

MATH News

Summer 2021

Issue 11

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

MATH Works

Dear Friends,

I am proud to note MATH is fulfilling its mission despite the ongoing civil strife in Haiti. Your continued support enables us to sustain this momentum as we wait for the time we can resume mission trips. Meanwhile, our Haitian partners have kept the clinics and hospitals open and, incredibly, continue to expand the medical services they provide. This is no easy feat considering the obstacles they must work around. Reading this issue, I hope you will be inspired by the many examples of your donations at work in Haiti.



L-R: Dr. Reinaldi Figueroa, Dr. Sherly Hanna Michaelle, Dr. Wilkens, and Dr. Michael R. Bourque

This spring we are so happy to have as our guests in Connecticut Dr. Sherly Pateau-Gilbert, our Port-au-Prince pediatrician, and her husband and our PaP Medical Director, Dr. Wilkens Gilbert. Dr. Pateau arrived in early April needing care for her high-risk pregnancy. Baby Hannah Michaelle, their second daughter,

was safely delivered in Hartford at the end of April by veteran mission team members, and colleagues at St. Francis Hospital, Woodland Women's Health Associates and Woodland Anesthesiology Associates. We are grateful to the many local MATH friends and associates who provided medical care and have seen to the family's comfort while they are away from home. Congratulations and "bon chans" to the Gilbert family!

Rick Thibadeau, President & Founder of MATH

On The Ground in Haiti Update

Available data shows that Haiti has been only mildly affected by COVID-19 compared to other countries in the region, with under 300 reported deaths. Medical professionals and scientists are at a loss for the reasons. Though public health experts are relieved, they remain vigilant in case of virus variants due to increased travel to Haiti.

Aside from the pandemic, civil unrest in Haiti continues and unfortunately brings collateral socio-economic issues that impact the most vulnerable citizens. We are heartened that our projects in Port-au-Prince and Dame-Marie are thriving, and our partners in Haiti continue to expand the healthcare infrastructure serving the poor in these two communities through *your* support of MATH.

Despite the pandemic and protracted civil unrest, our Haitian partners are continually moving forward with PASSION, PATIENCE, and PERSEVERANCE.

MATH is all-volunteer

95%

of each dollar received goes directly to our mission

YOUR donations to MATH sustain the momentum of this good work and giving hope through healthcare.



IN MY OWN WORDS

Jean O'Neill, RN MSN | Mission Team Volunteer



I've been fortunate to visit Haiti many times over the past 15 years. It started with medical missions to Port-au-Prince in 2005 and has extended to surgical missions to Dame-Marie since 2013.

On one of the early visits to Dame-Marie, a Haitian physician came with us, and I thought that this was great because, after all, our mission is "Helping Haitians Heal Haitians".


His name, Dr. Wilkens Gilbert, rang a bell and I realized we had met in 2005 when he was our translator on the early medical missions. I was so impressed that he had continued his medical studies and was now a surgeon.

The people of Haiti are always glad to see us, especially in the early days when medical and surgical services were only available in the areas served during the four weekly visits per year that MATH provided.


Our destination in February 2020 was not Dame-Marie as roads were not passable at that time, but Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne (HBLM) in Marlique. This trip was going to be different since only three of us were going, Anne D'Orvilliers, Dr. Valerie Rossetti, and myself, and our goal was to assist in setting up an operating room with the supplies that had been donated. The pictures I had seen of HBLM were a construction site, but when we ascended the mountain I was amazed. Transformed from a hole in the ground was a building with a waiting area, exam rooms, laboratory, pharmacy, emergency room, recovery area — a functioning clinic. Deeper into the building were two operating rooms filled with supplies that needed to be sorted and arranged.

During our stay, Dr. Wilkens introduced us to the staff — an OB/GYN, general practitioners, pediatrician, nurses, and laboratory, pharmacy and administrative personnel. A few of the nurses are looking forward to OR training and expanding their skills and capability. This most recent encounter reminded me of the movie, "Field of Dreams" and the great line, "if you build it, they will come." Dr. Wilkens did and the patients are coming.

HBLM has a mission team and staff residence floor, which is currently the home of Dr. Wilkens, his wife, Dr. Sherly Pateau, and daughter, Lilia. A sign hangs inside HBLM that reads "Bless this home and all that enter." Our small mission team was blessed to share our week with them. It's been a little over a year since I've been in Haiti. I can only imagine how the hospital and its services have grown and what work still needs to be done. I look forward to going back.



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Patient visits are returning to pre-COVID-19 numbers despite the temporary closing of the clinic in Croix-des-Bouquets to protect the safety of the primary care team in this area of political unrest. Patients requiring medical care in the area are provided transportation, as needed, to the open clinics at Delmas 60 or Marlique.

Since the opening of the HBLM "Kathy Aries" Operating Rooms in July 2020 with 2 days of surgeries per week, 27 general surgeries, 16 Cesarean section deliveries, 25 medically attended births, and 15 gynecological surgeries have been performed.



Congratulations to Dr. Wilkens and the medical and administrative teams for two significant achievements:

- 1) The Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population (MSPP) has accredited the former Clinic/Center as "Hospital", the highest designation in Haiti for an institution providing primary medical and surgical care with a practice for doctors.



- 2) Negotiating a contract with Ayiti Air Ambulance, for transport of emergency cases to and from HBLM by helicopter, a rare but invaluable service in Haiti. (This service was also invaluable to us when one of our mission team members had a medical emergency while in Dame-Marie.)

Construction at the Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne continues. Improvement of access roads, and the completion of the Labor & Delivery Room and areas for Dental and Ophthalmology departments.



Doing The MATH! (an earlier but ever relevant MATH catchphrase)

81	Life-Saving Cesarean-Section Deliveries
216	Medically Attended Births
19	Gynecological Surgeries
1,885	Obstetrical Consultations
407	Gynecological Surgeries

These astounding statistics since Jun 2020 are credited to the Maternal Health Care team – obstetricians, Dr. Adler Bonange and Dr. Jean-Louis Judson; anesthesia professionals, Dr. Esther Antoine-Dardignac and Love Génie Jean-Baptiste, CRNA; and the support of nurses, a midwife and staff of Hôpital de la Communauté Dame-Marienne.



Congratulations to Pierre Antoine and the team for being awarded a USAID grant for installation of an oxygen generator that will conduct oxygen to the OR, ER, and all patient rooms. This eliminates the current system logistics of refilling the H tanks.



One of three wells has been drilled, replenishing the water supply at the hospital, and the other two will provide water for surrounding areas in town and in the fishing village.



Welcome New BOD Members to MATH



Jerry H. Galipeau, D. Min.



Sachin R. Parekh, MD, FAAP

**WALL OF
GRATITUDE**



Ed & Kate
Cahill



Lagnese
Family Fund



PERSEVERANCE – Thank You to all MATH supporters

2021 Calendar

Events

Virtual events are under consideration.

If you have skills in this area and would like to help, please contact MATH at medicalaidtohaiti@gmail.com

Mission Trips

Resumption of trips is unknown at this time.

Prepare to go by submitting your volunteer applications at <https://medicalaidtohaiti.org/volunteers/forms/>

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