President’s Comments

It’s an understatement to say that a lot has happened since the earthquake on January 12, 2010. I know that many of you have been reading the updates but I’d like to share some comparisons with you to illustrate the magnitude of the changes at Hopital Sacré Coeur.

Within 2 weeks of the earthquake our hospital grew from 65 beds to 420 beds thanks to the town of Milot allowing us to take over 2 schools and then using Military tent hospitals purchased for us by the American Association of Malta and Caritas Christi healthcare system in Boston. We received over 500 earthquake patients from Port au Prince. In the 3 months since the earthquake we have had over 1000 volunteers compared to our usual 170 per year. We transformed our OR area so we in the beginning had 5 OR’s doing over 50 surgical procedures a day. We are now down to 3 ORs and have performed over 700 major operations since January compared to 1316 for all of 2009. The three U.S. associations of the Order of Malta, Malteser International, Americares and other organizations that you will learn about in the following pages have provided enormous assistance in our work.

In this newsletter you will read stories about our wonderful volunteers who made all of this possible. If you stop and think about the previous paragraph you have to also appreciate the amazing effort of our staff both in Haiti and in the US. Although the volunteers helped tremendously, the administration and staff did the behind the scenes work that made it possible to perform the surgery and care for the patients. Now think of the housing campus of Crudem. Can you imagine fixing 3 meals a day for 70 to 80 people for over 3 months? How about the laundry for the sheets and towels and cleaning the buildings.

Finally, think about the logistics of screening and scheduling all of the volunteers, handling the donations of supplies and money, answering the many requests for information from news outlets and aid agencies, updating the website in addition to doing the everyday duties to keep the Crudem foundation operating smoothly. People are amazed to learn that all of this was done by our 2 wonderful full time staff, Denise Kelly (unfortunately no relation to me) and Joni Paterson.

As we discharge patients and plan for the future we realize that Hopital Sacré Coeur will never be the same. That is a very good thing for the people of Haiti. We have become a tertiary care facility for all of Haiti that can provide specialty care no longer available in Port au Prince. We are in a position to play a larger role in training health care personnel and guiding the future of health care in Haiti. This is a large responsibility that the board is willing to accept. However we realize that we cannot expand at the expense of our survival. Every increase in service requires an increase in financial support so we can continue to be the Beacon of Catholic Health care in Haiti for another 25 years and beyond. This will only be possible with your continued support.

Thank you for all you did to enable Hopital Sacré Coeur to respond to this terrible disaster. God bless you.

Peter Kelly, M.D.

Editor’s Note:
This “Earthquake Edition” of the Newsletter is a departure from our usual format. It highlights some examples of the remarkable response of the hospital, the volunteers and our supporters from around the country to Haiti’s horrific tragedy.

Tom Flynn, M.D.
A New Jersey Perspective

For the past 10 years under the auspices of the American Association of the Knights of Malta I have been traveling to Hôpital Sacré Coeur with a surgical team from St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston, N.J. We were scheduled to be at HSC the week of January 16-23, four days after the earthquake. Our team, consisting of three general surgeons (two chief residents, Dr. Scott Sundick, Dr. Melissa-Alvarez, and me), an anesthesiologist (Dr. Richard Pitera), a cardiologist (Dr. Charles Dooley) and two OR nurses (Carol Myers and Elita Exil), was on the last scheduled flight before the airport was closed.

Along with the Hospital’s general surgeon, our group was essentially “it” until the orthopedic team from Washington, D.C. arrived two days later. The first helicopter flew in shortly before we did, and within hours it was necessary to perform three amputations, including a disarticulation of a gangrenous arm on a man who had a tourniquet on for several days! We had scheduled 25 cases after holding a surgical clinic but could only do five before the earthquake cases started to arrive in ever increasing numbers. With the added presence of the orthopedic team, it became apparent that we needed more space and more ORs. The town of Milot cooperated by giving us the school across the street that we called Hotel Milot. It was used as an admissions area and a patient post recovery area. The delivery room was transformed into a third OR with a spare anesthesia machine. The three medical exam rooms adjacent to the main ORs were converted into three procedure rooms with oxygen and capability for conscious sedation (the number of operations and debridements increased dramatically!). The patient waiting room in front of the hospital was turned into a pre-op area with benches used as beds. In the school, the classrooms were turned into wards with the benches and desks reversed so that a mattress could be placed on the benches creating a bed.

By Wednesday many more volunteers streamed in along with Dr. Peter Kelly. Team meetings were started and people assigned to specific tasks. The next day two technicians from Phillip Electronics appeared with enough state of the art monitors to cover all of our needs! By weeks end, we had done well over one hundred operations or procedures. On Friday a second school was recruited and a contact that was established with Royal Caribbean Cruise lines at Labardee set in motion what has become a vital supply route through their cruise ships.

Everyone was physically and emotionally drained at the end of the week but we all felt we had made a great start to expanding our little hospital to accommodate the many patients and volunteers who would be coming in the ensuing months. The outpouring of help from the local population in the care and feeding of so many people was fantastic, as was the camaraderie and professionalism of the volunteers and our Haitian staff in caring for the earthquake victims.

H. Stephen Fletcher, M.D.
From Washington, D.C.

It was on Wednesday January 13th that I first became aware of the tragedy that had struck Haiti the day before. On the way home from work, I heard the first news reports. They were disorganized and chaotic but it became readily apparent that severe damage had occurred. The next day I received an email from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, asking for volunteers to be immediately available to provide emergent orthopedic care. I called my father, who has spent many years volunteering medical services in Haiti, and asked if he wanted to volunteer. He recommended we talk with Carol Fipp and plan to go Hôpital Sacré Coeur in Milot, Haiti. He had been volunteering there for over 10 years and was familiar with the facility and its capabilities. I spoke with my department at the Children’s Hospital Medical Center and organized a team of four including Stephanie Gano RN, Kim O’Brien PA, Edward Fink MD and myself. Carol Fipp notified us Friday night that we were needed and we departed for Jacksonville Florida the next day. In Jacksonville we joined my father and Pat Balankey RN. Sunday morning we drove to Orlando to board a private plane to Cap Haitian.

On arrival we were met by the hospital staff. On the drive to the hospital we were stopped at the town soccer field that was being used as a helicopter landing pad. The US Coast Guard was off-loading several seriously injured patients. A team of general surgeons from Saint Barnabas hospital, lead by Dr. Stephen Fletcher, was already on site. They had arrived for a scheduled medical mission trip on Saturday and immediately were thrown into action treating earthquake victims. After a quick stop at the compound to drop off our gear we merged our team with theirs to begin seven intense days.

One of the first issues we had to address was organization of the hospital and the pre-donated equipment. Although much equipment had been collected over the years, it needed to be organized. This required the better part of a day’s work, primarily by Pat and Stephanie. As this was being done we began to triage the wounded and operated as best as possible. Rick Pitera an anesthesiologist with Dr. Fletcher’s team helped convert three clinic rooms across from the operating rooms into procedure rooms. This allowed use to wash out wounds, close lacerations, and reduce closed fractures without using valuable operating room space. As our only anesthesiologist Rick ran all 6 rooms with 3 Haitian CRNAs for 16-18 hours per day.

After several days it became apparent we required more help and better organization. We spoke with the hospital staff and were able to get permission to use the school across the street for a triage center. In addition, the CRUDEM Foundation had arranged for more doctors, including internal medicine physicians, emergency room physicians and trauma nurses to arrive. The first of these reinforcements arrived on Tuesday followed by more on Wednesday including a second team of orthopedic surgeons from the Des Moines Orthopaedic Surgeons group. The school became our emergency department as patients were assessed, stabilized and prepared for surgery. The school classrooms were converted to a cast room, pre-operative holding wards and for post-operative wards.

In the OR we disassembled our large trays into smaller units. This allowed them to be sterilized faster and spread out the equipment over more patients. The recovery room was turned into a recovery/intensive care unit to handle the most severely injured patients. Phillips Corporation donated and installed new monitors in the ORs, procedure rooms, and the recovery/ICU rooms and provided a defibrillator. With the arrival of a shipment of medicines and supplies, Hôpital Sacré Coeur began to resemble a trauma center.

By the end of our week we were able to perform over 150 surgical procedures and countless fracture reductions, casting and minor wound care. Although exhausted, we felt great comfort in that we had been able to bring together a group of professionals, mostly strangers to each other, and accomplish an almost impossible task. The strength we found could only have come from above and helped us perform beyond our individual abilities to provide the highest quality of care to the people of Haiti.

John F. Lovejoy III, M.D.
We always hear, “God works in strange ways.” But what if you not only believed this, but you actually witnessed and were privileged to be but a tiny part of His plan in ways you never could have imagined. What follows is such an account. The main story is on Haiti post-earthquake, and the main characters involve CRUDEM’s patients and volunteers at Hôpital Sacré Cœur—but at the center of the story, as it always should be—is God specifically, His Hand.

It’s hard to pinpoint how everything came together, so a little background information is necessary to see “the pieces of the puzzle.”

My personal journey with CRUDEM began just a short 4 years ago after accepting an invitation extended by Dr. Peter Kelly while on the annual Malta pilgrimage to Lourdes. That trip resulted in beginning an effort to provide nursing education to the staff of Hôpital Sacré Cœur, with teams of nurse educators continuing biannually. My last official “educational mission trip” was January 2-9, 2010.

In reviewing the CRUDEM video, it’s noticed that Project HOPE was previously involved with the organization. Could it be possible for the two entities to collaborate again? The two share so many things in common around healthcare education, there must be some potential to work together. Thus, discussions began over a year ago between Dr. Peter Kelly and Project HOPE’s President and CEO, Dr. John Howe, to explore possibilities. Time would tell what results would come from these discussions.

Three months before the earthquake CRUDEM was introduced to Caritas Christi Healthcare, the second largest provider system in Boston which include six hospitals. The purpose was to explore a potential relationship/partnership with a Catholic hospital group who shared similar values.

The meeting occurred at the office of Caritas’ CEO, Dr. Ralph De la Torre. Both he and the Chief of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Mark Pearlmutter, were quite impressed as Dr. Peter Kelly described CRUDEM and its mission, and learned that Denise Kelly, Executive Director, lived in Milot for 4 years. They could see how special this organization is simply by the members running it! The meeting did not last long, but it is forever imprinted in our minds. After asking some poignant questions, Dr. De la Torre, seemed completely engaged. He was excited, motivated and agreed to all suggested areas for partnership that came up—both in material and personnel assistance, purchasing power when ordering new equipment, donations of supplies, and more. He assigned Dr. Pearlmutter to be the lead contact person from Caritas for this new partnership. It was the hope for the first Caritas team to visit CRUDEM in January while Peter Kelly was there. Could all this be too good to be true? Time would tell.

Then the January 12th devastating earthquake hits...

Project HOPE was the first to call and to plan for the deployment of the USNS Comfort to get to Port-au-Prince. Although operated by the US Navy, many civilian medical personnel from the HOPE volunteer base augment the ship. HOPE asked how they could help CRUDEM—medical volunteers? supplies? Next call that came was from Caritas. How could they help? They have doctors, nurses, radiology techs, supplies, etc. They immediately put together a team to join a few from CRUDEM to get to HSC as quickly as possible. With some help from Malta and Caritas Board member, Jim O’Connor, along with Dr. de la Torre, the first team would travel to Haiti via a donated private jet!
and from St. Louis, MO...

The people of St. Louis responded in great numbers to the crisis following the Port au Prince earthquake. After receiving the go-ahead call from Peter Kelly to put a team together, I contacted Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital ER Director Bob Flood, who along with extraordinary transport nurse Mary Laffee became our first volunteers. Cardinal Glennon employees have helped staff pediatrics in Milot nearly every week since the earthquake. Charles Dubuque called nurse Jennifer Baggett from Columbia, Missouri, who within a day filled the rest of our 13 person jet with friends from Boone County Hospital. Jennifer has since returned to the hospital twice as my head nurse, a duty she performed with competence, compassion and grace. Other three-time responders include operating room nurse Marie Milewski and flight paramedic Rick Baker. Two weeks ago our Malta local area councilor Carole Less joined our team as a physical therapist.

Supporters and organizations around the area mobilized to raise funds for Crudem. Tom Schlafly, a CRUDEM board member, held an impromptu "Taste of Haiti" at his Tap Room with four other local restauranteurs. A.J. Chivetta, Tim Hanser, David Schmid and friends assumed their alter-egos when their band Spontaneous Nugent rocked a Kirkwood fundraiser. Steve and Grace DiFranco of Kansas City produced the “Concert For CRUDEM” event with 5 top bands performing a benefit concert in April. Musician Mario Pascal performed at a benefit at The Grammophone. Chris LaRocca and Steve Smith donated proceeds from their Kota Grill restaurant pre-opening. Chaminade College Prep exceeded their Haiti 10K Challenge goal and raised over $20,000 for CRUDEM, with an additional 10K matched by Tim Trout and Missouri Physicians Mutual.

Jerry Moyes of Phoenix, David Pratt, Tom Boldt, Donald Broughton, Mike Rattaree, Dave Spence, Chris Imbs, John Wilmsen, Mike Conley, Curtis Francois and others arranged the donation of corporate jets for the transportation of medical teams until commercial flights were restored. Jan O’Connell and Mercy Health System graciously donated new and used equipment and supplies, as well as the use of their distribution center, where CRUDEM board member Steve Reese and an army of volunteers assembled and shipped supplies.

The most remarkable fundraising story came from St. Patrick’s Center in St. Louis, an organization that provides job training and placement for homeless individuals. One homeless client told CEO Dan Buck “I wish there was something we could do to help those poor people… like have a bake sale or something." St. Patrick’s leadership, along with local corporate sponsors and incubator partner Hollyberry Baking Company, soon had St. Patrick’s clients producing thousands of “Helping Hearts Cookies”, which were sold at various corporations, churches and venues around town. This homeless man, motivated by compassion for those less fortunate than him, started a process that raised over $45,000 for CRUDEM!
Prosthetics Lab

“Haiti Grapples With Wave of Amputees”
WSJ Headline Monday, February 8, 2010

I have been asked why I am building a prosthetic lab and why I am so passionate about Haiti. My answer is – because I am so passionate about life. A few years ago I was worried about my life and if I would live. I have, so I guess the Lord has a plan for me.

My involvement in mission trips started 35 years ago. However, with my recent retirement, I have become more focused on the problems in Haiti through the CRUDEM Foundation’s Hôpital Sacré Coeur in Milot. Our orthopedic team was there shortly after the earthquake and experienced not only the human devastation it caused, but also sensed the enduring spirit of the people. Never once did we hear a complaint or notice any self pity, only a determination to survive. I bought into that determination and wanted to help them survive. Thus, I came back determined to do something that would, so to speak, give them a leg up!

For the past 20 years I have also been going to Grenada where we were able to convert a 40 foot shipping container into a prosthetics lab. This model worked well there so I thought why not duplicate it in Haiti where the need is so great. With the help of the Jacksonville community we were able to purchase at discount a container and completely refurbish it into an office and prosthesis lab. The American Association of the Order of Malta provided us with funds to purchase equipment that will fabricate and maintain the prostheses and train Haitians to continue this work.

Just think how it would be to walk around the rest of your life on crutches or to be confined to a wheelchair if it were not necessary. What we are doing, literally, is giving amputees a leg to stand on!

It is an ambitious project, but with the support of the Jacksonville community and the Order of Malta we are off to a good start – and with God’s help, we will succeed.

John F. Lovejoy Jr., M.D.

Wish List

New Deep Well - $25,000
Replace electrical overhead lines
Over the bed tables
2 commercial washers and 2 commercial dryers for Mission House
Sofas, chairs, end tables, coffee tables for Mission House and Doctors’ Residence
Industrial fans on stand

On the dock at Cap Hatien April 28th!

Note: If you would like to donate any of the above, please contact either Denise Kelly or Joni Paterson at the CRUDEM Foundation offices (413) 642-0450. They can help to arrange for the purchase and delivery to CRUDEM of any item(s) you want to provide. Thank you.
Three Incredible Volunteers

Deb Paine-Motyl, RN of Wilbraham, MA, had barely stepped off the plane from her January 2008 week-long visit to Milot, when she began planning her next trip. Her questions, “What more can I do? Where do you need help?” landed her the daunting position of Coordinator of Medical Volunteers. With infinite patience, Deb keeps track of the volunteers’ travel schedules, collects all their credentials and forms and arranges for their insurance with CMMB. Twice a year, Deb travels to the hospital as a RN, assisting in the recovery and other areas. When the earthquake hit, Deb jumped in and helped manage the incredible flow of supplies. She returned to Milot twice since January and earned the nickname, “Depot Debbie,” as she carved order out of the towering mounds of boxes and medications. Deb continues as the Supply Coordinator, alerting volunteers and donors of which supplies are most needed. All this, while maintaining a full-time position as a nursing consultant for Radius Management, Inc., a marriage and parenting two young college students!

Board member Carol Fipp of Jacksonville, FL, first visited Haiti over a decade ago when her father, the late George Fipp, MD, volunteered there as an orthopedic surgeon. Since, Carol acted as coordinator for the Jacksonville, FL CRUDEM support group that raised countless funds for the hospital and sent orthopedic teams to Milot twice and then three times a year. Within minutes of the earthquake, Carol jumped in to help. She spent countless hours a day for weeks and months on end recruiting medical volunteers and donations of supplies, arranging transportation for people and goods, fielding press contacts, fundraising, assisting with patient transport by military craft and handling the boggling amount of back office work that accumulated.

When the earthquake hit, Tim Traynor, of Wilbraham, MA, had already been at the hospital for a week and a half, conducting repairs and making plans for the hospital’s expansion. Within minutes of the earth’s shaking, Tim’s volunteer position as Project Manager for Construction quickly expanded into Emergency Ground Coordinator. Tim’s invaluable expertise as an electrician and retired international contractor served to turn the 63 bed hospital into a 500 plus bed hospital within weeks. Communications systems, sanitation, heating and water needs, building expansion and remodeling, a helicopter landing zone and tent constructions all bore Tim’s signature. With the practiced and creative touch of a general in the field of battle, Tim supervised staff and volunteer crews, helped open up supply routes, and established life-saving working relationships with the US military ships and choppers. Anyone who spent time at HSC during the past several months, found Tim to be not only the wizard of technical problem solving but a compassionate, patient and caring friend.

“In order to prevail in the face of so much death and misery, we needed to balance our actions with resolve, compassion and humor,” said Tim. Part of Tim’s healing presence includes his pet goat, Dr. Beeg Nutsac, who has become a bit of a mascot with quite a following. Not only has this unlikely critter offered a touch of humor and play to patients, staff and volunteers alike, but Dr. Nutsac has offered a listening ear to many numbers of volunteers as they process their intense experiences. As life at HSC settles back to a more even paced routine, Tim has returned his focus to supervising the expansion plans, with his 4-legged companion in tow.