

MATH News

M E D I C A L A I D T O H A I T I Helping Haitians Heal Haitians

Now, before you say, "Oh no. Not another newsletter!"...



From the beginning, MATH has followed a "no frills" philosophy in our approach to accomplishing our mission goals in Haiti. In fact, staying on this path is the very reason we are able to dedicate nearly every donated dollar to our cause. The donors and volunteers who are most essential to our accomplishments in Haiti represent the foundation of what we do. Today, I am proud to begin telling you the stories and introducing you to the people who help us find our way through the challenges and successes of MATH's ongoing mission of helping Haitians heal Haitians. So, while this may LOOK like a typical newsletter, I hope you see it more as our vehicle to bring you the stories and people that make our work in Haiti so gratifying. And whether you are already part of the MATH community or just learning about us, I hope it inspires you to donate, to volunteer or to advocate for Medical Aid To Haiti. Enjoy the reading!

Rick Thibadeau, President & Founder of MATH

Seeing is believing: MATH brings vision screening to its clinics.

MATH In
PORT-AU-PRINCE September
PROJECT of 2015,

Medical Aid To Haiti sponsored another of its mission trips to Port-au-Prince to work with Karavàn Lasante, a Haitian medical team. Karavàn Lasante ("Health Caravan") was started by Dr. Wilkens Gilbert, a Haitian physician, in partnership with MATH to provide primary care clinics in and around



Flanked by interpreter Joel Exavier (left) and MATH volunteer Scott Morris (right), are some happy Karavàn Lasante eye patients wearing their new eyewear.

Port-au-Prince. MATH funding staffs their full-time clinic in Port-au-Prince and four other mobile clinic sites that are visited weekly by the team.

This Fall's MATH mission trip of volunteers was led by Michelle Wordell, RN, who has traveled to Haiti regularly for several years. Joining her were Donna Czaja, RN; Caroline Griffin, APRN; and Scott Morris, all first-time MATH mission trip participants.

continued on back..

IN MY OWN WORDS

Anne D'Orvilliers | Board Secretary, MATH

As a volunteer at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center, I came to know Maggie Levasseur, RN, an ardent MATH volunteer and advocate for Haiti. After hearing her story and asking how I could get involved, I volunteered for the MATH mission trip in May 2014.



Although having traveled extensively and seeing areas with people and families in need, the dire living conditions of the thousands of people in and around Port-au-Prince — years AFTER the earthquake — was saddening. The lack of food and clean water, basic housing and sanitation facilities, educational opportunities, and access to basic medical care for health issues was distressing and clearly illustrated the need for MATH's ongoing efforts there.

In retirement, it is gratifying to give back for all the blessings and advantages I've received in my life. I am so proud to be a part of this organization's enduring mission.

By the numbers

A few of the goals we strive to achieve:

4 days per week that our mobile clinic operates annually

12,000 NUMBER OF ANNUAL PATIENT VISITS TO MATH'S FIXED AND MOBILE CLINICS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE

MATH volunteers that traveled from the U.S. to Haiti in 2015 on medical mission **71**

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

At MATH, we won't turn away anyone who wants to offer their support for our mission. Whether it's volunteering, advocating or donating, we welcome your interest. Visit our website at medicalaidtohaiti.org more information, or email medicalaidtohaiti@gmail.com.

(continued)

The focus of this trip was not only to assist and work alongside the Karavàn Lasante staff doing regular medical exams, but also to help screen the many vision-impaired people that are cared for at the clinics.

Over the course of their week-long visit the volunteers examined more than 300 hundred people, many of whom received prescription reading glasses donated by Bruce Tucker, a Connecticut optician.



MATH volunteers Michelle Wordell and Donna Czaja perform an eye exam, using an SVOne auto-refractor that they brought with them on the trip.

Donated Medical Equipment Arrives



Last Spring, Dr. Marco Morel, one of the senior members of our OBGYN group at Saint Francis Hospital, was closing one of his offices and offered all of the equipment there to MATH. So volunteers disassembled his office and put it on a truck destined for a container ship to Port-au-Prince. All of the equipment was there waiting for us when we arrived in September. And Dr. Morel's Ultrasound machine made the difference in diagnosis for two young women with obstetrical complications. Both might have died. The best news is that this machine will stay and help the local staff year round do a better job of caring for their patients. Many thanks to Dr. Morel for his donation!

The Road to Dame-Marie



by Dr. Michael R. Bourque

The roads in Haiti are challenging, to say the least, and our trips there are often strung together by hours of rugged miles. This past September's trip was no exception, as we made our way by bus across the only main artery crossing Haiti from East to West.

Once we have arrived (and exhaled), the first order of business is always to reopen the operating room and prepare for the work that makes miracles happen for the people of Dame-Marie. Surgeries include everything from hernias to tumors to emergency Cesarean sections – all unavailable until our team gets there.

Along with veteran and new team members, we were blessed to have local Haitian surgeons

Dr. Wilkens Gilbert and Dr. Rolph Richeme team up with us.



Back L-R: Peggy Facciolo, RN; Wilkens Gilbert, MD; Kathleen Monahan, CRNA; Collette Ringie, RN; Joel Nevejans, CRNA; Claire Perkins, RN; and Victor Dowling. Front L-R: Jodi Vandergrift, RN; Michael Bourque, MD; Kathy Aries, RN; Denise Bolduc, CRNA; Sarah Schilling, CRNA; Margaret Levasseur, RN; and Candace de Long RN.



Dr. Rolph Richeme and Dr. Wilkens Gilbert

Well-meaning people often ask why we risk so much, and travel so far when there are many poor in desperate means much closer to home. My answer is simple really. There are no safety nets of any kind in most of Haiti. Whether you live or die is random, arbitrary and totally unpredictable. It doesn't matter if you have money, are previously healthy, or are young or old. If

you need acute medical attention and you find yourself in the wrong place, you will die. And our teams have the capability to change that equation.

Their cry of need was loud and spoke to our hearts. We are glad we listened, for all of us are forever changed. And despite the road we traveled to get there, it is definitely worth the trip.

FIND AND FOLLOW US:



Medical Aid to Haiti, Inc.
80 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107
For more information,
please call 860-760-7009
or visit us at
www.medicalaidtohaiti.org



Follow us at
facebook.com/MATHaiti

MATH BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Judith A. Carey, RSM, PhD; Richard Thibadeau; John M. Chapman; Anne D'Orvilliers; Michael R. Bourque, MD; Victor Dowling; Thomas H. Gorin, MD; Jim Lane; Margaret Levasseur; Giuliana Musilli; Tera R. Stock