



FRIENDS FOR HEALTH HEADLINES

SPRING, 2013

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.

5th Annual

Hope for Haiti Banquet

Saturday, April 13, 2013
Milwaukee, WI

Visit our website for more details

FriendsForHealthInHaiti.org

INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE GATINEAU HEALTH CENTER IS A HUGE SUCCESS!

On February 23, 2013, an Inauguration Ceremony was held to publicly celebrate the completion of construction of the Gatineau Health Center (Centre de Sante de Gatineau). It was a bright, sunny day and over three hundred people attended the ceremony. Visitors included FHH board members Timothy Bedient, George Jelich and Neal Meitler, friends Ralph Minor, Maura Myles, Lisa and Isabelle Jergens, Megan Caley and Joyce Throness, business men and women from Jérémie, local politicians and elected officials and hundreds of our most faithful patients.

The ceremony itself was the culmination of construction efforts by many people, both in Haiti and the US. Although there are still finishing touches needed in the building before it can be fully functional, the fact that it was standing tall with iron doors in place, ceramic tile on the floor and fresh paint on the walls was a huge cause for celebration and thanksgiving. The ceremony was a chance for us to thank those who helped us accomplish our task of constructing a permanent outpatient clinic building, to thank the Lord for protection, guidance and direction in the construction process and to dedicate the building and its use to the Lord's service for the sick, poor and most vulnerable in Haiti.

Concepcia Pamphile, the Assistant Medical Director of the Haitian government hospital in Jérémie, Hopital Saint Antoine, was the Master of Ceremonies. She not only welcomed everyone and introduced each speaker, she also offered words of encouragement and thanksgiving of her own. Pastor Felix Leconte Belace, the pastor of a local Protestant church



Front of clinic, decorated for the inauguration

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INAUGURATION, CONTINUED...

near the clinic, gave the invocation after which a choral group from his church sang a worship song. The children's "brigade" group from his church provided assistance to the crowd and gave a marching show at the conclusion of the program. Two local community members gave personal accounts of the importance of the clinic to them, as they related stories about their own experiences as patients with us. Local community members danced in traditional country dresses and brought gifts of fruits and baskets that they laid at the entrance to the clinic. At the conclusion of the ceremony, as group of school girls from a local Catholic school danced to traditional Haitian music.

Cherlie Severe gave an impassioned speech that was a testimony to the Lord's guidance and direction in our efforts to provide quality health care in an extremely underserved area of the country. She cited the obstacles that we had faced in the construction process, but shared examples of the powerful provision of the Lord in overcoming the obstacles and accomplishing the task at hand.

I presented some of the history of Friends for Health in Haiti and the process by which construction of the clinic had occurred. I also thanked those who helped us achieve our goals, including the construction workers, engineers, local business owners, Haitian Department of Public Health, board of FHH and patients who prayed the clinic to completion. It was a joy to have so many of our patients present and to feel their joy and contentment, realizing that their dreams and prayers were truly being answered with this wonderful, new clinic building.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, AND ALL OF IT TO DRINK!

One of the things we typically take for granted in the US is running water in our homes and businesses. But, in Haiti, we often either have to do without or we have to provide our own water supply. That was certainly the case with our new clinic in Gatineau. There is a creek running through our clinic site, but the water isn't clean, since people use it for washing clothes and bathing and they often bring livestock down to the water to drink. There is a capped natural spring up the mountain from us and the government put in a pipeline to bring water down from the spring onto our site. But in dry season, the water level is low, so they shut off our pipes and we're left without water! So, we decided that we needed to have a source of water that we could control and that would give us a constant supply of clean water. That meant finding someone to drill a well for us – not an easy task in the mountains outside Jérémie!

We were fortunate to make contact with Haiti Mission, Inc., a non-profit organization that works in our area and that has drilling equipment in Jérémie. In February, the drilling team came to our clinic site, set up their drilling rig and within four days had struck water at 55 feet! They drilled on down to 150 feet, in order to be sure that we would have a good flow of water from the well, placed PVC pipes and capped it off. Once we install a solar water pump, we'll be able to pump water from the well up to a concrete reservoir on the side of the mountain and have the water fed by gravity into the clinic buildings, where it will be treated with UV filters before going into the faucets. We'll be able to drink water from the tap without fear of becoming ill or having our patients get ill. What a wonderful blessing! Thank you, Haiti Mission!



ONE OF OUR FAITHFUL

Liliane Rene first came to our clinic in 2008. She was 63 years old at the time and was ill with diabetes and high blood pressure. Her vision was poor and got worse over the next few years, making it difficult for her to walk to clinic. She usually sent a young child to the clinic early in the morning, before dawn, to save her a seat, and she walked down from her home later in the morning after the sun was up and she could see. She was very excited to see the construction progress this past year, telling us on each visit that she was praying for us in our efforts. "Don't be discouraged", she would say. "The Lord has great things planned for this clinic." She told a friend of hers that her dream was to see the new clinic built and functioning.



Liliane Rene

Liliane was one of the hundreds of patients who we invited to the Inauguration Ceremony in February. She was beaming that day, happy and contented to see that the Lord had answered her prayers. We were shocked and saddened to learn that just two days after the ceremony, Liliane collapsed as she went down to the local spring to get water. Although neighbors came to her assistance immediately, she had already passed away, leaving this life and joining her Maker. We lost one of our most faithful patients and we'll miss her and her words of encouragement.

AND THEN THERE WERE...VISITORS!

Cherlie and I enjoy having visitors come to Haiti to help us out and we appreciate the huge amount of effort and expense that these visits entail. We had a record 79 visitors in 2012, including 7 teams, and we've already had 35 visitors in 2013. A team of 11 from the New Brunswick Presbytery in New Jersey came down in January to help paint the new clinic building. All but one had been here last year and two of the team members were on their fourth visit! Since the paint that we had sent down to paint the clinic was held up in the Haitian Customs Department, the team painted the whole clinic with pure white primer paint, making it bright and beautiful for the Inauguration Ceremony. They also laboriously painted the Haitian-made pine inside doors for the clinic rooms with oil-based paint. Here are some of the team members showing off their work:



VISITORS, CONTINUED...

Elmbrook Church in Waukesha, WI has sent several short-term teams down here to help us in the past two years. The most recent team was composed of Marc Schulz, Jeff Hurst and Jeff DeVillers. They did a great job installing door frames and doors on the rooms inside the clinic. They and engineer Nick Matthews spent most of their nights up at the clinic site, sleeping on cots and cooking over a small camp stove. The nights were cool, stars were impressive and fellowship was sweet (especially with the women absent!). Go guys!

Isabelle Jergens is 8 years old and she made the trip down here for our Inauguration Ceremony with her mother Lisa. They were here to represent Eastbrook Church in Milwaukee, one of our faithful supporting churches. When they got home, Lisa sat down with Isabelle and asked her some questions about the trip. Here are excerpts from their conversation:



Cooking over camp stove

Q: What did you think Haiti would be like?

A: I thought Haiti was going to be like home but it turned out to be more beautiful than I could imagine! The people were very kind to me. Every time they saw me they smiled.

Q: What did you like best about the inauguration?

A: The celebration was very fun and I LOVED the dancing!

Q: What did you like about getting ready for the celebration?

A: I was happy that I could help set up the new clinic by sweeping the floors and mopping. I also painted a trash can and helped hand out cookies to the Haitians. The new building is SO much bigger than the old building and is cleaner and has more light.

Q: What do you remember about the day we went with Katie and Cherlie to the clinic to see patients?

A: There sure were a lot of patients the day we went to the clinic. I sat outside and played with the kids waiting with their families. We read coloring books and they seemed really interested. I also liked handing out little toys to the kids too. I told them that I hoped they would feel better soon and God bless you.



Isabelle and friends at the clinic

Q: What do you think about Cherlie?

A: I really like Cherlie and she likes me too! She is an amazing woman. When she talks she uses a lot of expression. I think that's because she wants to make her people hear what she is saying about Jesus. They are so lucky she cares about them.

Q: What about Katie?

A: I think that Katie's work is interesting and I like that she wants to help the people that God loves. She makes them feel well. I think that makes God happy.

Q: Any last thoughts about your trip to Haiti?

A: When you say something is beautiful... you can't explain Haiti with just that. You just need to add more than beautiful but that's the only word I can think of. The people, the land...all of it.

MORE INAUGURATION PHOTOS...



View of the visitors



Dr. Katie Wolf at the podium



Speakers in front of the stage



Schoolgirls dancing



Audience



Cherlie thanking visitors



Dr. Wolf and Concepia Pamphile, Master of Ceremonies



Lisa and Isabelle Jergens



Refreshment tables



Giving refreshments to attendees



Church brigade exiting



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