

# MATH News

Winter 2021

Issue 12

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

## UNFATHOMABLE

Dear Friends,

As I write this note, Haiti is in the throes of yet another crisis: gang violence. Our Haitian Medical Director, Dr. Wilkens Gilbert, along with his family and staff, have been forced to sequester at Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne in the hills above Port-au-Prince. His home in Croix-des-Bouquet, which had been turned into a neighborhood clinic, closed as the civil unrest and violence escalated to the point that it was no longer safe to be open. A guard hired to protect the house was recently assaulted, the house ransacked and riddled with bullet holes, and both family dogs were killed. This assault was perpetrated by the same gang of criminals that kidnapped the group of 17 missionaries in October.

Remarkably, despite living amid the terror and violence that is gripping Haiti, MATH's in-country Port-au-Prince and Dame-Marie Projects continue to be operational and provide desperately needed medical care. I give thanks for the healthcare workers we support as they persevere in an environment, we can't even fathom.

*Rick Thibadeau, President & Founder of MATH*

## On The Ground in Haiti Update

**COVID-19:** From 3 January 2020 to 2 November 2021, there have been 23,960 confirmed cases with 671 deaths reported to WHO. As of 29 October 2021, a total of 123,502 vaccine doses have been administered. (<https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/ht>)

**Earthquake:** Although the 7.2 magnitude earthquake on 14 Aug 2021 did little more than shake Port-au-Prince and points north, the south and its peninsula were affected with significant structural damage in the cities of Les Cayes and Jérémie and villages along the only road we take to Dame-Marie. Dame-Marie was spared significant damage and through the efforts of Pierre Antoine, Miss Beatrice Siméon, RN, and Association D'Entre Aide Des Dame-Mariens (AEADMA), HCDM mobilized a response team to provide medical and psycho-social care, medications, water, food, and personal hygiene items to stricken communities. In PaP, Dr. Wilkens and staff are providing follow-up care at HBLM to patients sent to trauma centers in Port-au-Prince.

### HAITIANS HELPING/ HEALING HAITIANS



**Political Unrest:** Gangs continue to pose significant threats to the already weak infrastructure. For now, MATH's focus is to provide resources to our Haitian colleagues living through this dire situation so they may continue providing medical and surgical care.



## IN MY OWN WORDS

**Jerry Galipeau, DMin | BOD Member**



I first became familiar with MATH in my capacity as the Executive Director of Mission Integration at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford. Requisitions would come across my desk for medical supplies to be used by those traveling to Haiti on the medical mission trips sponsored by MATH.

As a guy with mission at heart, I found the hospital's generosity to be in line with our core value of "Commitment to Those Who Are Poor." I thought these medical mission trips were what constituted the core of MATH's work and ministry to the people of Haiti. Then I met Dr. Mike Bourque. His simple telling of how his life and priorities changed through his encounters with the people of Haiti touched me very deeply.

I came to quickly realize the mission of MATH was not the "fly in and fly out" kind of medical mission trip; MATH's mission is about one thing: changing lives of those less fortunate, not by changing it through a medical mission trip here and there, but by equipping Haitians to change their world from within. This is why I enthusiastically said "yes" when invited to become a member of the Board of Directors of MATH.

My own life in ministry, in liturgy, liturgical music, Catholic publishing and now, Catholic Health Care, has been focused on one thing: employing Gospel values to help change the small part of the world in which God has planted me. So, my own life's mission, the mission of Trinity Health and Saint Francis Hospital, and the mission of MATH really create a wonderful consonance for me. I am honored to serve MATH in whatever ways I can as we continue to maneuver our way through this pandemic and through the seemingly endless turmoil engulfing Haiti right now.

95%

THANK  
YOU

of each dollar received  
goes directly to our mission



Sponsored by



WebsterBank

Thank you to all who donated to  
MATH through 2021 Travelers  
Championship Birdies for Charity.  
This was MATH's best year ever and  
the 15% in Bonus Bucks  
from funds raised covers the  
salary of the OB / GYN for one year!

Please remember to choose MATH  
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-4757226>



Partnership with Hôpital de la Communauté  
Dame-Marienne (HCDM)



### Hospital Renovation

Major renovations were made to the hospital with USAID funds – installation of doors and windows, masonry work, tiles, electrical upgrade, plumbing and painting.



The next phase is installation of an oxygen generator system that will replace H tanks currently used in the operating rooms, as well as becoming a source for other hospitals in the southwestern area of Haiti.

### Maternal Health Care (MHC)

During the renovation, the Maternal Health Care Team of Drs. Adler Bonange and Jean Louis Judson (OB / GYN) spent 5 weeks in training for screening and management of precancerous lesions and cervical cancer. The training was a participatory internship with the gynecologists of the IHI (Innovation Health International) involving clinical screenings and thermocoagulation of precancerous lesions, and surgical interventions for cases of gynecological cancers.

Our mission teams have seen several cases over the years where intervention was too late. This training, along with the needed materials to conduct screenings and biopsies, will provide expanded gynecological services to benefit the women in Dame-Marie and surrounding areas.



L to R: Adler Bonange, MD OBGYN, Judson Jean-Louis, MD OBGYN, Nadrige Dardignac, RN, Dr Esther Antoine Dardignac, MD Anesthesiology / veteran team member, and Vanessa Louis, RN.

Welcome to Vanessa Louis, RN, and Nadrige Dardignac, RN, who will join the HCDM MHC team as scrub and circulating nurses in the operating room. They recently completed their internship under Mrs. Elise Raymond, RN, at King's Hospital in Port-au-Prince and bring well-regarded skills to the team.



Partnership with Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne (HBLM) / Centre Médico-Chirurgical du Quartier (CMCQ)

### HBLM Ophthalmology

Phase I – COMPLETE The Ophthalmology (OPH) Department at Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne (HBLM) opened in August 2021, just prior to the earthquake and to long-awaited anticipation by local villagers. Welcome to Dr. Martine Jeune, MD OPH, and Miss Anna Nearling Emilus, certified RN OPH, are now on staff to provide services on Wednesdays.



L to R: Martine Jeune, MD, Wilkens Gilbert, MD, Anna N. Emilus, RN

Thanks to a generous donation by U.S. Visions through the efforts of Michael Derenzo, Director of Retail Operations, and Bruce Tooker, the MATH Ophthalmology Project focal point, and the rolling base support constructed by Ermson Elcine, a local welder in Haiti, a slit lamp setup now provides the comprehensive examinations for determination of eyeglass prescriptions and severity of eye conditions.



L to R: Ermson Elcine, constructing rolling cart and Martine Jeune, MD, examining patient with slit lamp.

Phase II – The Kathy Aries Operating Rooms provide an opportunity to conduct eye surgery at HBLM if the wish list of equipment and supplies can be obtained. In this direction, Paul Gaudio, MD, Eye Disease Consultants, has generously volunteered to provide his expertise and assist in this phase of the project.

### Welcome New BOD Member



Victoria L. Veltri, JD, LLM

### WALL OF GRATITUDE



Ed & Kate  
Cahill



Lagnese  
Family Fund



### 2022 Calendar

#### Events

Winter White Party, 13 Feb 2022, Salute  
Autumn's Palette, TBD  
Craft Festival & Marketplace, 12-13 Nov 2022

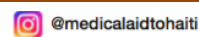
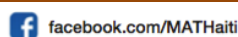
#### Mission Trips

Resumption of trips is unknown currently.  
Prepare to go by submitting your volunteer applications at  
<https://medicalaidtohaiti.org/volunteers/forms/>

### TO DONATE, VOLUNTEER, ADVOCATE OR FOLLOW US:



Medical Aid to Haiti, Inc.  
344 N. Main St, Suite 1, Marlborough, CT 06447  
To donate or for more information, please call 860-760-7009  
or visit us at <https://medicalaidtohaiti.org/>



#### MATH Board of Directors

Pierre Antoine, Michael R. Bourque MD, John Chapman, Anne D'Orvilliers, Victor Dowling, Gerald H. Galipeau DMin, Thomas H. Gorin MD, Maggie Levasseur RN, Giuliana Musilli, Sachin Parekh MD, Richard Thibadeau, Victoria L. Veltri JD LLM, Gilbert Wilkens MD