



A quarterly newsletter for Friends for Health in Haiti, by founder and executive director, Catherine E. Wolf, MD MPH

### Our Mission

The mission of Friends for Health in Haiti, Inc. is to improve the health status of the people of Haiti through high-quality health care provided in a caring, compassionate and respectful manner, as a means of demonstrating God's love in this world and as a reflection of our faith in Jesus Christ.

### Friends for Health in Haiti is on the web!

- Regular updates on our blog.
- Photo gallery filled with photos of clinic site, patients, and life in Haiti.
- Donate online!

[FriendsForHealthInHaiti.org](http://FriendsForHealthInHaiti.org)

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## BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WAIT...AND WAIT...

Funds for a new **Toyota Land Cruiser jeep/ambulance** were raised and in our hands back in September 2009, at which time we placed an order for the vehicle with the Toyota dealership in Port-au-Prince. Since this model of vehicle is the one used by most of the major non-profit organizations in the country, the dealership cannot keep them in stock and has to order them in batches directly from Japan. We were told to expect it to be delivered in January 2010. Well, it was delivered in January, but to Santo Domingo, since the wharf in Port-au-Prince was damaged by the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake. It took until the end of February for the vehicle to arrive in Port-au-Prince, where it was placed under control of the Haitian Customs Department.



Thus began the long saga known as "**customs clearance**" – a process all too well known to those of us who live and work in Haiti, and now increasingly familiar to all the new organizations that have come to Haiti to assist after the earthquake. After months of filling out papers, hiring drivers to take them to the right government buildings, pleading the services of friends in Port-au-Prince and hiring brokers to move the paperwork in the right direction, the jeep was finally cleared from customs and licensed in Port-au-Prince August 10<sup>th</sup>. Cherlie and I went to Port-au-Prince to pick it up and we are pleased to announce that it is safely in our hands in Jérémie.



Cherlie Severe RN with grateful patients on first day jeep was taken to the clinic. Signs read Mèsi (Creole), Merci (French) and Thank You (English).

It will be used to transport staff and ill patients to and from our clinic in Gatineau, transport ill patients down to the general hospital in Jérémie and transport medical staff to mobile clinics in other rural areas. **Much thanks** to all those who contributed to its purchase, especially the F.I.S.H. Foundation (<http://fishfoundationinc.org>), and those who prayed it through the customs process.

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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Friends for Health in Haiti has as its mission to improve the health of the people of Haiti. One of the factors significantly affecting one's health is his or her economic status. The rural population in Haiti, which is the population FHH serves, are among the poorest of the poor, living as **subsistence farmers** on small plots of barely arable land. These rural farmers live a daily life of survival, trying to find enough to feed themselves and their families, find wood to cook with and water to use for their daily household chores and cooking. Their already over-burdened lives became strained even further by the influx of relatives from Port-au-Prince who were displaced after the earthquake.

As a means of helping them meet these increased food needs, FHH gave funds to families in 15 nearby communities, with which they bought yam plants and bean seeds to plant during the spring planting season. This



Gemi Baptiste

marked the second time that FHH has contributed seeds to communities as a means of increasing their agricultural productivity. The communities, in turn, are asked to organize a Management Committee that oversees distribution of the seeds and determines how much each farmer is asked to "pay back" at harvest time, in order to have another batch of seeds to donate to another group of farmers. It's this **"recycling" philosophy** that we are trying to teach the communities, because it allows them to have an ongoing source of seeds or plants to give to those most in need each planting season.

We recently hired a part-time employee to help us get to know the communities better and to help supervise seed projects. His name is **Gemi Baptiste** and he is from a community down the mountain from Gattineau. We're excited to have Gemi working with us and look forward to his forthcoming reports.

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## HOSA BACKPACKS HAVE ARRIVED!

The Wisconsin chapter of **Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA)** decided last year to adopt Friends for Health in Haiti as their service project for all HOSA chapters in the state of Wisconsin. We asked that they consider making up backpacks for Haitian school children with school supplies, hygiene supplies, tennis shoes and socks and they accepted the challenge. At their year-end banquet in the Wisconsin Dells on April 26, 2010, HOSA presented FHH with 299 backpacks, replete with the requested supplies, plus funds to pay for shipping of the backpacks and school health exams for the students.

The backpacks were taken in a rental truck to NY where they were put in a shipping container to Port-au-Prince, Haiti. They arrived there in July and were taken in a truck out to Jérémie, where they await distribution. At the start of the school year in October they will be distributed to students in three primary schools in the area around the clinic site. Much thanks to HOSA students, families and advisors for this wonderful gift to needy rural children.

# HOPE FOR HAITI, 2010

The 2nd Annual **"Hope for Haiti"** banquet was held April 17, 2010 at the Wisconsin Club in downtown Milwaukee. Two hundred and fifty guests attended the affair, which was held to raise money for the ongoing work of Friends for Health in Haiti.

## ***Here are some highlights from the benefit:***

Guest speakers included **Lanise Antoine Shelley**, an actress with the Milwaukee Repertory Theater who was born in Haiti and raised in an orphanage in Port-au-Prince until she was adopted at an early age by an American couple working with an aid organization. Ms. Shelley spoke about her early life in Haiti, her return as an adult to connect with her birth family and her present efforts to contribute to the betterment of life in her native land.

FHH Executive Director Dr. Katie Wolf spoke on the theme of **"I Have a Dream"**, relating stories of heartbreak and survival after the January earthquake in Port-au-Prince, and the dream of FHH to improve the health and lives of those they serve in the Jérémie area.

A silent auction was held and Haitian crafts, coffee and vanilla were sold in a "Haitian Market".

Radio and TV personality Steve "The Homer" True presided over a live auction which included such items as a genuine ancient Greek silver coin and condo stays in Myrtle Beach, Scottsdale and Puerto Vallarta.

**If you live near the Milwaukee area, join us for our Third Annual "Hope for Haiti" event on April 16, 2011.**



Board V.P. Dr. Gregory Von Roenn  
and Executive Director Dr. Katie Wolf



Event Committee member Carla Von Roenn, Board Member Dr. Timothy Bedient, and Guest Speaker Lanise Antoine Shelley (left) Jeanine Heuer and Board President Dr. Dale Heuer (right)

# EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

It's been seven months since the January 2010 earthquake in Port-au-Prince and there are many questions being raised regarding the use of funds given to organizations to help earthquake victims and their families. Shortly after we returned to Jérémie following our relief work in Port-au-Prince, we surveyed our clinic population and found that **75% of our patients had family members from Port-au-Prince living with them.** When we asked how they were managing, they shrugged their shoulders and said "We're doing what we have to do to survive." Since Jérémie was not in the immediate area affected by the earthquake, they received very little attention or services from the government and donor organizations. But, they had real needs that required some intervention. So, we at Friends for Health in Haiti felt that the best way we could help the people in the communities around our clinic site was to do the following:

- Increase patient consultations from two to three times per week
- Reduce all of our medication prices
- Give money to the communities for planting seeds in the spring planting season
- Continue our plans for construction of a permanent clinic building that will eventually provide employment to many people in the area



Committee members receive funds for seed project.

We're happy to report that these strategies have, indeed, **made a difference.** Hundreds of people have been treated in the clinic and all have been appreciative of the reduced medication costs. Fifteen communities received money for seeds and have planted a variety of beans, corn and yams. And, we are progressing with our plans to begin construction soon on the clinic. We appreciate your continued prayers for us as we work to meet the physical, spiritual and economic needs of these rural Haitian communities.

## NOTES FROM THE HOME OFFICE

If you would like to receive our **newsletters via email**, please let us know by signing up on our website or sending us an email at **[friendsforhealth@gmail.com](mailto:friendsforhealth@gmail.com)**

Find us on **Facebook!** Friends for Health in Haiti has a page on Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). Look for us there, "Like" us, and connect with us and other supporters. It's the quickest way to find the latest in photos, news and announcements.



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