

**CONTACT:**

Helena Finnegan  
Mary's Meals USA Communications Manager  
helena.finnegan@marysmeals.org  
239-290-7788

## Despite Unrest, Global School-Feeding Charity Continues to Feed Children Experiencing Hunger in Haiti

*Mary's Meals is Collaborating with Local Partners to Deliver School Meals*



*School meals provide food and access to education in an increasingly turbulent Haiti.*

**Bloomfield, N.J. – October 4, 2023** –In spite of ongoing turmoil in Haiti, global school-feeding charity Mary's Meals continues to provide meals to 206,000 children, ages 3-18, in 662 schools thanks to in-country partnerships and resolute volunteers.

As Haiti struggles with prolonged civil unrest and gang violence, it is further burdened by acute food insecurity as classified by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system, which shows that more than 4.89 million people in Haiti – 49% of the country's population – are currently in crisis or emergency from hunger. This classification specifies that humanitarian food assistance is urgently needed.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas and has been plagued by an onslaught of natural disasters, violence and food insecurity for years. According to the United Nations (U.N.), from January 1 to August 15 this year, more than 2,400 people have been killed in gang violence, and more than 950 people kidnapped, including a United States aid worker. The U.N. estimates that 80% of the country's capital, Port-Au-Prince, is controlled by gangs. Malnutrition is widespread due to chronic food insecurity, and it is estimated that at least 500,000 children are out of school.

Despite this turbulence, Mary's Meals, with partners Summits Education, Caritas Hinche, and Bureau de Nutrition et Développement (BND), has managed to continue delivering school-feeding programs throughout 2023, ensuring that more than 200,000 young learners can rely on a daily meal at school.

"The program is ongoing because of our ability to mitigate risk. We adapt to the constantly evolving situation. Firstly, we know that if we can just get the ingredients for the meals to the schools, there are immediately fewer constraints in the daily delivery and monitoring, since the teachers and school monitors live locally and can take it from there," explained Cassandre Regnier, program director at Summits Education.

“The local staff we have in each region know of upcoming protests or events that might cause disruptions, and they can modify activities and interventions as needed,” she added.

In this type of environment, where political and environmental stability can change rapidly from one day to the next, the dedication of the volunteers is even more apparent.

Regnier stated, “Volunteers come daily to prepare the meals and donate their time to the school-feeding program. It is rare that volunteers don’t show up, unless there is an emergency. They know the children will not eat if they do not volunteer, so it’s crucial to the parents. We are so appreciative of the contribution made by volunteers; without them our school-feeding program simply would not function.”

The simplicity of a meal at school in [Haiti](#) is anything but that given the perilous situation everyone faces. It’s a rare opportunity for hungry children to have some semblance of normalcy, food and access to education in a nation beset by chaos.

For more information about Mary’s Meals or how to support school feeding in Haiti, visit: [www.marysmealsusa.org](http://www.marysmealsusa.org).

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## About Mary’s Meals

Now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year, [Mary’s Meals](#) is a global movement that sets up school-feeding programs in some of the world’s most vulnerable communities, where conflict, poverty and hunger often prevent children from gaining an education. Mary’s Meals works with in-country volunteers to provide one daily nutritious meal in a place of learning to attract children into the classroom to receive an education. This simple solution to help end world hunger also enables children to lift themselves from the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Mary’s Meals began by feeding 200 children in Malawi in 2002. Today, the organization feeds 2,429,182 hungry children every school day in 5,084 schools across five continents in the following countries: Benin, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Myanmar, Niger, South Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Mary’s Meals collaborates with the U.N. World Food Program, partners with USAID in Liberia and is part of the global School Meals Coalition, an emerging initiative of governments and partners to drive actions that can urgently re-establish, improve, and scale up food and education systems. For more information about Mary’s Meals, visit [marysmealsusa.org](http://marysmealsusa.org).

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