



HAITI HEALTH CARE NEWS

An occasional bulletin to report on the work of the Haitian Health Care Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond, Inc. It is available also at www.haitianhealth.org and www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti.

April 2010

Board news

ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER

The Haitian Health Care Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond held its annual Benefit Dinner at the Hermitage Country Club in Manakin-Sabot, Virginia the evening of April 23rd.

The dinner was sponsored by Bon Secours Virginia Health System.

Dr. Lisbet Hanson, a Virginia Beach obstetrician/gynecologist, was the featured speaker. She and her husband, Dr. John Kenerson, were in Haiti at the time of the earthquake and she was able to report first-hand on the devastation to property and death, injury and displacement to so many hundreds of thousands of people.

She talked also of her work with ultrasound training for Haitian physicians, nurses and midwives. She and her husband led in establishing medical facilities in their parish's sister parish in Baptiste, Haiti.

Dr. Kurt Elward, Acting President of the Foundation, described the work of the HHCF in the areas of maternal health, dental health, eye and ear care, and child welfare. The Board is very grateful for the presence of so many supporters and for the funds they provide for the Foundation's mission in the Central Plateau of Haiti.

After the quake

HINCHE OVERBURDENED, BUT RISING IN IMPORTANCE

Mark Coughlin, from Duluth, Georgia, provided this eye-witness view of the impact of the earthquake on Hinche.

Many thousands of newly homeless earthquake survivors made their way to Hinche after the disaster, most of them having family connections there. The massive increase in population is not immediately

apparent as you walk down the street, but if you ask anyone, they will tell you the impact has been huge. There are several refugee camps scattered outside of town, but the majority of the relocated people have just moved into the already crowded homes of relatives in Hinche.

Before the earthquake Dr. Dagerus, Whitney Clinic physician, was living with just a few other people, but now his household has ten additional family members sleeping on his floor. This is the case for many families and has caused a housing shortage and a significant increase in the cost of food and other essentials. There are reports of a large increase in infectious diseases like TB along with scabies and other skin ailments likely due to the overcrowded sleeping arrangements. Our medical team saw an unusually high number of very sick folks.

One case stood out as symbolic of the difficulties of life after the quake. A gaunt woman in her mid-50s showed up, suffering from pneumonia. She tested positive for HIV. We learned that her daughter and son-in-law were killed in the quake and her four grandchildren came to live with her, putting a huge strain on her scant resources and fragile health. Upon learning of her HIV diagnosis, her first concern was for the kids: what would become of them if she dies? Her second was for discretion on our part: if the people she lived with found out she had HIV/AIDS, she and the kids would be immediately put out on the street. Fortunately, *Zanmi Lasante* (Partners in Health) operates a free HIV treatment center at St. Thérèse Hospital in Hinche, and we helped her get set up for treatment there. We hope it is not too late for her.

Maternal Health Program

MIDWIFE TRAINING CONTINUES

US and Canadian nurse midwives connected with Midwives for Haiti continue to come as volunteer trainers in Hinche. The current class of twelve trainees is hard at work. There is lots of opportunity for hands-on clinical experience as babies

continue to be born day and night at the hospital in Hinche. They also work at the Whitney Clinic across town and participate in Caritas' mobile clinics serving women in rural areas.

Unfortunately the current group learned that Caritas was suspending the mobile clinics for the month of May, so having their own vehicle is becoming more of a need. Midwives for Haiti, Bon Secours Virginia Mission Services, and the Haitian Health Care Foundation are collaborating on acquiring just such a vehicle.

We have sent a down payment of \$15,000 to Jeff Daniels Jeeps in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, for a *Mobile Midwifery Jeep*. Dan Ziegler, the owner of JDJ, has already built two such vehicles for Haiti and has promised to custom-build a Jeep for less than \$40,000, with vendors donating parts and his men donating much of the labor.



Dr. Steve Eads teaching suturing to one of the midwife training groups

Midwives for Haiti directors Dr. Ken Heatwole, Dr. Steve Eads, and Nadene Brunk, visited Jeff Daniels Jeeps two weeks ago to see some Jeeps in process of renovation for Haiti and to explain what was needed: room in the back for a stretcher, an inverter for running electricity to power a portable ultrasound machine and other equipment, a luggage rack on top that will support an awning that could be the shelter for a clinic, and so forth.

Work has begun: the frame is being stretched and the interior floor is being lowered, and special axles ordered. Mr. Ziegler estimates that they can have the vehicle in Haiti within about two months. Midwives for Haiti is asking Rotary International for

most of the second \$15,000. An exciting development!

Orphanage Wellness Program

HELP FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN

Maison Fortuné Orphanage in Hinche, has taken in over seventy children orphaned by the January earthquake in the Port-au-Prince area. As noted in our February newsletter, volunteer health care workers from the US provided initial health screening of the new children, who were, on the whole, in good health. Now, two months later, we can report that they are well adjusted and very much at home.

Recently, thanks to funding from the Haitian Health Care Foundation, we were able to secure dental services from Haitian dentists, and all the new children have had check-ups and some needed services.



Nurse Mode Mulatre and Brother Michael McCarthy in the orphanage clinic with one of the children

OUR OTHER PROJECTS

The Haitian Health Care Foundation of the Diocese of Richmond, Inc. continues to support the dental clinic at the hospital at LaColline, the Caritas Eye & Ear Clinic on the grounds of the Ste. Thérèse Hospital in Hinche, and the projected rebuilding of the outpatient clinic building at St. Thérèse (with the Engineers Without Borders chapter at Virginia Tech). We will have progress reports on these projects in our next newsletter.

We continue to rely on your financial support—thank you for that!