



HAITI HEALTH CARE NEWS

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

January 2008

REPORT ON THE MIDWIFERY TRAINING PROJECT

From Dr. Stephen Eads, a Richmond obstetrician/gynecologist, we have this report on the Midwifery Training Project being undertaken by Midwives for Haiti with support from the Haitian Health Care Foundation.

Nadene Brunk and her team returned from their latest trip to Hinche on November 19th. Activities of previous trips had concentrated on teaching clinical skills to ten women. Though some training did take place during this recent trip, Nadene spent the majority of her time establishing partnerships with other organizations working to improve maternal/child health in Haiti.

Preliminary communications with Dr. Raoul Raphael of the Ministry of Health for the Central Plateau laid the groundwork for an agreement on current and future training taking place at St. Thérèse Hospital in Hinche. At issue were necessary prerequisite training, terminology to describe the scope of training and methods of certification. All issues were resolved satisfactorily.

It was agreed that in order for students to receive certification from the government's Ministry of Health they would need to be graduates of approved *auxiliaire* [nursing assistant] programs. Clinical skills would be evaluated by the supervising U.S. midwives and the Zanmi Lasante obstetrician at the hospital. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates would be certified as *Auxiliaires with Obstetric Training*. A certificate would be provided at the end of training and be signed by Dr. Raphael.

Dr. Raphael is keenly interested in our providing obstetrical training to some of the hospital staff. Our next class, scheduled to begin training this summer, will include hospital auxiliaries and additional auxiliaries from the surrounding area to bring the class size to ten women.

Beginning last December prenatal care is being provided five days a week at Whitney Clinic, which operates on the grounds of Sacre Coeur parish, Hinche, with support from the Catholic Church of St. Monica in Duluth, Georgia. Currently the clinic physician, Dr. Louis, provides care to 20-40 patients a day. The clinic has a good infrastructure with plans to improve the electrical system with solar panels. Midwives for Haiti is funding an expansion of the patient waiting area and will lease clinical space.

Discussions were held with Sarah Marsh of Partners in Health (Zanmi Lasante) concerning operations at St. Thérèse Hospital-- Sarah is a nurse midwife working throughout Haiti to improve maternity care. We identified areas of need at the hospital and agreed to work together to improve access to essential equipment in the labor and delivery area. Oxygen is not currently available in the delivery room and Sarah thought this could be quickly remedied. Other emergency equipment is not easily found and emergency boxes are going to be provisioned and

stored in the delivery room. There will be separate boxes for treating hemorrhage, septic shock, hypertensive crises and neonatal resuscitation.

A very productive meeting was held with Madame Aladin, president of the *Association des Infirmières Sage Femmes* [Nurse Midwives Association] and Agnes Jacobs, a Belgian midwife who is training midwives in Petite Rivière, Haiti. Nadene will be able to continue her discussions with these women when she attends a maternal health conference to be held in Haiti in February. The conference is being organized by Sarah Marsh of PIH.

Nine women continue in the midwife training program and will begin a new phase of training in January. In order to prepare them for independent practice they will work full-time at Whitney Clinic providing prenatal care and at St. Thérèse Hospital attending women in labor and supervision will be provided by U.S. midwives. After returning to the U.S. Nadene was able to confirm that Thamy Crevecoeur, a Haitian woman recently graduated from a U.S. midwifery school, will be able to work in Hinche from February through July, thus providing great stability to the program and accelerate training.

We owe many thanks to all of you who continue to support this midwifery training project.

DENTAL CLINIC UPDATE

Susan Pleasants R.N., Vice-Chair of the Haitian Health Care Foundation, was in Haiti in November and provides this report.

The Zanmi Lasante clinic, once just the dream of a small group of Zanmi Lasante (ZL) and Partners in Health (PIH) professionals, will soon be a reality. The ZL clinic located at La Colline, between Mirebalais and Lascahobas on Haiti's Lower Plateau, is scheduled to be dedicated in January. It will be a time of great celebration for the 70,000 people that it will serve. The celebration is expected to include representatives from the Haitian government's Ministry of Health and from Partners in Health. I have had the pleasure of watching the clinic under construction for the last ten months, and can attest that it is a beautiful complex nestled against a mountain background. Haitian artisans have hand-crafted much of the iron work that decorates the entrance, and the doors feature the four-hands Zanmi Lasante symbol.

On my most recent visit to the site I had the opportunity to tour the clinic with Leo and Margaret Blumle from Virginia Beach, who were on their way to Hinche and their twinned parish in Baptiste (this was Margaret's first visit to Haiti). Many workers were busy putting finishing touches on the clinic and Dr. Paul Farmer was to arrive at the site later in the day to survey the progress. Ferris, a ZL employee, agreed to let us into the dental clinic so we could see the progress. The La Colline Dental Clinic is a partnership between the Haitian Health Care Foundation's Lascahobas Coalition and Zanmi Lasante. Several Virginia twinning parishes have

contributed both financial support and equipment to this effort. The HHCF recently provided an additional grant of \$10,000.00 to make the clinic a reality, thus providing dental care to people who have never had access to dental care.



The La Colline Dental Clinic

After attending the dedication and meeting with ZL staff, I will provide in the next newsletter an update on the new clinic and plans to renovate the old clinic into a maternity center.

VISION AND HEARING TESTED IN SALTADÈRE— IS THERE A NEED?

On January 30th, a team from St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish will travel to their twin parish in Saltadère, Haiti, bringing portable vision and hearing test equipment and a supply of eyeglasses to St. Michel's parish and school. The trip will attempt to provide an answer to the question: **What are the hearing and vision deficits present in Haitian school children?** The team hopes to test as many of the approximately 600 school children as possible, using standard eye charts and further testing utilizing a refractometer for fitting eyeglasses. These same children will also be tested with an audiometer for hearing acuity. Because of the large number of students, the focus will be on half of the school population, testing alternating grades. Future visits will work with those children not tested during this trip.

Working closely with the pastor, Père Rene Blot, the school director and teachers, the team plans to track testing results. Local nurses and teachers will be trained to continue screening, utilizing eye charts. Time permitting, the team will also test adults identified as having hearing or vision difficulties.

The team, including Janet Stack, an American Speech-Language-Hearing Association-certified and Virginia-licensed speech-language-pathologist, and Anne Knasel, a retired physician, will be trained in the use of the refractometer by fellow-parishioner and optometrist, Dr. Matthew Harpin, who also supplied the eye charts. The refractometer and eyeglass supplies were provided by the Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center of Northern Virginia, Inc.

Those traveling to Saltadère are: Anne and Mike Knasel, Joan McDonald, Kathy Smith, and Janet and John Stack. This pilot program will determine if screening visits should continue; what aspects of the trip should be replicated; and what areas are in need of improvement. Results will be made available to other

parishes interested in doing vision and hearing testing with their twinned parishes. **Stay tuned. Keep your eyes and ears open!**

THE GIFT

The following article comes to us from Board member Kathy Faw. Kathy is a nurse at Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center, Mechanicsville, Va., and was in Haiti December 11-19.

As I began my journey to Haiti with two of my friends, Melissa Brooks RN and Jackie Thornton RN, we soon discovered how our faith was to be challenged. Due to a bad ice storm in Oklahoma, our flight from Richmond was delayed several hours, making us miss our Miami connection. Of course, there were many other dynamics involved besides just missing our flight!

Once arriving in Port-au-Prince, however, I was home and nothing else mattered. As we traveled throughout Haiti, we had the opportunity to hold a mini-clinic outside a church in Domond in the Lower Plateau. The pastor asked us if we could check blood pressures for the people who lived in the community, knowing we did not bring medications. We were delighted to be put to work as nurses. We saw over 300 hundred people from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. We referred many of those with dangerous blood pressure levels to the Zanmi Lasante (Partners in Health) Hospital for treatment. We purchased many bottles of Tums for those with GERD and treated wound infections with antibiotic ointments. I saw one lady with a large goiter in her neck. I searched the closest town for iodized salt, and could not find any for sale. I will be sending salt with my fellow Board member, Susan Pleasants, in January to help treat this woman with her deficiency. We were exhausted by the end of that day, but left that clinic filled with such a bigger gift—gratitude for the gift of our own good health we so often take for granted.

As always, I like to visit the Azil, the hospital/home conducted by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Hinche, and help out where needed. There were many sick babies with colds, viruses, coughs and diarrhea. There we saw two mothers who were sitting in the doorway breast-feeding their babies who had been dropped off there several weeks earlier. As I sat next to the Mom who was nursing her baby, peace filled my heart and my eyes welled with tears of joy. I was so excited to see the mothers of these children playing an active role in their children's lives. Not too often do you see the parents of the children who have been left at the Azil in serious conditions from malnutrition and dehydration.



Kathy Faw at Domond

As I journeyed home, I felt truly blessed to have experienced the spirit of our Haitian brothers and sisters during the Christmas season. May each of you receive and recognize your own special gift of good health.

DR. DAVID WALTON TO BE ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER SPEAKER

Dr. David Walton of Partners in Health will be the guest speaker for the Annual Haitian Health Care Foundation Benefit Dinner, April 11, 2008, in Manakin-Sabot, Virginia.

Dr. Walton is one of two graduates of the 2007 *Howard Hiatt Residency Program in Health Equity and Internal Medicine*, Harvard University School of Medicine. He received his BA from Augustana College and his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 2003. The summer after his first year of medical school he traveled to Haiti as research assistant to Dr. Paul Farmer.

Dr. Walton is a member of the faculty of the Division of Social Medicine and Health Inequalities at Harvard, and plans to continue his work in Haiti.

During his residency last year he helped to transform a nearly defunct medical clinic in Lascahobas into a fully functioning primary health care center. He has extensive experience delivering HIV/AIDS care in resource-poor settings. He has done extensive research in both Latin America and the Soviet Union with emerging diseases and drug resistance.

Dr. Walton is currently completing the new medical clinic in neighboring LaColline which will enhance and expand current services to the area of Lascahobas, LaColline, Belladère, and Mirebalais. The Haitian Health Care Foundation's Lascahobas Coalition has contributed to his efforts by helping to found the area's first dental clinic.

The Haitian Health Care Foundation is honored to welcome him as our guest speaker.



Drs. Tom Eichler, David Walton and Peter Wobac

MEDICAL TEXTBOOKS NEEDED

At the *Sant Zaveriyen* [Xaverian Center] in Port-au-Prince live fourteen young men from peasant families who are studying

at various universities in the capital. Five of these young men are in medical school; one is in his final year of dental school; others are studying business administration, etc.

Br. Harry Eccles CFX, who has lived in Haiti for the past 18 years, is the director of the *Sant*, and from him we have received a request for the following books for the medical students:

- Surgery (Schwartz)
- Anatomy-Pathology
- *The Merck Manual* [multiple copies are useful]
- Pediatrics (Nelson)
- Physiology (Guyton)
- *Atlas of Anatomy* (F. Netter)
- *Professional Guide of Signs and Symptoms*
- Pathology
- Obstetrics (Williams)

If you can help provide any of these, mail single books (under two pounds) to Br. Harry Eccles, c/o Lynx Air, P O Box 407139, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33340. Otherwise, send the books to John Gallini, who is coordinating the project, at 10200 Gwynnbrook Road, Richmond VA 23235. If you send books to Br. Harry, email John the titles to avoid duplication:

gallinijb@aol.com

MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS' TRIP TO HAITI

A medical professionals' trip to Haiti is being planned for the fall. More information will appear in the next newsletter, but preliminary plans include visiting multiple medical sites in Haiti and perhaps an opportunity for "hands on" care, depending on the preferences of the participants.

The Board of Directors of the Haitian Health Care Foundation, of the Diocese of Richmond Invites You To Be Our Guest for a Dinner Benefiting The Work of the Foundation in the Central Plateau of Haiti

Friday, April 11, 2008

7:00 p.m. Reception

8:00 p.m. Dinner

Guest of Honor: David Walton M.D.
Partners in Health, Cange, Haiti

The Hermitage Country Club
1248 Hermitage Road
Manakin-Sabot Virginia

All Central Virginia readers of this newsletter will receive an invitation. If you live outside the area and wish to attend, please contact: Br. Cosmas Rubencamp CFX at 804-358-6210 or crubencamp@comcast.net

The Dinner is Sponsored by the Bon Secours Richmond Health System

Haitian Healthcare Foundation, Inc.

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I am enclosing a check for \$ _____ payable to: **Catholic Diocese of Richmond**).

I would like to designate it for (please check one):

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> General Haiti Health Care Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Support for the dental clinic project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support for our medical/dental students | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation Associate Member (\$25 a year) |
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