scarce. As a result, 87% of total students were able to complete their 2021-22 school year and were promoted to the next grade. Three students successfully graduated. HEI now celebrates 12 high school graduates, 10 of whom are attending university. The total number of children HEI now serves has grown from 208 to 211.

Schools closed for several months in spring and fall, but conditions in Cayes-Jacmel were much quieter than in downtown. Thus, partner Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FJJ) was able to run our scholarship and weekly meal and job training programs for 65 students without interruption. They also added a summer camp and distributed emergency food kits that fed over 500 people for a month in response to widespread food scarcity. Their retention rate was 100% and 98% of their students were promoted to the next grade and two students graduated – an astonishing achievement under the circumstances. Their fall enrollment is now 65 students.

Downtown Jacmel experienced school closures and protests, but as soon as the streets were safe, our Jacmel Scholarship Program partner Peterson Jean-Pierre and his assistant, Toussaint Pierre, reopened our doors. They ran remedial reading, writing, and math lessons to help students gain ground academically and fed hungry participants. They, too, added a summer camp with games, lessons, and meals. Enrollment has increased from 143 to 150 students, with 81% retention and 82% promoted to the next grade. Under Peterson's leadership, the Jacmel Scholarship Program has applied for legal status as Foyer d'Initiatives Educational en Haiti (FIEH).

HEI continues to be committed to efficiency, accountability, and transparency. As a result, we again achieved a 'Platinum' rating from GuideStar indicating our commitment to the highest level of transparency. For every dollar spent in 2022, we sent 89 cents to programs in Haiti.

## Enrollment 2012 through 2022



As we enter our 13th year of operation in Haiti, HEI has become inured to the country's instability. Our model of partnering with committed educators in Jacmel has enabled us to keep functioning when so many other organizations have had to close. Our consistent and reliable delivery of food, scholarships, remedial classes, and job training programs helps children and their families survive and focus on the future.

**SUSAN P. WHITCOMB, PH.D.**

Founder



# Our Partners and Programs

Our partnerships are with two Haitian-led organizations, Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FJJ) and our Jacmel Scholarship Program, now undergoing the process of becoming its own legal entity as Foyer d'Initiatives pour l'Education en Haiti (FIEH). As teachers, school administrators, and dedicated caregivers, our partners are excellent role models for the 215 children in our programs.

## Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FJJ), Cayes-Jacmel

The Joseph family foundation operates in the semi-rural region of Cayes-Jacmel, located about 15 minutes east of Jacmel. Led by Paul Brunet Joseph (Director), a history and geography teacher at the Cayes-Jacmel High School, seven members of the Joseph family and their associates have provided leadership and important services to their community since 2007. FJJ's 65 children and 11 graduates primarily come from subsistence farming families in the mountain and coastal regions of Jacmel. This region suffers from food insecurity because of crop shortages and skyrocketing food costs. Political violence and fuel shortages caused school closures intermittently throughout the year; nevertheless, FJJ was able to provide these services:



- **Scholarships for 65 children to 27 area schools:** These funds cover tuition, uniforms, backpacks, shoes, books and school supplies. FJJ pays the fees, completes the paperwork, and oversees attendance and academic outcomes.
- **Weekly meals for 65 children:** For many, we supply the only cooked meal they eat all week. Good nutrition helps children resist disease and perform better in school. These children eat only a cornmeal mush augmented occasionally with a vegetable or fruit. FJJ provides a weekly meal of rice and beans, fried chicken or beef stew, and a vegetable or plantains with fruit juice.
- **Emergency food kits for 65 students:** FJJ distributed rice, beans, spaghetti, bouillon and other staples to feed our students and their families (500 people) in November. This food helped impoverished families survive widespread food shortages and high prices in Haiti.

- **Weekly computer literacy classes for 30 children aged 9-19 :** Computers donated by Project Redwood allow students to learn Microsoft Word, Excel, and to use the Internet.
- **Weekly needlework and dressmaking classes for children aged 9-19:** The garment industry has been a long tradition in Haiti and tailoring is a proud accomplishment. Our students learn sewing, embroidery, and crochet to prepare for anticipated new jobs in factories and sewing cooperatives. We also teach jewelry-making, bead curtain-making, and traditional crafts to children aged 3-8. Paper flower making for use in parades, weddings, and other celebrations is a popular industry in Haiti.

- **Cooking and baking classes for children 9 - 19 (when possible):**



Students learn to cook basic meals and to bake the cookies, cakes and other sweet treats they sell at school and in the market. They also use their skills at home to improve their families' nutrition. Soap-making is another lucrative project.

- **Enhanced job training opportunities for secondary school students (when possible):**

Fuel shortages and lack of transportation prevented us from coordinating with local resources this year.



- **Summer camp:** Provided a safe space for meals, play, and to learn macrame, floral crafts, languages, reading, and theater arts.
- **End of the school year and Christmas parties:** To celebrate our students' courage and hard work in completing their classes despite hunger, lack of transportation, and the danger of violence, we held joyous parties with abundant food, music, poetry, and dance.

## Foyer d'Initiatives pour l'Education en Haiti (FIEH)

Administrator Peterson Jean-Pierre and his assistant, Eddysson Pierre, consolidated our downtown and Pasquette area scholarship programs into Foyer d'Initiatives pour l'Education en Haiti (FIEH), which is currently in the process of becoming a separate legal entity. Peterson is a graduate of University of Haiti and is Director of Jakmel Ekspresyon, an arts and vocational school in downtown Jacmel. He also co-founded two community programs: the Pasquette High School and an agricultural co-operative. Despite the disruptions, he oversaw these successful programs:



- **Scholarships for 150 children to 44 local schools:** As with FJBJ, these scholarship funds equip the children with everything they need to enroll in school.
- **Remedial classes in math, social sciences, and French reading and writing:** Students facing national exams for promotion to middle and high school receive tutoring in small groups, as well as students who need extra help to catch up.
- **Meals:** Students who participate in remedial classes also receive healthy meals and snacks.
- **Summer camp:** Provided a safe space for meals, play and learning floral arts, cooking, baking, macrame, and making saleable liquid products like soap, detergent, and vinegar as exercises in mathematics, physics, and chemistry.
- **End of the school year and Christmas parties:** To celebrate our students' courage and hard work in completing their classes despite hunger, lack of transportation, and the danger of violence, we held joyous parties with abundant food, music, poetry, and dance.



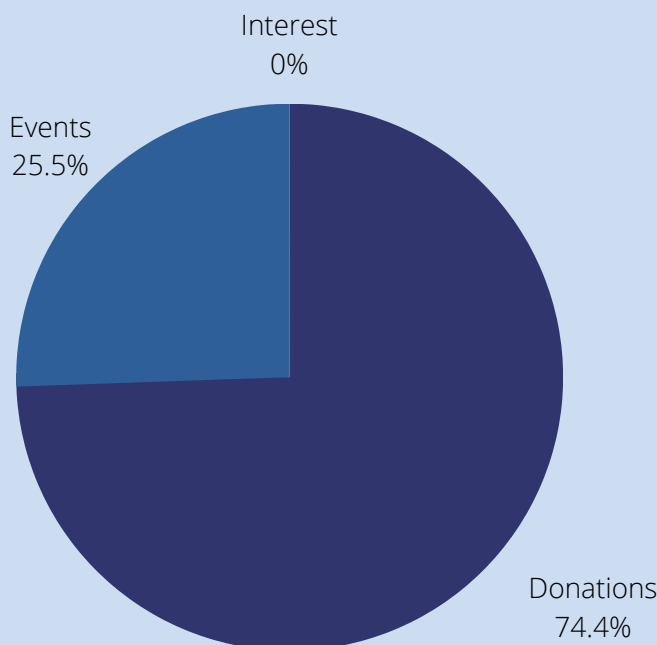
# Our Financial Picture

Haitian Educational Initiatives maintained a strong financial position during the 2022 fiscal year. This was due both to HEI's strong cash balance as it entered the fiscal year and to the temporary suspension of certain programs in the face of school closures and civil unrest.

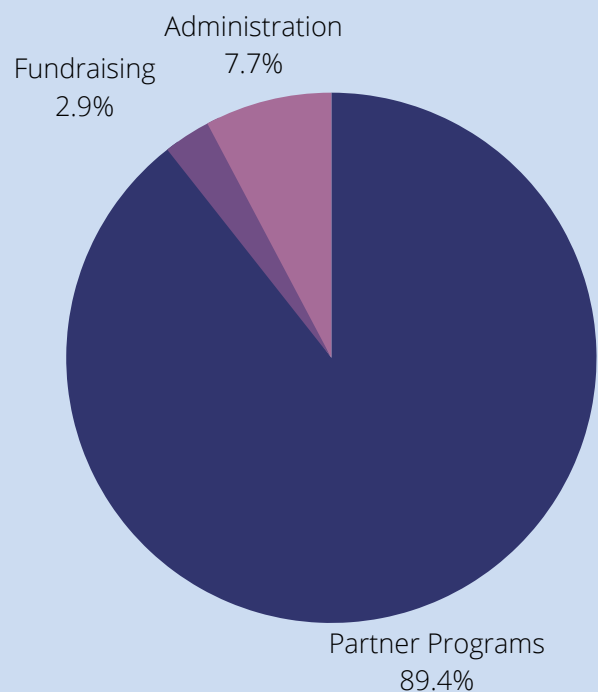
Donations totaling \$82,766 were lower than the \$92,326 received from donors in 2021. The HEI Board decided to pause fundraising during the second half of the year as program suspensions reduced cash needs, thus largely foregoing donations typically received during the fourth quarter. HEI was the beneficiary of a generous bequest from the estate of Sheila Traub in the amount of nearly \$25,000.

The combination of lower income and lower spending was a balance of cash and funds receivable of \$87,360 at year-end, a relatively strong position as we enter 2023. However, with schools tentatively reopening and a renewed need for tuition payments at mid-year, HEI will need to resume fundraising to meet anticipated educational, after-school, and feeding needs in 2023.

## Income 2022



## Expenses 2022



## INCOME AND EXPENSE SUMMARY - 2022

Income		
	<b><u>2022</u></b>	<b><u>2021*</u></b>
Donations	61,634	67,872
Grants	0	3,500
Special Events	21,132	20,954
Interest	20	21
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 82,786</b>	<b>\$ 92,347</b>
Expenses		
Partner Programs		
Jacmel	31,163	14,751
FJB	58,995	41,104
Pasquette	210	250
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 90,368</b>	<b>\$ 48,399</b>
Fundraising	2,910	4,479
Administration	7,835	7,153
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 101,113</b>	<b>\$ 67,737</b>
<b>Increase (Decrease) Reserves</b>	<b>\$ (18,327)</b>	<b>\$ 24,610</b>

## BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022

Current Assets		
	<b><u>2022</u></b>	<b><u>2021*</u></b>
Cash	82,927	100,365
Funds Receivable	4,433	3,002
Prepaid Expenses		2,361
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 87,360</b>	<b>\$ 81,287</b>
Current Liabilities		
Payables & Accrued Expenses	120	160
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 120</b>	<b>\$ 160</b>
Charitable Funds		
Restricted Funds	11,550	11,550
Unrestricted Funds	75,7690	94,017
<b>Total Chaitable Funds</b>	<b>\$ 88,240</b>	<b>\$ 105,567</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Charitable Funds</b>	<b>\$ 87,360</b>	<b>\$ 105,727</b>

\*2021 restated, no material difference

# Board of Directors

## **James Whitcomb, President**

Jim is a Managing Director at Westbury Group, an investment banking firm headquartered in Westport, CT. He has advised corporate clients on mergers, acquisitions, and corporate finance in markets around the world.

Jim is currently a Director of the British Schools and Universities Foundation and a Director of Zurich-based International Corporate Finance Group. He served as Director, President, and Treasurer of The Southport Conservancy, a 501c3 organization dedicated to the preservation of an historic Connecticut village. Jim was educated in England at Rugby School, received a B.A. in History from Williams College and an M.B.A. from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business. He and his wife live in Westport, CT.

## **Susan Whitcomb, Ph.D., Founder and Secretary**

Susan founded HEI in December 2010 after serving as a volunteer teacher with Global Volunteer Network in Jacmel. She taught English and French to adults recovering from the earthquake and also assisted in childcare facilities in the city. She has taught at Purchase College and the University of Saint Joseph, where she also directed the Honors Program. Susan served on the Board of Directors of the A Better Chance program in Ridgefield, CT and is a docent emerita at the Morgan Library in New York. She earned her B.A. from Wellesley College and Ph.D. in English Literature from Yale University. She lives in Brevard, NC.

## **Dan Drake, Treasurer**

Dan recently retired from a 45-year career with the nation's largest general contractor. Over his career, Dan built new schools and renovated existing schools throughout Fairfield County. He also worked on major hospital renovations in Bridgeport, Greenwich, and Sleepy Hollow, as well as office renovation projects too numerous to list. One of his favorite projects was the renovation of the historic Ingalls Rink at Yale University. Dan served on the Building Committee at his church for over 10 years. Now that he has retired, he is happy to be able to spend more time with his three daughters and sons-in-law, as well as his four grandchildren. His hobbies include woodworking, astronomy, and repairing anything that is broken. Dan and his wife live in Darien, CT.

## **Gerard Azor, Jr., Liaison to the Haitian-American community and the Haitian diaspora**

Originally from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Gerry is a Core Account Manager for Cardinal Health. He is also the Vice-Chairman of the United Haitian-American Society of Connecticut and the Executive Director of the Haiti Relief Fund. He has been a leader in the Haitian-American community for over 30 years, organizing numerous activities in the tri-state area. He serves as an advisor to many Haitian-American media outlets. Gerry studied Business Management at Sacred Heart University. He lives in Fairfield, CT.

# Board of Directors (cont.)

## Virginia Lynch Dean

Virginia Lynch Dean has an extensive background in features, and documentaries, theater and television development and production at NBC newsroom, including most recently, co-producer/director of the short documentary: "Ghost Mountain, the Second Killing Fields" 2021. Author of *Chief Crazy Snake: the Untold Story of Roy Hoffman & Chitto Harjo*, 2021. She is an active fundraiser for non-profit organizations, serving on the executive committee for The Chapin School Capital Campaign, the Governing Board and the Sustaining Board of Memorial Sloan Kettering, and the Board of the YMCA/YWCA of Greater New York. Virginia is an active supporter of the New York City Mission Society and Project Learn, Bridgeport, CT; a founding member of non-for-profit Divine Mortgages, Bridgeport, CT; and organizer of Wings World Quest, NYC. She has also served as a consultant for the Howard Dean campaigns.

## Abigail Franklin

Abigail has 25 years of senior management experience in fundraising and marketing with organizations such as The New York Academy of Medicine, New York Common Pantry in East Harlem, NY, The Ms. Foundation for Women, Columbia University and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and holds a graduate degree from Yale School of Drama. She lives in New York City.

## Rosemond Joseph

Rosemond Joseph was born in Fond des Blancs, Haiti and attended Jean Price Mars High School. Arriving in the U.S. in 1997, he attended Norwalk Community College and The University of Phoenix. After working at Virgin Atlantic Airlines as lead trainer, he has spent the last 15 years in retail banking with Chase and HSBC/Key Banks. He lives in Norwalk with his wife and four children. Rosemond enjoys travel and sports, especially football, soccer, and basketball.

## Edvardine Joseph

Edvardine is President and Founder of the International Student Aid Association (ISAA), which aids nonprofits that help underdeveloped countries become self-sufficient, starting with educating the youth. Under Edvardine's leadership, ISAA has conducted three successful campaigns in Haiti: sending 50 textbooks to students in Jacmel; 50 COVID-19 hygiene kits to a medical clinic in Cazale; organizing the first "Let's Start with the Youth!" Talent Show to fund full tuition scholarships for five accomplished students in Jacmel. Edvardine lives in CT and is of Haitian descent. She is a graduate of Greenwich Academy (Class of 2021) and is currently an undergraduate at the University of Chicago (Class of 2025).

# Board of Directors (cont.)

## Joan O'Connell

Joan O'Connell brings 40 years of experience in computer software. She recently retired from a career in software sales and consulting. Joan graduated from Boston College, and lives in Darien, CT, with her husband Rick Agresta. She is a member of the Technology and Communications Committee of Project Redwood, spends too much time on a computer, and is always reading more than one book.

## Yvrose Romulus

Yvrose Romulus has over twenty years of experience in Higher Education and has been the Associate Dean/Associate Director of the School of Professional Studies & UB Online at the University of Bridgeport. She has been the President of Fraternité Valléenne of CT for 3 years. Yvrose has served as an Advisory Council Member for Family Economic Security Program (FESP) for Fairfield County's Community Foundation at Housatonic Community College and as Senior Advisor for the Advising Department at Gateway Community College. In 2009, Yvrose was the Marilyn Gordon Woman of the Year Award recipient at the University of Bridgeport and the 2014 Purple Knight Partnership Award Recipient. Yvrose has a keen ability to assist, inspire, and guide others. She earned her M.A. in Counseling with a focus in College Student Personnel from the University of Bridgeport. She lives in Monroe, CT and has family in La Vallee, near Jacmel, Haiti.