

# MATH News

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



## On-the-Ground

Dear Friends,

Another New Year arrives and, unfortunately, no improvement in the situation on-the-ground in Haiti. Thankfully, our mission of *helping Haitians heal Haitians* means that consistent, quality healthcare is being delivered under the guidance of our Haitian Medical Director, Dr. Wilkens Gilbert, for the Port-au-Prince Project, even with our inability to send US-based mission teams to Haiti. Reflecting changing circumstances, our operations in Haiti have morphed from a mobile clinic to fixed clinic locations, and the launch of Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne in 2019 with MSPP (Haiti Ministry of Public Health and Population) certification in 2021. The scope of services has expanded with dental added in 2022; remarkably, the hospital is advancing towards trauma-level status.

In another development, we are saddened to report that MATH's financial support of the Maternal Health Care program in Dame-Marie has been suspended since the retirement of Pierre Antoine, our Haitian partner for the Dame-Marie Project. It is incumbent that we vet a new management team that meets our operating and reporting requirements. Rest assured that we take our fiduciary responsibilities seriously and will not disburse funds that you've entrusted to MATH without the proper protocols.

*Rick Thibadeau, President & Founder of MATH*



## IN MY OWN WORDS

**Stuart Lieblich, DDM | Mission Team Member**

Often dentistry is not considered when thinking about mission trips, especially one that is based on a health care and an obstetric and gynecologic focus, as is MATH. But dental disease profoundly effects overall health of individuals, and dental infections can have life-threatening consequences. Painful teeth cause suffering and periodontal (gum) disease has been associated with cardiac disease and complications in pregnancy, including low birth weights of babies. One can only expect that in a country where medical care is so limited, dental care would be even less accessible.

In speaking with Dr. Bourque and others in 2017, I learned a dental clinic was functioning at the hospital in Dame-Marie. I was able to be part of their team for my first mission trip and worked directly with the hospital dentist, Claude Lundi, DMD, in his clinic. As I anticipated the clinic was a bit austere. Certainly, it was safe and complete sterilization of instruments was provided, but lighting was a desk lamp, the suction unit didn't work, and equipment was quite limited. Most dental mission trips are associated with extraction of teeth that can't be fixed and that was largely the work we did. Removing painful teeth that had troubled these folks for some time put a "smile" back on their face.

However, dentistry goes beyond just the repair of teeth. As an oral and maxillofacial surgeon and part of a facial trauma team here in the US, I also was able to treat a few patients with traumatic facial injuries. One such was a child with facial swelling caused by a vascular lesion and repair will prevent its continued growth and risk of serious spontaneous bleeding. At the airport on our return home, we also learned of a more complicated case of a child with a large jaw tumor and resulted in a collaboration with Calvary Chapel (Colorado) to operate on him here in the US (see MATH newsletter issue 6, 2018).

So, there is more to do.

*I congratulate Dr. Wilkens in the opening of the dental clinic at Hospital Bellevue-La-Montagne! His foresight at addressing this important health aspect is commendable. I look forward to the time I can return to Haiti and be part of his team.*

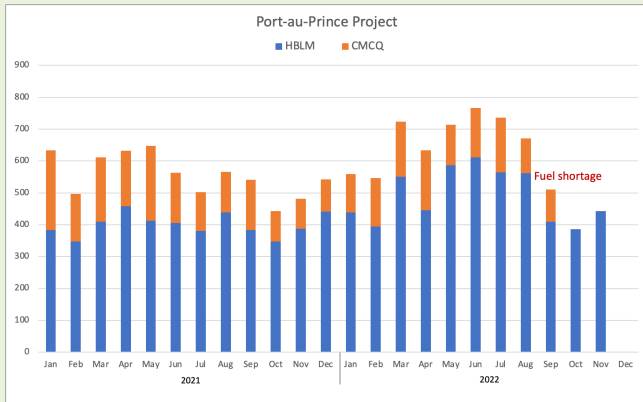




*Partnership with  
Hôpital Bellevue-La-Montagne /  
Centre Medico-Chirurgical du Quartier*



Despite the civil unrest and disruptions in fuel powering the generator during 2022, Dr. Wilkens and staff have kept the doors to the hospital and clinics open and continue to serve the community. And a new milestone was added with the start of dental services in July by (center photo L-R) Dental Assistant Yvrose Lovensky, Dentist Eugénie Bruneau DDS and Prothesis Tech Marie Carmelle Cassy.



*Autumn's Palette Recap*

This signature MATH event was back this year at The Town & County Club. The evening was filled with camaraderie of new and old friends, a farm-to-table menu created by Chef Joel, a wine and beer tasting, live and silent auctions, and the fun addition of a Mystery Punch Board. Thank you to all who made the event a success and to our speakers for their inspiring words – excerpts follow, and full videos are on the website.







*Kathy Aries, RN from Colorado*

"Hello, everyone. ... I've participated in over 31 mission trips. ... There are many parts to successful mission work – the people on the ground, doing work, the people at home, organizing, and donors, such as every one of you, who will help our important work continue in Haiti. I have seen first-hand the poverty and desperation in Haiti, and yet there are changemakers rising, such as Dr. Wilkens, who singlehandedly has built this hospital in one of the most underserved areas in the world. The Haitian people are some of the most resilient and resourceful people, they just need more resources. I want to thank you for your donations tonight. All monies go directly to the Haitians Healing Haitians. Together we are saving lives. This reminds me of the adage, "If you save one life, you save the world." Please help us save the world."



*Wilkens Gilbert, MD from Haiti*

"... We are honored to be able to speak at tonight's event and we feel infinitely proud and grateful to MATH who has brought together all these beautiful people to talk about the cause and above all to encourage you to continue to act in favor of Haiti.

As I speak to you, the right to life, the right to education and the right to health are seriously threatened in my country. ...As for the right to health, ...we are close to a health catastrophe with the closure or reduction ... of the country's hospitals because of the unavailability of fuel to produce the energy necessary for their operation and for the movement of health personnel and patients. All this drama is happening in a country which normally has 4 health professionals per 10,000 inhabitants. ...The picture I have just painted for you is dark and disturbing. However, I want to remind you that this evening you have come together to celebrate success stories ...

Our success story with MATH can be summed up in a few words: love and support on the one hand and determination and seriousness on the other. ... We are very grateful for the unfailing support that MATH brings us and this with the greatest respect for our dignity. Only true and pure love can explain the continuity and persistence of such support despite the discouraging situations ... MATH has always been at the side of the Haitian people for more than a decade ...

Our determination to overcome the barriers of inaccessibility motivated the implementation of our project to build a community hospital ... and from there we launched primary care activities ... in the summer of 2019. Progress has been maintained and 4 years later, we are ... operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with various services such as: obstetrics-gynecology, pediatrics, general medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, dental care. All this in an area where the populations were devoid of everything ... So, you, dear donors, and supporters ... you can be proud to help make the world a better place, to relieve the suffering of the sick and to restore hope to the poor. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you and we urge you to continue to support Medical Aid to Haiti and that on our side we renew our firm commitment to ensure the efficiency and durability of your support. Thank you, very much and good evening, to you all!"



*Michael R. Bourque, MD*

"Good evening, everyone. ...Normally, missionaries like myself love to tell stories, ... It's been three years since I have physically been to Haiti and its absence in my life has left me feeling incomplete. ... Haiti has always had its dragons. Poverty, malnutrition, disease, lack of resources and being in the bull's eye of Mother ... And we, MATH, and the people we serve, had adjusted to this as best we all could. But now there is a much bigger and the most dangerous dragon of all, and it is human. Gangs ...these wild dragons now have grown out of everyone's control. They discovered they no longer needed politicians or the rule of law. .... Fear, injury, death is everywhere. ...But there is a positive side. ... For if you live and work in Haiti, hope for a better future is at your core. Hope costs nothing. It is available to everyone, and it can sustain you when nothing else seems to work there. And why is that?"

There's a saying that if we didn't have dragons, we wouldn't have heroes. And I think that is true. Today heroes seem like they all have to be Marvel characters. ...But for me. ...Dr. Wilkens and his wife, Dr. Sherly ... are heroes due to their decision to stay and help their people. They are putting their lives on the line for their belief that Haiti still has a chance to be something better. ... Quiet, unassuming, but with the strength and conviction of a giant. I have traveled with him, sweat with him, laughed, and cried with him. And I have stood on the opposite side of an OR table and watched him save lives. I call him family and one of my best friends.

I googled this week what it is that makes a friend a "bestie", a BFF. And the best answer I found was someone who comes when everyone else leaves. And who stays when no one else will. So, I ask you all now, to recommit yourself as I have personally done to the cause of all the Dr. Wilkens and Dr. Sherly's out there. We sit here tonight in comfort and abundance with so many blessings. But that is alright as long as we stand with them in spirit and use our donations to help them stand in the street of their choice with the lives of their townspeople and country at stake. ...Thank you"

**Do you have ~1.5 hours a month to spare?  
Volunteers are needed for Finance, Marketing and Development**

**95%**

of each dollar received goes directly to our mission

**YOUR donations to MATH sustain the momentum of this good work and gives hope through healthcare**



In the US, volunteers Kathy Messier Rph, Cathy Street RN, Maggie Levasseur RN, Jean O'Neill RN, and Barbara Bourque RN recently prepared surgical packs from donated items for shipment in barrels to HBLM.



Recent Deliveries at HBLM – twins (left) and reserve fuel tanks



**Boost your giving power by 15%**

[https://partnerhq.com/public/events/2023-travelers-championship-birdies-for-charity/organization\\_partnerships/3203](https://partnerhq.com/public/events/2023-travelers-championship-birdies-for-charity/organization_partnerships/3203)



*Amazon is stopping this program on Feb 20, 2023*

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS PROGRAM**

**WALL OF GRATITUDE**



Ed & Kate Cahill



Lagnese Family Fund



**2023 Calendar**

**Events**

Winter White Party, Sunday, 12 Feb 2023  
Craft Festival & Marketplace, 09 – 10 Nov 2023  
Fall Event - TBD

**Mission Trips**

Resumption of trips is unknown currently.  
Prepare to go by submitting your volunteer application 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/>

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