After taking the course on Leadership and Global Health, I was greatly aware of the widespread malnutrition in Haiti and the various socioeconomic conditions that contribute to this growing problem. This class not only provided me with the knowledge that prompted me to take action but also the inspiration to create a successful and informative fundraiser. Although I had previously attempted to sell “Hope for Haiti” bracelets to raise money to combat malnutrition, this fundraiser was not nearly as successful as I had hoped. For my action plan, I decided to rethink this idea in the form of a Haiti dinner at my school and donate the proceeds to Partners in Health, a non-profit organization where my professor, Cate Oswald, worked.

Upon returning to school in the fall, I decided to suggest the idea to my advisor and fellow board members of the Interact Club, a community service group. I was met with much support and enthusiasm, especially from one of my close friends who soon became co-chair for the event. Together, we worked on choosing a date for the fundraiser, finding raffle prizes as well as donations for food and utensils, and advertising the event around the community. We received a generous donation of $2,000 with which to purchase raffle items and used this money to obtain an iPad, Amazon Kindle, and a digital camera. In addition, we were able to secure thirty-two other donated prizes, dinner, and dessert.

Over one hundred people from the school and community attended the dinner, and we raised approximately $3,000. At the dinner, we incorporated a Skype video call to Cate Oswald in Haiti, and she spoke about the work that Partners in Health performs and the aid it brings to malnourished children. In addition, we included a PowerPoint presentation providing statistics and a general overview of malnourishment, its root causes, and actions being taken to combat the problem. We hoped that this information would help those in attendance understand not only where their money would be going but also the importance of the issue and what can be done to solve it. Numerous people spoke to me afterwards greatly impressed by the Skype call and learning from an actual representative in Haiti, which emphasized the reality of the situation and the pressing need for attention.

Throughout the time between completing Leadership and Global Health and the dinner, I was motivated by current events in Haiti, most notably the cholera outbreak. I was determined to create a successful fundraiser for Partners in Health to continue their life-saving work despite the misfortunes that plague the country. My action plan brought Haiti back into focus after many in my community had gradually forgotten about its plight after the 2010 earthquake. It also allowed me to creatively branch out into my town and school by using the leadership techniques I had learned over the summer. Most importantly, I was ultimately able to realize my goal and pursue an issue that has been of great interest to me for many years.