

Hôpital Sacré Coeur

CRUDEM

Issue 9

Fall 2007

Notes From Haiti

Living on the edge -

Do you ever stop to think before you flick a light switch or turn the tap that nothing will happen? We all tend to take for granted the electricity which turns darkness into light, preserves our food in our refrigerators and assures that we have a cool refreshing drink on a hot day. We too have taken such gifts for granted until, that is, a recent Friday noon when suddenly all the hospital campuses were plunged into darkness. It was almost as if time suddenly stopped as everything came to an immediate halt! We ran to the generator building from which smoke was belching. The generator attendant first on the scene grabbed a bucket of sand and threw it on the source of the smoke. When the smoke cleared we saw that a piston had crashed through the side of the motor spilling gallons of oil all over the ground.

We have come to rely on our generators as reliable work horses providing the electricity which makes everything else work - the water pump, the lights, the medical equipment, the computers; always trusting that they will continue providing good service. We have tried to treat them well changing the oil and filters every 250 hours of use. Our two 180 KW generators, in service since 2000, serve not only the hospital but the woodshop and soldering shop, both works begun long ago by the Sacred Heart Brothers and permitting craftsmen to earn a living and provide for their families. One was already down waiting for parts, now the remaining one was down. We do have



a small emergency generator meant to power the OR and Laboratory only. Max, the hospital's facility manager,

spent the rest of the afternoon and weekend changing circuits and rewiring to try to get lights to all essential services. The newly installed inverter system helped as well.

On Monday morning the hospital opened as usual with all services, except for radiology, in full operation. Lanterns were retrieved from



storage to light those places with no lighting, doors and windows were open for both ventilation and light. The experience highlighted for us how dependent we have become on computers, both to do our work and to communicate.

Being human everyone complained of being hot and sticky, but the service of patients went on without a hitch; everyone managed. Dr. Alexis, the dental social resident gets the prize for perseverance and creativity. Since the dental office didn't have electricity, he hooked up a desk lamp with a long extension cord so that he could see and taped a small battery driven fan to the non working dental light so that he could continue to work and see patients. He couldn't provide the usual level of service as his electrical powered instruments didn't work, but he did what he could with manual instruments.

All in all the event is humbling and made us reflect on how truly dependent we are on each other and on the good will and generosity of so many who are often unseen, and sometimes unrecognized, but all of whom make the ministry of Hôpital Sacré Coeur. It also made us realize anew how grateful we should be for what we have and so often take for granted.

Dr. Bernes Chalumeau, Jean-Mary Louis, Marie Ange Barrella, Raymond Pierre-Louis, Sr. Joanna and Sr. Martha

President's Comments

In today's gospel, Jesus teaches us to be faithful in handling worldly wealth so that we will be welcomed in the eternal home. So often we forget that our worldly wealth is much more than financial means.

A frequent question that I am asked is " How can I help CRUDEM and Hôpital Sacré Coeur if I have no medical skills?" My response has always been that we have many needs not just medical needs. However when asked for specific needs I usually floundered.

Our new executive director Denise



Kelly has provided me with a much better response. Denise is a citizen of Ireland, has an MBA from Fairfield University and spent four years

living at CRUDEM. She has met and assisted all of the volunteers and has a true understanding of the needs of CRUDEM and a passion for it's mission. She has guided me in developing my new response which is " Come and see for yourself what you can do to help."

In this newsletter you will see a beautiful example of how mission house provides volunteers with an opportunity to experience Haiti and CRUDEM and discover how they can use their talents to help. The list of possibilities is endless and only you can judge which of the many God given gifts that are your worldly wealth you can use to help CRUDEM and the people of Haiti.

The logistics of arranging a trip are easy, the time frame is flexible and the rewards are many. We have had volunteers ranging in age from teenagers to retirees in their 80's. They have all found ways to help the people of Haiti and returned home with a new perspective and appreciation for their many gifts. It's

never the perfect time but there is always no better time than now!! God bless all of you for your continuing support of the people of Haiti through CRUDEM.



Peter J Kelly MD
President,
CRUDEM
Foundation

First time readers of this newsletter are probably wondering what CRUDEM means. It is an acronym:

Center for the
RUral
DEvelopment of
Milot

When the Brothers of the Sacred Heart came to Milot in 1968 and started building roads and bridges, constructing schools, medical clinics, a tile factory, a lumber mill and bringing electricity and clean water to the village; they called their mission CRUDEM.

In 1986 they built an 8 bed hospital with an operating room and called it Hôpital Sacré Coeur. St Louis surgeon, Dr Ted Dubuque was the first volunteer to arrive, and shortly thereafter with his childhood friend, Carlos Reese, Dr Dubuque formed the CRUDEM Foundation in St Louis to support the hospital. It is a 501(c) (3) corporation.

“Pray It Forward” returns to Milot

As I sit here looking at the photographs of our missions to Haiti I know that, for anyone reading this newsletter, the desire to give is probably “hard-wired” into our souls. I am equally sure that this is exactly how God would have it be. Through our mission organization, the *Pray It Forward Foundation*, visits to the Hôpital Sacré Coeur find me flexing my muscles as a general surgeon. In doing a multitude of operations and consultations it would be so easy to equate “THE MISSION” simply with what goes on in the operating theater and all the accolades given to the surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses. But such a characterization would miss what has for us proven to be ‘the heart’ of our relationship with Milot.

On each of our trips we have extended the opportunity of giving to at least one non-medical individual who has sincerely desired to join us in our work. Often times, nearly overcome with excitement after being selected to accompany us, those individuals find themselves burdened with the troubling thought “but what will I do? What CAN I do?”

Bonnie is an artist, wife and mother who, over twenty years ago worked for a brief time as a med-tech at Massachusetts General Hospital. On our 2005 mission, among her other duties, she magically transformed herself into “the lollipop lady” doling out sweet surprises to children right and left. Winning friends and the confidence of many of the children, we had Bonnie don surgical scrubs for some particularly apprehensive patients and accompany them into the operating room, keeping their young confidence up as general anesthesia was induced.

Debra and Jean-Baptiste (Mister B) accompanied us on our most recent mission. Debra, a doctor's receptionist in remission with stage IV breast cancer who had never flown in an airplane before, will tell



you that she had the time of her life. Not only did she get a memorable, world-class flying experience courtesy of LYNX Airlines, but, while in Milot, she was put to work in the pharmacy sorting pills, packaging patient sized medication baggies and making friends with her Creole-speaking coworkers, while she carried on in her characteristically lilting Southern drawl. Mister B, a native-born Haitian whose day job finds him transporting patients in our hospital, reacted as if he had just won the Super Bowl when I asked him to join us last December. Having left Haiti many years ago in haste, he now was returning with dignity as a member of an American surgical team. This was an opportunity for him to give something back to the people who still hold a prominent place in his heart. In addition to organizing our surgical patients, making sure that pre-operative medications were given and assuring that I performed the correct operation on each individual, this gentle giant assisted with translation and acted as a liaison with the non-English speaking members of the hospital staff. The soul of this man was on display for all to see when we visited *Children of the Promise*, a nearby orphanage.

We all have our gifts to give (thank God, not all of us are doctors). In my heart I know that, long after the name and face of the surgeon who performed the hernia operation at the Hôpital Sacré Coeur has faded into the distant past, many of my patients are much more likely to remember the nice lollipop lady who transformed the otherwise scary hospital situation into a loving example of unsought, unexpected Christian charity. The opportunity to dispense such “rare fruits” needs to be extended to one and all in whom this burning desire is hard-wired.

Dr Hank Zielinski

Dr Zielinski, a frequent visitor to CRUDEM is a surgeon from Marietta, Georgia



Communi Pro



In Haiti, a hospital is not only responsible for in-patient services, but is also responsible for defining the department of Health. From 2001, the program assumed responsibility for the most basic services including vaccinations, education, and health care when necessary. When the program's funding was cut, the program was forced to close.

In 2003, Mme Nirva Fils-Aime, after completing her nursing degree, returned to Hôpital Sacré Coeur and started the Community Health Service. She began with herself and two other nurses. They located the local health center, the Nutrition Center and located the local health workers. Project Hope, retraining them. With this program, the program provided vaccination program, child health screening, and health education.

Next there was the distribution of food provided to under nourished children and anemic patients. The program was started providing education to the health workers on ways to reduce the mosquito population. It included the distribution of mosquito nets. When the Filariasis Program was closed, Community Health Services took over the program and provided education to patients with lymphatic filariasis to take care of themselves.

Another program, the Prevention of Transmission of HIV, Child provides prophylactic treatment to babies and mothers. To provide voluntary testing to all who request it. When babies, they were frustrated and saddened when their mothers and other seropositive patients. This program was started at Hôpital Sacré Coeur and Catholic Relief Services. The program being made available for patients at the hospital and in 5 outlying clinics. The response was very positive.

As the numbers of programs have grown, the program has expanded its staff, which now consists of 9 public health nurses and 10 health workers.

The staff is determined that no child or adult should die from preventable disease and treatment.

Community Health Project



for the care of sick patients in its clinics and for community health in geographic areas. From 1995 to 2001, Project Hope's Child Survival Program provided the essential of the preventive health services such as child health screening with referrals when the program was terminated it left a huge vacuum.

After completing her formation as a public health nurse, she began rebuilding the Community Health Center and her nurses. She assumed responsibility for training health promoters who had been trained by Project Hope. With a newly assembled team she restarted the program and health education out in the community. The center is supported by the World Food Program for families of pregnant moms. A Malaria Prevention project was implemented with healthcare staff and the general public on simple health education. The center also offers discounted insecticide treated bed nets. The program changed its focus to preventative work and health education. The responsibility for the clinic which provides services for malaria, and elephantiasis and shows them how to



transmission of the HIV Virus from Mother to Child. It quickly expanded to include babies born to HIV moms. While the staff were happy to help the community, they were frustrated at not being able to give help to the moms who were not in the program. They prompted a collaborative relationship between Project Hope and the Community Health Services that has resulted in anti-retroviral services for HIV moms with AIDS. It now provides service at the center and the response has been tremendous.

The program, reaching over 150,000 people, so has the staff of 10 nurses, 5 LPN's and 34 health promoters. The program's goal is to prevent an adult will die due to ignorance or lack of care



A Volunteer's Reflection

When I started to practice medicine at St. Mary's Hospital in 1985, Dr. Ted Dubuque, the hospital's finest surgeon interrupted his career to go to Haiti. Through the years, I have heard of the mission work done at Hôpital Sacré Coeur by Dr. Dubuque, Mr. Carlos Reese and a number of other supporters from St. Louis whom I admire. Like most physicians, I had a romantic notion of doing medical mission work "some day". After meeting the board, including Drs. Peter Kelly and Tom Flynn at Susan Reese's home last year I felt called to visit Milot. I didn't expect my trip to be such a profound experience.

Dr. Mark McLaughlin, a radiation oncologist from Marietta Georgia, made the trip with us. He made rounds with the staff and me and gave a grand rounds presentation about the diagnosis and treatment of the most common cancers in Haiti. Unfortunately, screening tools and treatment for most cancers are unavailable at the hospital. Treatment options for cancer are limited. Unless a surgical cure is feasible, cancer is a death sentence.

Though efforts by the hospital have brought a dramatic reduction, infant mortality is still high. There are no prenatal or diagnostic ultrasonic examinations unless a visiting radiologist comes with a technician and a portable ultrasound machine. Dr. Mike Carron came from Florida with his technician, Darena Cummings. They worked all day every day to screen pregnant women and perform numerous diagnostic ultrasound examinations.

The reputation of the hospital allows it to attract top Haitian physicians. Dr. Chalumeau gave me the honor of lecturing the hospital staff on a number of topics for their morning conferences. I was able to attend the clinics of the internists Drs. Zephirin and Cintellus and the walk-in consultation clinic of Dr. St.Fleur, who later visited me in St. Louis. The physicians do the best with what they have, but are constrained by limited finances.

As a physician, this was medical heaven. The patients presented themselves dressed meticulously and groomed well in spite of the lack of running water, electricity or sewage treatment. They were uniformly respectful and well mannered. I could not help but respect and admire them.

The people of Milot have done far more for me than I for them. It was an honor to witness the heroic acts of charity by the Daughters of Charity, the staff and the visiting team.

Never has it been more clear to me how the Holy Spirit works through remarkable people such as those at Hôpital Sacré Coeur. The generosity of friends, family and patients since my return has been unexpected and very gratifying. I look forward to returning this fall not out of obligation, but with joyful anticipation.

Dr Bill Guyol

Dr Guyol is a member-elect of the CRUDEM Foundation Board of Directors





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STAFF PROFILES

Wilson Louis

Wilson's association with the hospital goes back over 10 years. His first job was as a guard for the construction materials store when the second story was added to the hospital. After construction was completed he helped out in medical records and the pharmacy. Wilson says he was asked to become a health promoter because it was noticed that he had a good rapport with the patients, and when asked questions, he always willingly and correctly responded. Through Project Hope he received the training he needed to take on the responsibility for the community health activities in one of the Milot neighborhoods, Circa. Initially he was responsible for providing vaccinations, organizing health education and encouraging pregnant moms to go to the Hospital's prenatal clinic. With the advent of the HIV treatment program Wilson's responsibilities were increased to include the supervision of the treatment of a group of patients in the program.



Wilson lives down behind Palais Sans Souci, with his wife and 4 children. He considers that one of the most important aspects of his job is to provide health education, not only to the folks who live in Circa, but to all his friends and neighbors. He encourages them to come to the hospital when they are sick and not to go to the voodoo doctor. As one of the more experienced health agents he is always available to assist the newer health agents as they learn to manage their many responsibilities.

Nirva Fils-Aime

Mme. Fils-Aime graduated from Justinian Hospital's nursing program in 1993. After completing her year of social residency, she started to work part time at HSC. In 1995 she was recruited to work as a nurse supervisor in Project Hope's Child Survival Program. She was responsible for supervising the preventive health activities of the nurse auxiliaries and health agents in 5 communes. Her experience working with the folks from the countryside motivated her to return to school when Project Hope ended to become a public health nurse. Upon completion of her training Nirva returned to HSC as director of Community Health. She immediately set about building a community health program with the assistance of two other nurses. They had to start from the beginning, retraining the health promoters, organizing the vaccination, health education and home visiting programs. Nirva says that it is the contact she had with the poor that motivated her to study public health. She finds it particularly gratifying to see greater awareness and comprehension evolve in the population through the community health efforts.



Nirva lives in Cap Haitien with her husband Edouard, her 12 year old son and her long awaited second child of 4 and a half months.

Wish List

generators (2)

*air
conditioners*

*echocardiograph
machine*

*pallet and
storeroom
shelving*

*a power
washer*

Note: If you would like to donate any of the above, please contact either Denise Kelly or Joni Paterson at the CRUDEM Foundation offices (314) 754-7471. They can help to arrange for the purchase and delivery to CRUDEM of any item(s) you want to provide. Thank you.

A Taste of Haiti In St Louis

The Friends of Hôpital Sacré Coeur in St Louis staged **A Taste of Haiti** gala at the Schlafly Brewery on September 26 for over 260 people. It was a fun filled evening in which \$37,000 was raised to support the hospital.

Entertainment was provided by a St Louisian whose stage name is Mama Lisa and whose husband is Haitian. Guests were treated to a lively performance of Haitian dance and music that had every foot in the room tapping and got a lot of people of all ages into a Haitian conga line toward the end of the evening. Throughout the room there were food stations with different delicacies prepared by the chef at the brewery, including epis, grio, diri ak pwa rouj, chictay, pwason gwo sel, sos poul, and potat dous (Haitian garnish, fried pork, rice and beans, spicy slaw, stewed fish,

chicken in sauce and Haitian sweet potato pudding). At the end of the evening guests took home DVDs about CRUDEM and commemorative sacks of coffee, courtesy of Ronnoco Coffee Company as reminders of the evening and CRUDEM.

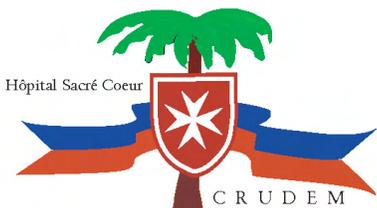
Although the poverty of Haiti can seem overwhelming, the country also produces a rich culture full of joy and hope. **A Taste of**

Haiti was a celebration of its rich culture and cuisine; and it raised awareness of the tremendous northwest Haiti

human needs in and the work of the hospital in alleviating these needs.



Denise Kelly with the host committee for a Taste of Haiti in St. Louis and Mama Lisa's troupe of performers.



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