

Article by Yuri Napoleon about the cooks of St. Patrick, November 20, 2023

At 8 a.m. many students are gathering at Saint Patrick's school for the school day. As the students enter the classrooms, the two cooks, Laurore Estant and Elisbonne Joseph, begin to prepare the hot meal that will be served at lunch time. The day begins with the raising of the flag and the students enter their classrooms. Next to their classrooms, there is a small room with a kitchen where the cooks begin their work; it has large pots for cooking the rice and beans. It will take them about 4 hours to prepare the meal for the 200 students of St. Patrick's.

Laurore Estant, aged 63, mother of three, has worked in the kitchen since 2012, appears happy and joyful despite the distance traveled to come to work (a 35 minute walk): "despite the distance, it is not in vain because I can be there to prepare meals for children who are in extreme need in order to thrive." The sixty-three-year-old shows satisfaction from her work, she describes this initiative as noble; after her business activities, it is the only recourse she has to face the vagaries of life. Despite the difficult political and economic situation in the country, these students can find a hot meal 3 days a week, which relieves many parents in Belloc and other surrounding areas.

Elisebonne Joseph, 55 years old, is the mother of 5 children: ages 15, 13, 9, 7, and 4. She does not hide her satisfaction and her emotions, and is a direct beneficiary of the Program: "for a long time it sometimes happens that children have been so poorly nourished that they fainted during the walk to school, but now it is different thanks to this Program, we can only say thank you to SPR for having taken this initiative." Four of Elisebonne's five children are beneficiaries of the Program. Her dream is to see her children reach a high educational level. Like most of the inhabitants of Belloc, she works hard on the land in order to see her dream come true. Elisebonne tells us: "My work at Saint Patrick is my main source of income, after my activities of cultivating the land. Thanks to this job I can take care of my family."

