

COVID-19 Update

Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you and your families safe and healthy as we resume our lives and the pandemic recedes for now. I offer a heartfelt "thank you" to our many friends in the medical community who have spent the past several months dealing with SARS-CoV-2 and its ugly consequences and to those providing essential services who have allowed us to isolate and stay safe.

In a twist of fate, the political unrest in Haiti last year severely curtailed international travel to the island which limited the introduction of COVID-19...until now. Unfortunately, this unintended quarantine was broken when more than 11,000 Haitians working in the Dominican Republic fled that country's outbreak and returned home bringing the virus with them.

The medical update as of the end of May was that Dame-Marie had zero confirmed cases. All patients are triaged outside the building at Hôpital de la Communaute Dame-Marienne as a precaution and home visits are planned. Laboratory technicians from Jérémie assist in conducting the tests, which take 5 days to get results and those with symptoms must quarantine in their homes. Centre Medico-Chirurgical du Quartier / Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne are situated in a hot zone of COVID-19 in Port-au-Prince and Dr. Wilkens is ensuring appropriate precautions are in place to prevent the spread and keep the staff protected, while maintaining needed services to patients. Rest assured we will continue close communication with our Haitian partners as they respond to this pandemic.

I am proud to share the photos in this newsletter that show the progress being made to enable additional medical services. You can see the great strides in building a medical infrastructure where there had been none. We rely on your partnership to continue *Helping Haitians Heal Haitians*, thank you.

Rick Thibadeau, President & Founder of MATH



IN MY OWN WORDS

Valerie Rossetti, MD, MPH | Mission Team / Medical Committee Volunteer



On arriving at Aéroport International Toussaint Louverture in Port-au-Prince (PAP) this past February as part of a small team of MATH volunteers, our temperatures were taken by an airport screener. This was one of Haiti's early efforts to protect itself from COVID-19. Three months later, our hearts go out to those in Haiti who are facing the broadening pandemic with a lack of clean water, food scarcity, a dense urban population, limited medical care, and little personal protective equipment. There are estimated to be only 60 ventilators for this population of 11 million.

We were met by MATH's Haitian partner, Dr. Gilbert Wilkens, an incredibly gracious and dedicated physician and surgeon, whose clinics in poor areas have been supported by MATH. Despite shortages of resources and intermittent flaring of political violence, Dr. Wilkens is building a small hospital south of PAP in the hills of Marlique, where access to surgical and obstetrical care for the poor has been non-existent. Should these patients require surgery, a Cesarean section, or experience an emergency, they face daunting obstacles — from finding a way to travel dangerous roads, to finding a public hospital willing to accept them, and then finding the money to pay for items necessary for their surgeries (e.g., IV fluids, anesthetic drugs, pain medications, and other surgical supplies). Up rough and steep dirt roads, the new Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne already operates a neighborhood clinic. Our team's mission this trip was to help envision, with Dr. Wilkens, the appropriate equipment and best layout for the two planned operating rooms named in honor of MATH nursing director, Kathy Aries, RN.

It was a rare privilege to provide input for the beginnings of this surgical service. There are many hurdles, such as how to ensure a constant supply of electricity and clean water, how to sterilize instruments, finding equipment for basic and safe anesthesia, and anticipating scenarios for critical patients. Our fortunate lives rarely provide the opportunity to connect with those who endure a dire lack of access to surgical care. To even briefly work alongside Dr. Wilkens, his wife and pediatrician Dr. Shirley Pateau, and their staff of general practitioners, nurses, laboratory technicians, and support staff, re-opens our hearts to the best of humanity. It is a priceless gift from them to all MATH volunteers.

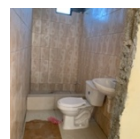
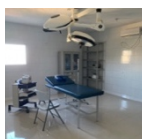
Donations Equal Progress



Much progress has been made readying Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne in Marlique for surgical services. Floor 3 houses the neighborhood clinic exam rooms, laboratory services, and pharmacy, and the first of two operating rooms, named in honor of MATH Nursing Director, Kathy Aries RN, were outfitted in February, along with pre-op and post-op rooms. General surgery and emergency Cesarean sections will commence in June, 2020. Building of the Labor & Delivery room on Floor 2 is underway.



The construction of the new residence area on the 3rd floor is nearing completion. This benefit for staff is important for maintaining service at Hôpital de la Communaute Dame-Marienne in this remote area of Haiti. And HCDM achieved another milestone with the receipt of an x-ray machine through the generosity of the Haitian Health Foundation clinic in Jérémie -- a must for providing added treatment options in the local area.



~~~~~ Tribute to MATH Missionaries / Volunteers ~~~~~

During this time of pandemic, we have witnessed selfless acts of many. MATH would like to salute our volunteers who, over the last ten years, have furthered our mission of *Helping Haitians Heal Haitians*. On dozens of medical mission trips, US teams have worked alongside our Haitian partners and are now on the front lines with COVID-19 in their home communities and hospitals. We thank the many volunteers who have offered knowledge, skills, time and efforts on mission trips, committees, and events, and to their family members who shared them with MATH.

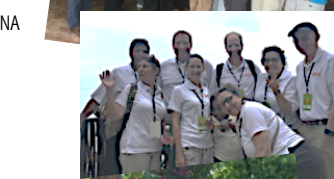
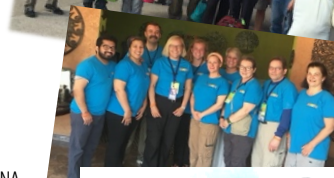
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Calendar

Events and mission trips through September 2020 are cancelled. Updates will be available through emails, MATH website and Facebook.

Support MATH through Travelers Championship



Deadline June 28, 2019 – Boost your giving power by 15% by donating to MATH at https://partnerhq.com/public/events/2020-travelers-championship-birdies-for-charity/organization_partnerships/718

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