

# **The Language Hangouts Project:**

**Implementing video chats to develop English skills and cross-cultural community.**



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# Reflections

Haiti  
Partners

- “Just finished my hangout and love that we really seem to have hit a stride. Today he sang me a song he had written in Creole and when I asked him to translate it he insisted instead on teaching me to sing it. He thought it was hilarious to hear me mangle the words (and my tone deaf singing voice) but was so patient and persistent on getting it right. It made my week!”

*- Kristin in Minneapolis, MN*

- “Another great chat with Fritzner this afternoon. We talked about gardening since he told me he spent the day starting his garden (beans and corn). I told him I grow tomatoes and herbs for summer. He brought some great pictures of his wife and new baby boy. It was a very quick 30 minutes! I promised I would bring pictures to show next week.”

*- Jennie in Hershey, PA*



Jesse, the project founder, and his language partner, Denis during a visit to Haiti

# Language Hangouts Project

- An experiential learning method for Haitian students to practice conversational English.
- Extending their learning spaces outside the classroom, students engage in weekly conversations with native English speakers through web-based video chats for sessions scheduled for eight weeks (Ballard, 2014).



**2015: # of Participants**  
- 61 US Participants  
- 40 Haitian Participants

**25-30 hangouts every 8 week session**

**1300+ volunteer hours in 2015**

**Collaborative Institutions:**



**CHESTNUT  
HILL  
COLLEGE**

# Goals & Outcomes



- Students and their English-speaking counterparts discuss and reflect upon their academic studies, future hopes and goals, and the value of family and community.
- Primary goal is learning English.
- Secondary goals equally valuable.

## Mutually beneficial outcomes

Intercultural  
Communication

Cross-cultural  
Collaboration

Technology  
Integration

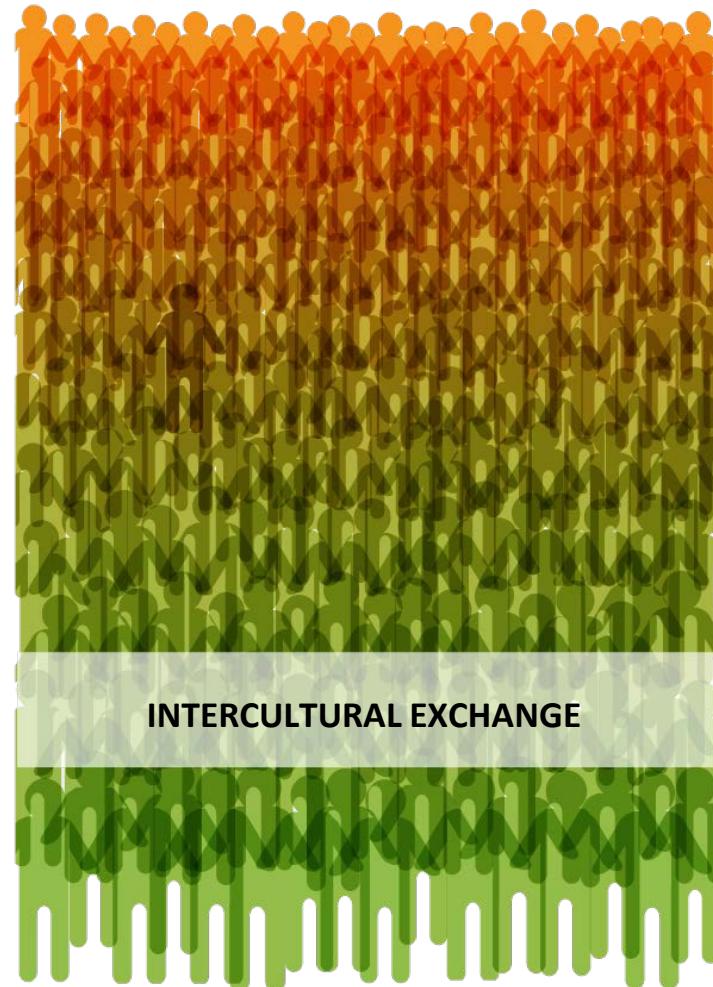
# Leadership

- This program also provides a framework for developing leadership skills (Guthrie & Jones, 2012), while attaining levels of English fluency necessary for social entrepreneurship opportunities and increased job prospects.
- Aligns with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to encourage a “changemaking” culture (Weissburg, 2012).



# Community & Collaboration

- The scalability and flexibility of this program provides numerous opportunities to create a community of inquiry (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000), and to adapt to high-impact practices including service-learning with an emphasis global and collaborative learning.



# Face to Face (remotely)

- Video chats provide one-on-one synchronous interaction that wouldn't be possible without study abroad.
- Broadband access, laptops with built-in cameras and access to free Google video chats has resulted in a community of learners exchanging perspectives on culture, family, and dreams while recognizing their shared heterogeneous and homogeneous characteristics.



# The Impact Video



# Our Schools

- We develop schools that help children realize their potential while driving community development and lifelong learning.
- We currently run one school of our own and we partner with six more, enabling students to attend school without exorbitant costs.



# Our Community



- We operate the Children's Academy as an incubator for ideas and approaches that are reshaping education in Haiti.
- In addition to school-aged programs, we involve the community in learning.
- Adult programs include Entrepreneurship Training, ESL classes, Gender Equality Workshops, and Village Savings and Loans.

# Our Micah Scholars



- Micah Scholars Program is developing a new generation of pastors and leaders who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
- In partnership with 3 Haitian seminaries, we're providing 39 young leaders with full scholarships to seek a Bachelor's of Divinity degree.

# Creating Changemakers



- The common thread for all our programs is to work collaboratively with our Haitian partners to unleash their thoughts, concerns and potential.
- Our focus is to provide the social and emotional learning that complements our educational curriculum and makes “changemaking” possible.

M E R C I



# References

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**Weissburg, R. (2012, April 9).** Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Expert Roger Weissberg on Academics and Character Education [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGZKfKjDgVc>.

# Allison P. Selby

Allison Selby has taught in higher education for the last ten years. She has taught various digital media courses for many schools, including The University of the Arts, Drexel University and Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia. Currently, she is a Sr. Instructional Designer with [Collibra](#), a data governance company.

She is a graduate of Chestnut Hill College, Masters of Science, Educational Technology. She recently earned a Graduate Certificate in Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning in Postsecondary Education from Portland State University.

Allison is from Hershey, PA (which explains her undying love for chocolate) and is now in Asheville, NC, where she now resides with her two dogs. In her spare time Allison likes to hike and generally spend time outside away from the pings, beeps and various alerts from her computers.



**Allison P. Selby, MS.**

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# Jodie S. Kitchens

After more than 25 years in the financial services industry, Jodie Kitchens felt restless knowing there were other things she was meant to do. In a leap of faith, she left the corporate world and spent 2010 “following the thread” of energy and engagement.

This thread solidified her personal mission “to help families in crisis” and led her to her current role with Haiti Partners. A country struggling with massive unemployment, poverty, natural disasters and political unrest, Haiti has many strikes against it. To help these families create a different future, Jodie serves Haiti Partners as the Entrepreneurship Program Project Manager. In that role, she designs and coordinates delivery of business awareness and tools for individuals to succeed; and she leads the development of a social business to support the community. She also serves as the Language Hangout Coordinator, a project that has expanded 6 fold since its inception in early 2015.

Jodie takes her role of “helping families in crisis” beyond Haiti Partners as the President of the Board of ASK Childhood Cancer Foundation, an organization devoted to helping children with cancer and their families by providing emotional, spiritual and financial support.

Jodie cherishes her family including her husband of over 26 years, Randy, and her two college-aged children, Selena and James. She continues a family tradition of handcrafts by knitting, is learning the guitar, and is becoming an expert at making jerky to support her son who is thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail.



Haiti Partners

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More information about  
Language Hangouts at:

[www.haitipartners.org/languagehangouts](http://www.haitipartners.org/languagehangouts)