



A quarterly newsletter for Friends for Health in Haiti, by founder and executive director, Catherine E. Wolf, MD MPH

Our Mission

The mission of Friends for Health in Haiti, Inc. is to improve the health status of the people of Haiti through high-quality health care provided in a caring, compassionate and respectful manner, as a means of demonstrating God's love in this world and as a reflection of our faith in Jesus Christ.

Friends for Health in Haiti is on the web!

- Regular updates on our blog.
- Photo gallery filled with photos of clinic site, patients, and life in Haiti.
- Donate online!

FriendsForHealthInHaiti.org

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BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

The following is an excerpt from a blog written by Dr. Wolf on July 11, 2009:

This past Thursday we went up to our clinic in Gattineau as usual, not knowing that a routine 8-10 hour work day was going to turn into a rugged 24 hour shift! At the end of the day, I put the key in the ignition of our pick-up truck and turned it and the engine went chug-chug-chug, but didn't turn over. So, I tried again. Chug-chug-chug, same result. I continued doing this, not believing that our pick-up truck, which has been so reliable for the past two and a half years, was failing us. But, alas, it was true. We weren't going anywhere very soon.

Our co-worker Ti Jean's son Jimmy, "just happened" to come riding up on a motorcycle. So, we sent Jimmy off down the mountain to find a mechanic and bring him back to us. We, in turn, settled down to wait. Over the next few hours, about six of our neighbors wandered into the yard, wondering why they hadn't yet heard us pass by their houses. We usually wave and say goodbye to people all along the road as we head home for the day. So, when they didn't see us, they knew something was wrong. One of them brought a wind-up flashlight and held it for Ernest, the mechanic, as he worked on the car as darkness surrounded us. The rest of us sat around together on the ground, alternately talking and sleeping as the night wore on. It took Ernest until 3am to find and fix the problem. He patched things up as well as he could and the car finally started!

At 3:30am, 11 hours after our first attempt, we thanked our neighbors, waved goodbye and said a prayer for safety as we made our way down the mountain. We were almost to town when we lost power and couldn't make it up the last few hills. With some more mechanical help and towing by a friend, we finally made it home by 8am. By noon, the car was fixed and we were all tired, but grateful – grateful for safety throughout the night, the companionship and concern of neighbors up in Gattineau, the competence and dedication of a mechanic we had never met, the loyalty of our employees, Ti Jean and Annous, who stayed with us during the whole episode, and the faithfulness of the Lord, who's hand was in it all.

Members of the board of the F.I.S.H. Foundation (www.fishfoundationinc.org) were so moved by our need for a reliable vehicle that they gave us a gift of \$42,000 to complete the funding necessary for the purchase of a brand new 13 passenger Toyota Land Cruiser jeep. This vehicle will serve to transport us up and down to clinic and will be used to transport patients to the hospital and to the clinic when needed. We want to give a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to our Jeep Fund from its beginning and to the F.I.S.H. foundation for this generous grant. The jeep has to be specially ordered from Japan and will take several months for shipping and clearance through customs. Watch for updates on our website and blog at <http://friendsforhealthinhaiti.wordpress.com/>.

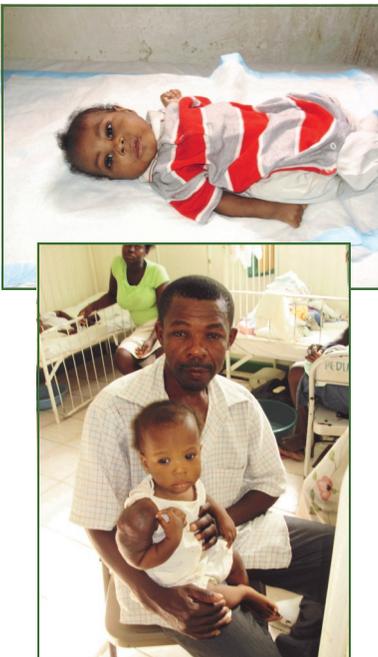
WAITING AREA HAS A NEW LOOK

When we first started seeing patients in our little “house clinic”, we built a waiting area out of wooden posts with coconut leaves across the top. This provided a modicum of relief from the sun, but very little protection from hard rains, which meant that all the people waiting outside had to crowd into the clinic itself, so as not to get wet. So, earlier this year, we made a new waiting area that is larger, has sturdier support poles and is covered in tin. Not only does it provide more air flow and blocks the sun, but it also allows the patients to remain sitting outside even when it rains.



Clinic waiting area before (left) and after (right) renovation.

PATIENT POOR FUND



Women in several churches in the New Brunswick Presbytery (my home church's Presbytery in New Jersey) wanted to give us a donation that would specifically help patients in need of hospitalization at the government hospital in Jérémie. Many times, even when we strongly recommend that a patient be hospitalized, the family refuses to take them because of lack of finances to pay for their care. So, we used the Presbyterian Women's contributions as seed money to start a Patient Poor Fund that will be used to assist patients and families with:

- Cost of hospitalization at the government hospital in Jérémie
- Purchase of IV solutions, medications and supplies while they are hospitalized
- Food (especially milk) for parents taking care of pediatric patients in the hospital
- Purchase of medications at our clinic for especially needy patients

Photos: Malnourished baby (top) hospitalized pediatric patient (bottom) . Both are recipients of poor fund money.

WE'RE OFFICIAL!

We are very happy to announce that we have been officially approved by the Haitian Department of Public Health to begin construction on our clinic and maternity center with inpatient beds. This has been a 2-3 year process, and required a great deal of persistence and the help of some wonderful Haitian friends to accomplish. Working in tandem with the Haitian government is essential for long-term stability and sustainability, and this approval is a huge step in becoming integrated into the government programs and protocols. **Thanks to all who have been praying with us for this victory!**

REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITIES AROUND US

Hurricane Relief Grant put to good use

Madam Antime and her husband had 6 daughters, one of whom died from typhoid fever as a young girl. They lived in a small thatched roof house in a rural community outside Jérémie. Charlie knew the family from her youth, and we often visited them, taking used clothing and shoes to the children. Antime died of heart failure several years ago, leaving his wife to fend for herself and her young daughters. Then, two of the daughters began having children of their own, with the extended family all living under one little roof. That roof was blown off and their house destroyed by the hurricanes last year. So, they all crowded into an even smaller home made of sticks and branches.



Madam Antime's present house for seven people

Thanks to a Hurricane Relief Grant from Bridgeway Funds (www.bridgewayfund.com) and Health Empowering Humanity (www.heh.org), Madam Antime and her family are going to be the recipients of a new tin-roofed house. The site has been cleared and the masons are ready to start work on the foundation.



Meeting with representatives from 17 local communities for seed distribution.

The Hurricane Relief Grant provided by Bridgeway will also provide funding for the purchase of bean seeds for farmers in some of the communities around our clinic site. Each of 17 communities has organized a management committee to purchase and distribute seeds to farmers in their communities who are most in need of assistance. Then, when the beans are harvested, each farmer will give seeds back to the committee so they can be distributed to others in need. This "recycling" idea is an important concept to foster independence and empowerment in the communities we serve. Other uses of the grant include repairs to three frequently -flooded areas of the road up to the clinic site, and money for our Patient Poor Fund (see page 2). For more information and updates regarding this Hurricane Relief Grant, please visit our website at www.friendsforhealthinhaiti.org.

PUBLIC HEALTH CORNER

Our overarching goal at Friends for Health in Haiti is to **improve the health and change the lives and hearts of the people of Haiti**. We desire to do this by providing integrated health care to patients of all ages, in a nurturing, Christian environment. We feel that it is important to maintain **dignity** while providing charitable care, instill a sense of **responsibility**, rather than contribute to dependency and strive for long-term **sustainability** by keeping our administrative processes simple and making wise use of limited resources.

Our developing model of care involves the following key concepts:

- Care for **patients of all ages** each day
- **Point of care education** using “teachable moments” during acute illness
- Services directed to areas of **greatest need** (epidemiologically directed services)
- **Best practices** incorporated into clinical guidelines for care
- **Empowerment of communities** through participation in decision-making and responsibility for some of the costs of care
- **Nurturing**, respectful, compassionate environment
- **Development of relationships** as a priority: clinic staff relationships with the surrounding communities, local churches and religious leaders and the government sector, community members’ relationships with one another, especially the vulnerable, malnourished, elderly, and homeless
- **Teaching** and mentoring of Haitian counterparts
- Collaboration with and integration into the **public health care system**, including provision of immunizations, tuberculosis treatment, HIV testing and treatment, community education activities, and **capacity building** at the local government hospital in Jérémie
- Integration of **Christian witness** with demonstration of strong moral and ethical principles in daily life and practice
- Integration of **traditional healers** into the formal health sector

We invite you to share your ideas with us as we continue to develop this innovative model of care.



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