



**SANTE TOTAL**

*Healthcare for Haiti's Poor*

**Summer 2015**

**Haitian First Impressions**

By: Ken Schoendorf, MD

It was a bit after midnight (or possibly 1 AM. The official time at the Port-au-Prince airport was an hour earlier than that sent to our phones; there seems to be disagreement about whether Haiti adopted Daylight Savings Time this year). We sashayed across the slick muddy field, crashed through some shrubbery, went four off the floor over a berm, and immediately upon re-finding the washed out road slid hard left to avoid the fallen electrical cables and pole that occasioned the detour in the first place. Us

truck inhabitants let out an exultant whoop. Berteau - who steered us through the mire - managed a sly grin. We were back in business.



That initial trip from airport to Jacsonville was a harbinger, a positive one, of our week. Any apparent obstacle would be overcome or, if need be, worked around. Motto, courtesy of Dr. Barbara - "New Plan".

Three intersecting and overlapping groups of people made that possible. There were us volunteers. Though a varied group, most of who just met for the first time, we coalesced into a fairly efficient, supportive, and fun team, providing the best care possible. There were Gaby and everyone associated with the Mission House, running themselves ragged anticipating our needs and those of the patients. Finally, the patients, living with virtually no infrastructure, scanty resources, and no reserves (though gorgeous scenery), working with us to assure our limited resources could make the most impact.

I've worked in various "alternative" settings (i.e., not the traditional US medical system) over the years. The combination of environment and people in Haiti, but mostly the people, made this probably the most satisfying trip I've been on. I plan on returning next year, if all y'all will have me, and hope to be joined by some old friends from this trip along with new ones not yet known.

**Summary of Jan/May Medical Trips**

By Barbara Weis, MD, MPH & TM

We completed our 23<sup>rd</sup> trip to Haiti in January, and our 24<sup>th</sup> in May. A great big thank you to all the volunteers who made these trips happen! In January, we had our largest trip ever. We



accomplished a tremendous amount with all that help, seeing 650 patients. The trip in May was smaller, with 14 volunteers. Despite the smaller size, we saw 300 adults, and examined all 250 school kids. During both trips, we treated several very sick people, transporting them to the teaching hospital in Mirebelais or the local hospital in Pignon. Sometimes we had to make the local transport by motorcycle!

**Good news:** it finally started to rain in April.

**Bad news:** it rained so hard that the trip to Jacsonville in May was very difficult. The rivers we normally ford were too high, there was mud everywhere, and the drive was tough. See Ken's story for more details! Special thanks to our incredible drivers, Berteau and Moussanto, and the team for enduring a grueling trip to Jacsonville! We also transported 8 extra 50 pound suitcases of school supplies!

The political instability and severe drought have taken their toll on the health of the people who came to clinic in January and May. It was especially disheartening to see more people than usual who didn't have enough food or water. We not only dispensed medications, but gave some families seed money to start household gardens or small businesses. Some additional things we accomplished in January and May:

-Complete inventory of medications and supplies before and after the trip, with transport of expired medications back to the states for proper disposal.

-Transport of 2-3 suitcases per trip of empty medication bottles for recycling in the states.

This is particularly important because there is no system for trash disposal there. Trash is burned, but things that cannot be burned just pile up.

-Organization and consolidation of medical records

Despite our many successes, it is always difficult to see so many patients go untreated because therapy isn't available for them. In January, we saw a 5-month old with hydrocephalus, a condition where the flow of spinal fluid through the brain is blocked. In the U.S., there are shunts available to treat this, and the children are often completely normal, but in Haiti, the head just continues to expand until the brain is compressed and the baby dies. We referred the baby to the teaching hospital, but they sent her on to another hospital in Port au Prince, where she was told that there was no one to treat her baby. We also lost a very sick baby we transported to the Pignon hospital in May with severe anemia and dehydration. We continue to see advanced pneumonias, cancers, strokes and heart disease, which we do our best to treat or refer. All of this would not be possible without your help!



We continued to work with a local Haitian doctor and Sandra, a Haitian woman who is now providing massages and treatment for pain relief, as well as ongoing blood

pressure monitoring.

In May, we also worked with an organization that is supporting several orphanages in Pignon. They contacted us about a newly orphaned 3 week old baby whose Aunt was trying to nurse her, but her milk supply wasn't enough to sustain the baby. We were able to visit the orphanage, give them some formula, and connect them with another orphanage that provides formula to babies whose mothers have died. We have great hopes that the baby will make it...



Finally, thanks to the Haitian staff who worked tirelessly to support us during the trips! Gaby was everywhere organizing and translating, his wife and family cooked delicious food for us every day, and Berteau ran constant transport to and from the airport, hospital, etc. Jose, Maisson, Isaac, and many other translators worked hard to help us treat our patients. During our off-time we took advantage of the usual sightseeing in Jacsonville – shopping in the market, catching a soccer game and scavenging for mangoes. The experience was rewarding enough that many will be coming back for more!



In the May trip, we had the opportunity to hear Jacsonville's children's choir.



Here, Nadia shows off our new eye exam charts.

### **FUTURE MEDICAL TEAM DATES**

**September 24 - October 1, 2016**

**January 21-28, 2017**

If you are interested in signing up please contact Alison Smith ([Alison.annette.smith@gmail.com](mailto:Alison.annette.smith@gmail.com)) or Heather Morgan in regards to the trips, more information will be available as dates come closer.

### **Funds needed for Sante Total**

Please consider donating to Sante Total. We are running very low on funds which will make it difficult for us to continue to support our projects in Jacsonville. Donations can be made through [www.santetotal.org](http://www.santetotal.org) or by sending a check to 1511 Dufossat St. New Orleans, LA 70115. All donations are tax deductible.



One of our translators, Deriza, with her daughter and Dr. Barbara Weis.

### **Guirlande**

In January, we met a young woman, Guirlande, who was 23 in 2010. Her left leg was crushed during the earthquake, and she had to have several amputations. Each time, her wound became infected, so she ended up having to have her entire femur removed, making it extremely difficult to fit her for a prosthesis. We contacted some groups who work in Haiti, and sent her to the Albert Schweitzer Hospital to be evaluated. We discovered in April, though, that all their supplies had been stuck in customs since December. With the help of the prosthesis group, we purchased and transported a hip joint for her in our carry-on in May! I was kind of surprised security didn't ask about it...Guirlande was fitted for her prosthesis, and has an appointment next week to start gait training!

### **Helping Babies Breathe**

*A program developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Intervention in Pignon being led by Janie Ginsburg, RN*

We met with the administration, physicians and nurse midwife at the local hospital in Pignon to explore the possibility of bringing a program

called "Helping Babies Breathe" to the local midwives. This is a program developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics to train midwives in neonatal resuscitation. Many thanks to Janie, the nurse who is organizing the project as part of her Masters' thesis for her MPH. We plan to have our first local training for the staff and local midwives in September so stay tuned!

This program is looking to recruit several medical students to be involved in an inaugural project. The international course, "Helping Babies Breathe"

<http://www.helpingbabiesbreathe.org/> is designed specifically for resource poor areas to provide neonatal resuscitation skills. We will be teaching the course to local healthcare providers in rural Haiti. Your role as medical students will include becoming trained in the course and how to instruct it to local healthcare providers. You will be expected to travel with the medical team to Haiti on **Sept 24-Oct 1, 2016 or Jan 7-14, 2017**. You will work closely with several pediatric attendings and residents. Some of the days you will attend the instructional sessions, and the remainder of the days you will be working in the Sante Total clinic with the medical team. If you are interested, please email [asmith7@tulane.edu](mailto:asmith7@tulane.edu). No language skills required, but you are expected to come up with funding to help support your travel costs.

### **Sante Total Wishlist**

**Purchase important medical supplies to support Haitian clinic!**

Our wish list can be found here:

[http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/giftlist/LM-FZE20HRC2L/ref=topnav\\_lists\\_2](http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/giftlist/LM-FZE20HRC2L/ref=topnav_lists_2)



### **Link to merchandise:**

[http://www.cafepress.com/santetotal?awc=4102\\_1449203914\\_18e89914d5d5cd3877110659e0b65ba7&utm\\_medium=affiliate&utm\\_source=aw&utm\\_term=85386&utm\\_content=0](http://www.cafepress.com/santetotal?awc=4102_1449203914_18e89914d5d5cd3877110659e0b65ba7&utm_medium=affiliate&utm_source=aw&utm_term=85386&utm_content=0)



### **HOW TO DONATE**

We are making progress, but please remember we still need ongoing financial support to continue projects throughout the year! Our cupboards are looking quite barren! *Even \$20 can go a long way in Haiti.* **Please designate: "Sante Total" for your contributions.** There are two ways to give a tax-deductible donation:

1. **Visit our website at [www.santetotal.org](http://www.santetotal.org)** and make a donation via Paypal.
2. **Write a check** payable to: "Sante Total" and mail it to:  
Sante Total c/o E. Alton Sartor  
1511 Dufossat St.  
New Orleans, LA 70115



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#### *May trip participants:*

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**Have a great summer!**