

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Sketches of Nature - Environmental education through art



Cacao tree

On Thursday March 19 2020 I began an art and nature activity funded by the Cape Cod Bird Club Conservation fund. The objective of the project is to engage Université Chrétienne du Nord d'Haïti (UCNH) School of Fine Arts students with nature through directed activities of sketching nature and composing poetry and songs, and help them pass these skills along to children in the surrounding community through an art and nature workshop that they plan and direct. The ultimate goal is to link participants to nature to increase their awareness of the environment and conservation needs.

Funding allowed me to bring art supplies for 12 students (sketch books, color pencils, and graphite pencil kits). Fine Arts student Ruben stepped up as a leader and organized the students. The first workshop was 2 hours long and we sat outside on campus and sketched a cacao tree and leaves. At the end I gave the students two assignments – return next week with a drawing of flowers, and a drawing of something that wasn't a plant. At the next meeting we would plan a Saturday morning children's art workshop.

Little did I know that while we met, Haiti was closing its borders due to two confirmed cases of COVID19 and the US Embassy was recalling all overseas citizens back to the US. I returned to my campus house to find the messages and immediately bought an airline ticket for return to the US. The next meeting will have to wait until I return to campus, perhaps this fall or next spring semester. I hope the art supplies will give the students a creative outlet while the university and everything else is closed. I have asked Ruben to send me pictures of the students' art work. And the supplies for the children's program are safely stored in Haiti.



