

REGENT UNIVERSITY

# IMPACT

**Partners in Care Regent doctoral students Cedric and Widza Bryant and Regent donors John and Ruthie Sullivan are teaming up to help disabled children in Haiti**

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James 1:27 tells believers, “Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress” (NLT). Two Regent doctoral students and two longtime donors to the university are fulfilling that biblical command in the impoverished Caribbean-island nation of Haiti.

Cedric and Widza Bryant are the founders of the Vladimir Bryant Foundation (VBF). Their vision for VBF came to them after moving to Haiti from the U.S. and finding no medical support system in place for their son, Vladimir, diagnosed

with cerebral palsy. The Bryants say they met many other children with disabilities who had no access to health care:

“The country considers disability as a ‘curse,’ and consequently, people ostracize these children and their parents. Disabled children are not welcome in the schools or anywhere in Haiti: hospitals, restaurants and public places. Parents are ashamed to bring these children out in public for fear of being ridiculed.”

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The Bryants are students in [Regent University's Doctor of Strategic Leadership \(DSL\)](#) program. Cedric's concentration is Global Consulting, while Widza's focus is Leadership Coaching. Out of the challenges they faced in Haiti, the couple felt compelled to create VBF, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, to provide rehabilitation and integration into the community for disabled children.

VBF provides a safe haven for children with physical disabilities who have been abandoned and/or left to die on the streets of Haiti. The foundation also works with governmental and local partners to promote education and training about disabilities, and to change the stigma associated with disabled children.

Widza says Haitian society views disabled children as “disposable.” But she and her husband believe change can come through education and awareness: “Our VBF Little Heart Home orphanage in Haiti provides physical and occupational therapy, as well as daily provisions to include health-related needs, food, 24-hour personal care with staff support and love. It encourages parents and other family members to visit and see how we show love and interact with our children. It's an effort to change their attitudes toward these kids.”

Regent donor John Sullivan serves as president of The Because Project, a recently incorporated ministry of Haiti. The organization provides shelter, education and nutrition to those in need by partnering with local organizations, including schools, clinics, orphanages and hospitals on the island nation. Their partners currently include orphanages, schools, clinics and hospitals in Haiti, as well as the Vladimir Bryant Foundation.

John and his wife, Ruthie, first met Cedric and Widza in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. “Within minutes of meeting, we discovered our mutual connection to Regent,” John remembers, “and discovered that these two doctoral students were the embodiment of Regent's vision of *Christian Leadership to Change the World!*”



The Bryant family

That motto has long resonated with the Sullivans and inspired many years of generosity to the university: “It still appears to be the best use of resources to impact the world on a large scale,” John explains. “Regent has been faithful to the original vision, and that is why we continue our support.”

The Sullivans have been friends of Regent for three decades. “Since it was known as [CBN University](#) and the campus consisted of a single classroom/admin building,” he explains. “Then-president Bob Slosser invited us to work with his council of advisors at a time when there were virtually no alumni yet to represent the university. What a pleasure to serve an organization dedicated to changing the world in all the best ways!”

Widza calls Regent “a life-changing experience ordained by God to equip us with the ability to carry out this mission. We believe our study in organizational leadership at Regent has thus far opened our eyes to God’s plan for His kingdom on earth, which is the empowerment of leaders to change the world.”

Since meeting the Bryants, the Sullivans have spent time at their Little Heart House orphanage for children with disabilities, and they’re coordinating support for VBF’s work through The Because Project. Calling the two initiatives “a perfect fit,” John says he’s proud to be teaming up with Cedric and Widza: “The Bryant’s vision for Haiti goes well beyond their orphanage, and extends to changing the perception of people with disabilities nationwide. This culture shift includes not only providing safe shelter, but also adequate education, nutrition and health care for this under-resourced group.”

“Some of our long-term goals,” Widza explains, “include building a special-needs hospital in Haiti and rehabilitating children with disabilities through early intervention programs in collaboration with the Haitian government, the department of national education and local partners. And through evangelism and leadership training, we want to see VBF equip current and future church and community leaders to support the disability awareness program across the island of Haiti.”

When asked how the Regent community could help VBF, The Because Project and the children of Haiti, Widza replied: “Through prayers, support, resources; and help us spread the word. Also, we invite people to come with us to Haiti and see the work we are doing.”

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