Time to make a difference
Haitian man’s injury gives him chance to talk about orphanage

By LINDA MCALPINE
Daily News Staff

Most people wouldn’t consider a compound fracture of the leg a blessing, but for Orel Lisius the cast on his leg could be just that.
“He was supposed to go back to his home country of Haiti, but because of his accident he is able to stay here and make more connections,” French teacher Christi Fischer said Wednesday as students filed into her West Bend East High School classroom to meet Lisius.

Making connections is why Lisius has been visiting the area — to raise money for the orphanage he started in Haiti.
“I started the orphanage in 2007,” Lisius said. “We have about 34 children now, ages 1 through 17.”

Lisius said many of the children had been living on the streets, orphans whose families died in the violence surrounding Haitian politics. Others have parents who, although living, are too poor to take care of them.
Lisius, who greeted Fischer’s class in French, shared a presentation with the students about the long and troubled history of his island home, sometimes speaking in French and sometimes in English.

His program, “Pirates of the Caribbean: Haiti’s Path from Underdevelopment to Catastrophe and What We Can Do to Help,” opened with a photograph of a lush, green tropical paradise. Before it was discovered by Christopher Columbus, the island was populated by native people, Lisius said. They were later put to work as slaves by Columbus and those who followed him.

“They put the natives to hard work and if they refused to work, they were killed and their bodies burned,” Lisius said. “After they killed off all the natives, they had to find other peoples to do the work and then began the period in island history of slavery by the French, who enslaved people from Africa and brought them to the island in the 1700s.”

Slave rebellions followed, and in 1804 freedom was won from the French. The French, however, were to have their revenge, according to Lisius, when they extorted the island residents for money under threat of another war.

“Schools were shut down and deforestation of the island began, as the trees were cut and shipped to France to try to pay the debt,” he said. “More than 95 percent of the island was stripped of trees.”

More political upheavals followed with internal unrest and dictatorships. Democracy hasn’t been easy for the island nation.

The impoverished country was struck by an earthquake in 2010 — killing more than 300,000 and injuring at least that many — and recovery has been slow, he said.
“About 80 percent of the population now lives in poverty,” Lisius said. “Fifty percent of the country’s children are malnourished. The life expectancy for an adult is 58 years.”

Lisius, 38 and a law school student, said he was surrounded by need and sought some way to help, thus starting the orphanage. This is his seventh trip to the United States to make connections with churches and others, hoping for support in response to his story of the oppressing property of his country.

Fischer’s French students were so touched by Lisius’ outreach that they managed to collect $1,000 among her six classes to present to him for his orphanage.

Lisius received another unexpected donation Wednesday.

“How are you doing, my friend?” said West Bend Fire Department Paramedic Larry Schwechel, who embraced Lisius.
Lisius broke both bones in his lower leg playing a pickup soccer game. Schwechel and paramedic Kyle Demler and EMT Rick Lesiecki were manning the ambulance that took him to
the hospital.
“During the ride to the hospital, although he was in pain, he talked about the orphanage,”
Schwechel said. “It really touched our hearts.”
The ambulance crew presented Lisius with a big bag of hard candy, which had in part been
gifted by the children of Our Savior Lutheran Church, tithed from their Halloween candy,
Schwechel said.
Lisius said Aurora Medical Center in Grafton, where he was taken and subsequently had bone
graft surgery on his leg, has agreed to write off the expense.
“I am so overwhelmingly grateful,” Lisius said. “I want to thank all the doctors and nurses for
their wonderful care.”
If he had suffered the injury at home, Lisius said, he could have lost his leg or, quite possibly,
his life to infection, as the quality medical care is not readily accessible.
Lisius arrived Sept. 4 and had planned to return to Haiti on Oct. 4.
Because of his injury, Lisius will be in the area until Dec. 4.
Ride in a fire truck

Noah Backhaus, 6, of Newburg runs to hug his mother, Jessie, as she climbs out of a Newburg Fire Department truck outside of McLane Elementary on Wednesday afternoon in West Bend. Backhaus won a ride home in a fire truck after entering his name in a contest at the Newburg Fire Department open house in October.

2013-14 WINTER PREVIEW: WEST BOYS BASKETBALL

Spartans look to seniors to lead turnaround
West has size to work with

By PAT NEUMUTH
Daily News Staff

Last year didn’t go as planned for West Bend West with a 6-17 record. However, with plenty of senior leadership, Coach Ryan Wietor said there’s a sense of urgency this season. The senior leadership starts with the Duening twins, Andrew and Jacob. They aren’t vocal leaders, but Wietor said their will to win has rubbed off onto the rest of the team. “They understand that this is their last go-round,” Wietor said. “There’s not another chance to leave a legacy here at West. I’ve really noticed that last-chance mentality and everyone is buying in.”

Wietor said last year was disappointing. The seniors are using that as motivation. The Duenings learned how to win this summer playing AAU basketball for the Wisconsin Shooters. Andrew Duening is 6-foot-6 and Jacob Duening is 6-foot-5 and plays an inside-outside game. “They’ve added strength and played in a competitive AAU program,” Wietor said. “Their skills have really developed in the offseason. They’ve always loved to play, but now I think it’s more about winning. They are dedicated to winning. All the credit goes to them for getting their minds right.”

Sophomore Matthew Koerner is 6-foot-8, so he will do most of the work with his back to the basket. The Duenings excel more playing outside on in. Wietor called them “slashers” and will score points going to the basket. Andrew Duening will start at power forward and Jacob Duening will start at small forward. That brings a lot of height to the frontcourt. Wietor said there is more structure to the offense and wants to get more paint touches.
Being tall doesn’t mean they will slow the ball down in the half-court. The Duenings both run cross-country and will run the floor. Wietor just doesn’t want his team to force the issue when it comes to playing up-tempo.

“I’m perfectly content to playing half-court because of our size,” Wietor said. “I have a preference that we are under control when we are in transition and not careless with the ball.”

Mike Frei will lead the backcourt. The senior is in his fourth year on varsity. Juniors Joe Peplinski and Alec Trunley, and sophomore Kyle Wilde will vie for guard positions.

“I’m glad we have some guard play, so Mike Frei isn’t alone on the perimeter,” Wietor said. “I have three guys that can handle the ball in Joe, Kyle and Mike. They are all capable shooters as well.”

The guards know the game plan is to get inside touches first. However, Wietor said to get the defense honest, these four guys can shoot off a screen or relocate after a post touch for a jump shot.

“I haven’t taken a light schedule this year,” Wietor said. “I didn’t want to create an easy schedule because of what happened last year. I did the opposite. Our nonconference is really challenging right from Game 1 with Whitefish Bay on Friday.”

Daily News file photo
West Bend West’s Andrew Duening will be one of the leaders for the Spartans this season.
CLASS OF 2014
West Bend East

Megan Kiefert
Softball, volleyball

- **Family:** Dad, Bryan; Mom, Mary; Sister, Nicole; dog, Saffron
- **Favorite teacher:** Ms. Neja
- **Favorite restaurant:** Cheesecake Factory
- **Favorite TV show:** “Grey’s Anatomy”
- **Favorite movie:** “Bridesmaids”
- **Favorite band/singer:** Macklemore
- **Favorite pro/college team:** Brewers
- **If I were a celebrity for a day I’d be ...:** Shay Mitchell
- **Hobbies:** Reading
- **Biggest pet peeve:** Slow drivers
- **Dream vacation:** Greece
- **Plans after high school:** Go to college, play volleyball, get my nursing degree.