



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.

### Construction updates

Regular construction updates can be found on our blog:

<http://friendsforhealthinhaiti.wordpress.com/>

### Visit our website

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

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## CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGES

*Many of you have likely been following the blogs on our website and have been keeping track of our clinic construction project. We have been blessed to have Engineer Nick Matthews with us this past year, helping to supervise the project and help with quality assurance and financial issues. He has been writing most of the construction update blogs, but I thought it would be good to hear a little more from him regarding his time down here in Haiti with us. Here’s what he has to say:*

Let me attempt to briefly reflect on a year that cannot be summed up easily.

First, I’ll tell you a bit about myself and how I came to be in Haiti. I grew up in Brookfield, Wisconsin, and went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I received a B.S. in Civil Engineering. Upon graduating, I did a 10-month internship in India with Engineering Ministries International – coincidentally, the same organization that designed the FHH clinic. In April of 2011, I found myself looking for a job, and it was then that I received “the call”. It was from a woman (Dr. Wolf) who said she was a doctor in Haiti and was building a new clinic, and we discussed the idea of me coming down to help oversee construction. Just a few weeks later, I came to Jérémie for a brief visit, and last September I came down here to work as construction project manager for a year.

One thing I learned quickly about life in Haiti: it’s hard just to live here. Every day is full of challenges. Challenges like the constant – and sometimes actualized – threat of theft posed by the neighbors, or the suffocating heat



Nick, supervising

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# HEALING THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS THE BODY

In the past 5 years since the Gattineau Health Center has been functioning, nothing has made us more grateful than the fact that our patients see the clinic as a place where the Lord is at work, using our hands to accomplish his healing in our patients' lives. We look forward to the day when our new clinic will be completed, so we can significantly expand our programs and services to the people in our area. One of the areas we look forward to expanding is our spiritual ministry and outreach. We are going to hire a local pastor as a clinic chaplain, who will be able to minister to the spiritual needs of our patients as well as our staff. He/she will share the Gospel message with patients as they await consultation and pray with patients in need, especially those who have serious or terminal illnesses. The chaplain will also hold evangelistic, educational and discipleship programs for those in the nearby area and will refer patients to nearby churches where they can receive further Biblical instruction, participate in worship and grow spiritually.

We want our clinic to be known, not just for the excellence of our care, but for the compassion with which the care is delivered. We want it to be seen as a safe haven for those who live in the darkness and fear of their Voudou beliefs, and a place where they can vanquish the forces of darkness and live in the light of Jesus Christ.

We encourage our supporters to pray for the spiritual ministry of our clinic. Although Haiti is relatively well evangelized, its people are very much in need of discipleship. What better way to show people how to live a Christian lifestyle than to model it for them? That's what Cherlie and I and our staff try to do and we pray every day for wisdom as we do it.

## LAWN-MOWING, HAITIAN-STYLE

One day while I was working in the clinic, I noticed a horse grazing in the yard. That would ordinarily not be a notable event, but I was surprised to see that he was in the yard for the entire day. Usually, when a patient comes to the clinic on a horse or mule or donkey, they leave them tied up in the yard and then ride them home. So, to see one there in the afternoon, after all the patients had left, was definitely unusual. I was even more surprised to see the same horse in the yard the next day. This was just too much for my sense of curiosity, so I asked Genezier, our yard helper about it. "Is that your horse in the yard?" I asked. "Oh no," he said.



Haitian Lawnmower

"I rented him from someone else." "Rented him?" I asked. "For what?" "Well, the grass was getting a little long, so I rented him to cut the grass," he said. He probably also thought to himself "What planet is this lady on that she doesn't know a good lawnmower when she sees one?!"

# CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

in July, or the frequent interruptions to the water supply or electricity. Challenges like construction delays, sometimes three months long, because of some ambiguous political situation; or because the dump truck that is used for getting materials to the construction site is broken down and the part it needs is difficult to find. Granted, the struggles faced by an American like me working in Haiti pale in comparison to the daily struggles of an average Haitian – trying to find consistent work, trying to feed a family, trying to maintain good health. Still, such difficulties can take their toll on a person and wear them down.

In experiencing daily life here, I have gained a new respect for those who have made lifetime commitments to serve in a place like Haiti. They have no end date in mind, when they will be able to leave the daily struggles of life in Haiti and live relatively peaceful lives in the U.S. They have committed to stay, through thick and thin, to embody the Gospel to the poorest of the poor, and to take up the slow, arduous task of community development.

If I've learned anything this year, it's that we, as Christians, need challenges such as these, not only because of the redemptive qualities they produce in us, but also because they are a reminder of the many external factors outside of our control, causing us to rely instead on God's sovereign control. In addition, accomplishments would not be nearly as sweet without the obstacles. These past two months, in which clinic construction has progressed rapidly, have been far more meaningful in light of our previous struggles than if things had been this smooth all along. They serve as a testament to God's faithfulness in bringing to fruition the work that He started many months ago. I am so grateful I have been able to take part in this journey, challenges and all.

## WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS!

The clinic construction involves two buildings: the main clinic building that will house patient care rooms, offices, procedure room, etc. with a second building for pharmacy, laboratory and radiology. Since the building site is on a slope, with the pharmacy building being constructed further down the slope, the pharmacy foundation is high off the ground, allowing for the creation of storage areas at the back side of the building. Here are the latest construction photos:



Front of Clinic Building



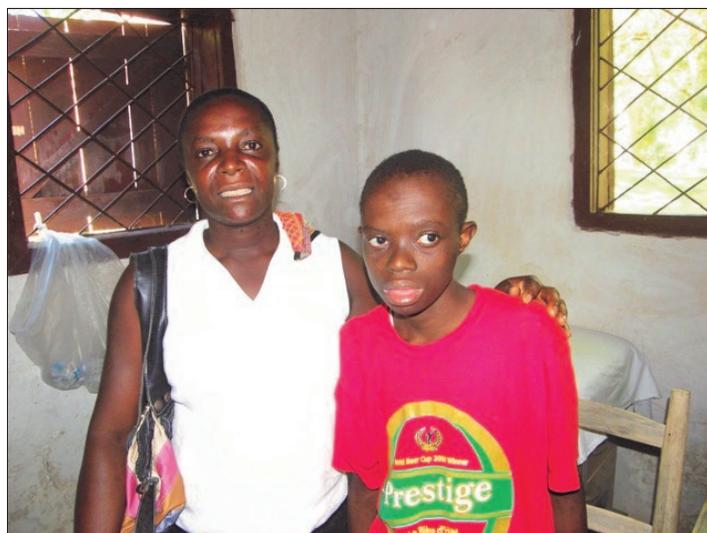
Pharmacy Foundation

## A NEW TYPE OF CAR PHONE

One of the most enjoyable aspects of seeing patients in an outpatient clinic is getting to know them and their families. Every once in a while, a patient comes in and just makes everyone laugh. Fritzner Pierre is one such patient. Fritzner is 32 years old, weighs 70 pounds and has Down's syndrome. He's been coming to the clinic for several months, always accompanied by his older sister. She confirmed the fact that he was severely developmentally delayed. He didn't walk until the age of 8 and just recently has been talking more fluently. On his first visit to us, he didn't talk very much, but was pleasant and cooperative. Before he left, I gave him a little toy car, thinking he might like to play with it at home. Before he and his sister left that day, Cherie said to me, "Do you realize that you gave Fritzner a cell phone, not a toy car?" I couldn't believe what I just heard. "I did what?" I asked incredulously. "Fritzner is talking with his friend Kenken on the car-phone," she said, laughing. I thought this was too funny, so I went out into the waiting area to see for myself. There was Fritzner sitting on the bench with his sister, holding the toy car up to his ear. "Kenken," he said urgently. "Kenken." Of course, there was no Kenken on the other end, but Fritzner was convinced the car was a phone. In fact, the next time he came to the clinic and I asked him where his phone was, he dug the car out of his pocket and started talking to Kenken again. We love Fritzner and his sister for the joy they bring to us all!



Fritzner wearing his mother's hat



Fritzner and his sister



### SAVE THE DATE!

The 5th Annual Hope for Haiti Banquet in WI is Saturday, April 13, 2013. Details coming soon!

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