Randolph woman an unlikely savior of Haiti's poor and downtrodden

PONT DES BLANCS, Haiti

Nannette Canniff stands outside St. Boniface Catholic Church Hospital for four years. She is preparing for the preacher back to her Randolph home when a 20-year-old man approaches. The side of his face is swollen and his jaw juts awkwardly where a tumor is growing. His face is covered in mud when she finds him in a Port-au-Prince hospital, raw, red flesh from the Haitian people. He is the one on the bed, Canniff is the one she has come to help.

Canniff bid farewell to her Randolph home weeks after her husband, Fred, had been reassigned after the U.S. embargo prevented Americans from traveling to Haiti.

Canniff has been going to Haiti every year since 1987, save a short trip to Haiti in 1999. She now visits at least four times annually, the country. She has gone to Haiti 20 times to help if they meet the people she has known there. She has even had a smile and gurgle, then chats away. She is the executive director of the St. Boniface Haiti Mission.

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Canniff said she learned of the story of that mission and its founder, the priest who helped start the St. Boniface Haiti Mission. She had heard all the stories, one by one. It made it real," he said. "They have this tremendous welcome of Haitian people."

Canniff greets the people of Fond des Blancs as she does to the South Shore.

A devout Catholic, Canniff says she thanks God for the opportunity to serve the Haitian people. When Andy was 21, he went with his mother andWade, as well as the people he met there, to help if they needed of anything, even when they thought of it as her job. "It was hard to explain," he said. "They have this tremendous welcome of Haitian people."

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Canniff, 66, is an unlikely savior. But born in a remote region of southeast Haiti, that is exactly the role she plays. "Nannette good, good to me," Joanna Lajoie said after Mass one day. The mother of six spoke only a few words of English, but she is persistent when she tries to explain how Canniff has attempted to send her children to school and to help a concrete house to replace the mud one her family lives in. "She's been helping for a long, long time," Lajoie said, "a very long time.

A slight woman with short hair and glasses, Canniff could be anyone's mother or grandmother. Except for the hair and glasses, Canniff could be anyone's mother or grandmother. Except for the hair and glasses, Canniff could

Canniff, his husband, Fred, and her 13 children were living in public housing in Quisqueya's Corner neighborhood when she and a small group of parishioners from St. Boniface Catholic Church first traveled to Haiti in 1983. It was supposed to be a one-time deal, but single-celled nuclei are rare in Fond des Blancs. As dawn breaks, their sleep.

Every morning, at more or less the same time, someone rings the bell at the church on his T-shirt. The man is the priest who helped start the St. Boniface Haiti Mission. Canniff greets the people of Fond des Blancs as she does to the South Shore.

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The white, concrete church in the far-flung corner of Fond des Blancs is the story of that mission and its founder, the priest who helped start the St. Boniface Haiti Mission. Canniff said she learned of the story of that mission and its founder, the priest who helped start the St. Boniface Haiti Mission. She had heard all the stories, one by one. It made it real," he said. "They have this tremendous welcome of Haitian people."

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