Camp de Musique  
by David Jennings

God is good and He has been on full display at the Source of Light Center (SoL) in Port au Prince, Haiti. In August 2017, a volunteer team of musicians from the not-for-profit organization Now I Play Along Too (NIPAT) set out for the SoL Center in Delmas 19 to deliver instruments and teach music lessons at their annual summer music camp. NIPAT was established by the band Melodime to help provide opportunities for at-risk and underprivileged children to learn music, but also with the dual purpose of building character and discipline to overcome obstacles. Learning a new instrument can be a very rigorous and challenging, yet fun, process that helps define one’s character. Music also has the ability to unite others who may speak different languages and come from very different walks of life. This could not have been more apparent during this year’s summer music camp.

Each day started with a fun pump-up rally where everyone gathered in the chapel to sing high-energy worship songs led by the band. Some of the English songs were new whereas others had already been noticeably learned, based on the volume exerted from several of the kids in the front rows. We danced, we shouted, and we worshiped.

Then, all the kids were split into musical groups to receive instruction from both the NIPAT volunteers and teachers from the Haitian Holy Trinity School of Music. Most of the students had already been taking lessons throughout the school year so naturally they gravitated toward their favorites. Classes were offered in violin, viola, trumpet,
flute, acoustic guitar, and drums. It was amazing to walk through the orphanage courtyard area to hear all the different instruments sounding from the open classroom walls.

After lunch all the students met together in the chapel to play music together, where several were handpicked by the teachers to showcase their musical talent by joining the band on stage to play a few songs. It was so much fun to see the kids with huge smiles playing in front of a crowd of their friends for the first time.

We wrapped up camp with a pizza party and concert to demonstrate the various songs that were learned that week. A few classic Haitian folk songs, ‘Siwo Grenadin’ and ‘Waio Waio’ were among them. One by one each group performed with a roaring applause after each by all their peers. The concert closed with all the kids performing the English worship song ‘Set a Fire’, which served as somewhat of the theme song for the week. It was a remarkable moment to witness different cultures, languages, voices, ages, and instruments transcend any differences or challenges and celebrate together through music.

It was truly a blessing to have been part of it and will be forever changed, at least until we do it again next year.

For more information about the Source of Light Center and to learn about the child sponsorship program: Visit SourceOfLightHaiti.org or contact Staci Calkin at haitichildsponsorship@bgav.org.

For more information about the Source of Light Center and to learn about the child sponsorship program: Visit SourceOfLightHaiti.org or contact Staci Calkin at haitichildsponsorship@bgav.org.