

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

Why can't Haiti catch a break?

I'm often asked the question above by people that want to know more about Haiti – especially after the latest natural disaster, Hurricane Matthew. I won't pretend to know the answers, but Haiti's continued desperation reinforces our resolve to help Haitians heal Haitians. Our projects in Haiti, in Port-au-Prince and Dame-Marie, have been impacted by the effects of the hurricane. In Dame-Marie, on the western tip of Haiti, our surgical team just returned to report that nearly half of the homes were destroyed and nearly all vegetation, including crops, was decimated. The sole hospital in the area was damaged, yet they were still able to perform a number of life-saving operations during our week there. In Port-au-Prince, our fixed and mobile clinics are seeing nearly double the number of patients as usual. As I write this, there is a MATH medical team working side-by-side with our Haitian healthcare providers at our clinic sites. Our immediate hurricane relief efforts were to help our Haitian partners to procure essentials including medicine, food, water, tarps, batteries, fuel, etc. Now our goal is to provide funds to address the many post-hurricane medical problems. Your generosity has made everything we do possible. Maybe at least in that regard, we're all helping Haiti catch a break!



Rick Thibadeau, President & Founder of MATH

IN MY OWN WORDS

Jim Lane | Board Member, MATH

A few years ago, I was invited by my friend, Dr. Michael Bourque, to join the Medical Aid to Haiti team. Over the many years that I've known Mike, I



was always impressed with his stories and the insights of his frequent medical trips to Haiti. Now having witnessed it myself, my appreciation for the work that he and every member of the MATH team does has grown enormously. After visiting Port-au-Prince in July, I am becoming more and more aware of what drives Mike and other MATH volunteers to serve those in Haiti who are in such desperate need of medical and clinical services. I wish I had the skills to directly assist the doctors and nurses who provide first hand care to Haitians, but I'm incredibly grateful to be part of the team that supports their work. So with that humble experience and observation, I would like to truly thank all of those volunteers who give so much to this amazing organization.

Donations Help MATH Respond to Hurricane Matthew Devastation in Dame-Marie, Haiti



As the news of conditions in Dame-

Marie slowly began reaching us here in Connecticut, a team led by Dr. Michael Bourque was already being assembled to make a previously-planned, but now refocused trip, to Haiti. What we learned as we prepared to leave was beyond belief – death and injuries, destruction, loss of food and resources, and horrific illnesses to follow – difficult to imagine this poorest of countries weathering this after all that has fallen on them in recent years. To reach the hospital in Dame-Marie, the team had to navigate steep terrain while carrying duffle bags full of supplies. The only access to the Dame-Marie shore community was by small boat, and with no docks to speak of, all members of the team had to navigate the shoreline waters at their own risk. After a



Villagers getting water from newly installed / repaired central water system. Sea water breached the sea wall and came in so far during Hurricane Matthew that fresh water supplies were contaminated.

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By the numbers

Autumn's Palette, our first annual fundraiser at Tower Ridge was a great success!

26 live and silent auction items

130

attendees including donors, volunteers and special guests

NEARLY **\$30,000**

RAISED TO HELP FUND MATH MEDICAL MISSIONS

Thanks to all who made the event such a great success!

9th Annual Craft Festival for MATH

Lots of area residents came out Nov. 12 & 13 for the Craft Festival & Marketplace to benefit MATH held at the Church of St. Peter Claver in West Hartford. The annual event, which raised **\$6,000 for MATH**, has a dedicated following of vendors and patrons who appreciate that the people of Haiti are a beneficiary. The festival, organized by Audrey Byrnett and Lorri Chapman, is a unique venue where shoppers find an eclectic variety of quality goods created by Connecticut artisans and purveyors of specialty foods. **Mark your calendar for the 10th anniversary next year on November 11 & 12, 2017.**

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rigorous and coordinated effort through that first night to get prepared for their first day of service, the team was emergently awakened at 4:00am by hospital personnel to help deliver baby twins. What a night! That was just the first of many patient cases over the next few days, including 160 medical exams, more than 25 ultrasounds and 18 surgeries by Dr. Bourque's team. And the team also delivered another baby girl during that time! On their final morning before departure, some of the team surveyed the shoreline while awaiting the return boat trip. All around them was the aftermath and devastation left by Matthew. Boats in pieces, homes demolished, vegetation pooling in the inlets of the water's edge. But the people of this tiny town live on, trying to clean up and rebuild what little they had and then lost. Cholera and other illnesses will continue to be problematic, but the people... they continue on. This is why we do what we do. The people of Haiti are so resilient. Why shouldn't we be as well, and why shouldn't we do what we can to help them continue on?



L-R: Dr. Eric Balch (Anesthesia), Marie France, RN (Haitian hospital staff), Kathy Aries, RN, between surgeries.

Gifts From Emma's Heart

by Margaret Levasseur, RN

In a quiet moment at the triage desk at St. Francis Hospital, Jennifer Tierney, RN, mentioned that her 8-year old daughter had gifts that she wanted to hand out to sick children.

"She's been wrapping up her toys every night for months. She wants to come to the hospital to give them to sick children, and is upset that she can't do that." I told Jen that the next morning I was packing up two barrels to ship to Haiti and had some room to spare. Emma and the whole family arrived the next morning with a pile of gifts. Each one had been wrapped with a note "To girl (or boy), Love Emma." Emma knew what each gift was as she placed it in the barrel and was thrilled that her gifts were accepted. Dr. Wilkens Gilbert, our medical director in Port-au-Prince, was told gifts were on the way. He responded "I receive such news with palpitations. Big thanks to Emma. Please let her know that her gifts are so much appreciated and many children will be feeling so happy because of her."



November Mission Notes by Dr. Wilkens Gilbert (in his own words)

MATH
PORT-AU-PRINCE
PROJECT



I am pleased to submit this summary report to you on our activities with the Missionary Group of MATH during the period from Monday 14 to Friday 18, 2016. This report is focused on patients number seen during the week. We had the chance to meet the group of (MATH) missionaries in the evening of Sunday, November 13, a few hours after their arrival in Haiti. We had during this tete-a-tete the pleasure of getting to know the members of the team.

Monday 14 November The convoy, made up of 3 vehicles, accommodating the different members of the team (NMSC-MATH Interpreters-Personnel) set out very early in the direction of Grand-Boulogne where the population was once again enthusiastic to benefit from Our support. At the end of the day 118 people were able to benefit from medical and ophthalmological care.

Tuesday 15 November This second working day, which began with a guided tour of the fixed clinic before taking the direction of Marlique or 63 patients were able to benefit from medical care and 35 for ophthalmological care. In the afternoon the team returned to the clinic or 50 people were seen for ophthalmological reasons. About twenty people could not be



Karavan LaSante and MATH Port-au-Prince team at end of a day at Grand Boulogne mobile clinic.

seen because of the time. The team has to leave to give an appointment for Saturday to these people but this appointment could not be held because of the departure of the group.

Wednesday 16 November The team took the direction of Dargout (Croix-des-Bouquets) where 102 people could be seen including 39 for ophthalmological problems.

Thursday 17 November The team went to Santo where 103 people were seen including 34 for ophthalmological reasons.

Friday 18 November For the last day of work the team went to Lillavois or 87 people. 52 were able to benefit from medical care and 35 ophthalmological care. After the working day, the team went to the clinic where they were interviewed for a while to discuss the needs and perspectives of our partnership. Meanwhile a large quantity of glasses and some other materials could be stored at our depot by the members of the MATH team.

In summary by adding those of the fixed clinic, 641 people were able to benefit from your generosity only in 5 days! We thank each person who contributed to the undeniable success of this work week. Being directly involved in the care team this report is quite summary. A meeting is planned tomorrow with the members of the local team in order to synthesize the different points of view in order to constitute a final document relating to the mission.

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MATH
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