

# ValleyLifestyles



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Bugle-Observer WEEKEND



FILE PHOTO

Author Rosemarie Willis donates all proceeds to date, \$20,000, from the biography of her late brother-in-law Sgt. Mark Gallagher to Friends of Mark Gallagher representative Richard Blaquiere. Willis hopes to raise more funds with the publication of the book in French.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Reg Sorel, project co-ordinator, is in discussion on-site with M. Edgar Liburd, engineer overseeing construction.

## Gallagher School nears completion

Project co-chair Richard Blaquiere said barring unforeseen complications school should be completed in March

**BRENT MAZEROLLE**  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Next weekend will mark four years since a massive earthquake on Jan. 12, 2010, left Haiti in ruins and more than 300,000 people dead.

Among those killed was a well-known New Brunswick police officer, RCMP Sgt. Mark Gallagher, who was serving on a United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Caribbean nation, already impoverished and unstable before the 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck.

Back home in Canada, family, friends, colleagues and the public at large soon launched a project to build the Mark Gallagher Memorial Vocational School in Haiti, honouring his memory and helping to provide a badly needed educational facility.

The work has been long and hard, with all the frustrations and delays of working in a country that is the Western Hemisphere's poorest, rife with

desperation, corruption and crime. Nevertheless, the past year has seen some significant progress.

A year ago, only the ground has been cleared and a fence built to pen in the property in the rural community of Rivière Froide. But now, one of the people spearheading the project, retired Woodstock schoolteacher Richard Blaquiere, says "barring unforeseen complications, the school construction should be completed by March."

He warned of course that "unforeseen complications" which might be a snowfall or a zoning issue here in New Brunswick, can be everything from civil unrest to another natural disaster in Haiti.

"We persevered," Blaquiere says. The school will only officially open when the next Haitian school year begins in October, but he is hopeful one or two outdoor courses at the vocational school, such as masonry for instance, can be offered this summer even as the

school is still being outfitted.

He reports another member of the New Brunswick team, Dr. Eugene Lewis, has secured a 40 foot shipping container which is being filled with saws and ladders and other equipment needed for a vocational school. While there is the container to fill here, Blaquiere says the goal is as much as possible to use cash raised to buy whatever they can in Haiti as a means of contributing to the local economy.

The school will have about 125 students, and thanks to the separate project of a German non-governmental organization, it will stand next door to a brand new primary and secondary school.

"It's going to be a whole education complex," he says.

In a separate development, Moncton's Rosemarie St. Pierre-Willis, the late Mountie's sister-in-law, co-authored a book full of anecdotes entitled *Beyond the Call: The Life and Legacy of*

*Mark Gallagher*. She has dedicated 100 per cent of the funds raised, more than \$20,000, to the school, and now will be offering a new edition of the book translated into French.

"It's being edited now," she says. "We hope to have it out in about three weeks."

The first run of the book, in English, is all but sold out.

"I had 34 boxes and I'm down to two," she says.

She hopes a French version will reach another segment of the market in New Brunswick, and in Quebec where the New Brunswick teams partners in the school project are based.

She says she will also bring boxes of the book to the school when she attends its grand opening in the fall so that the students will learn the story of their school's namesake.

Of the roughly \$1 million raised so far, \$300,000 came from New Brunswickers alone, with a \$790,000 injection from

the Canadian International Development Agency.

The school's being built with the help of the Association pour l'avancement des Nations Unies, a non-profit, volunteer organization in Quebec that's worked on the ground in Haiti for more than 35 years. An order of nuns, Les Petites Soeurs de Sainte Thérèse, whose missions are located in 28 communities across Haiti, is doing a lot of the ground work to make sure the vocational school is a success.

The New Brunswick Community College has agreed to help develop the school's curriculum, which will initially include courses in masonry, tiling, sewing and clothes-making.

Also making the project come to life have been the New Brunswick Department of Education, the Canadian embassy in Haiti, and the RCMP.

"I can't speak highly enough about the RCMP and Staff Sgt. Dave Vautour's support," Blaquiere added.



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Sr. Kaline Honore, principal of the Sgt. Mark Gallagher Memorial Vocational School, works with her assistant Jean-Rony Louis.



FILE PHOTO

Sgt. Mark Gallagher