



*Healthcare for Haiti's Poor*

## Fall 2020 Newsletter

*Sante Total, which means "Total Health" in Haitian Kreyol, aims to provide sustainable healthcare to rural communities in the central plateau region of Haiti. We believe you can only improve health through eradicating the disease of poverty. The Sante Total approach considers the entire person – physical health, well-being, education, and employment, to be essential to health and quality of life.*



### **FUTURE MEDICAL TEAM DATES**

**May 2021**

**(TBD pending Covid-19 status)**

Be a part of the team! Contact us at  
[santetotal.healthcare@gmail.com](mailto:santetotal.healthcare@gmail.com)

## A Letter From the Sante Total Board:

Dear friends of Sante Total,

The following sentiments were generated in response to the recent events in the United States:

Sante Total was founded on the belief that the well-being of the entire person including their physical and emotional health, educational opportunities, and employment, is a fundamental human right.

Our work is in Haiti, a country birthed by slaves who revolted and demanded those rights for themselves. Centuries later, Haiti is still the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. For 10 years, we have worked to provide health care and to sponsor health-related projects in the town of Jacsonville, serving the unseen and the unheard at our clinic in Haiti. Our fight for equity in health care is the most challenging but most important work we can ever do.

We vow to never falter in our commitment to create a healthier, safer, and more equitable world. In Haiti, in the U.S., and in every community around the world, Black lives matter.

Against a backdrop of chaos, Sante Total has continued to do our best to support the community of Jacsonville. We hope that you will think of the people of Jacsonville, Haiti, during this season of giving and share generously to support the projects needed to improve their quality of life.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Weis MD MPH & TM and the Board Members of Sante Total

### **COVID-19 effects in Haiti**

COVID-19 cases have been reported throughout Haiti, with over 8,700 confirmed cases and a doubling time of 5 days. Haiti is more vulnerable than developed nations to the effects of COVID. Testing and treatment requires money, which is limited in many Haitian communities. Due to current living situations, many Haitians are not able to practice CDC recommended guidelines of wearing masks and socially distancing.

Furthermore, Haitians are incredibly hard workers and many Haitians value their jobs and need to work to sustain their living situation. Quarantining is a luxury, and severely limits money making opportunities, threatening their food security and daily lives.

Another one of the major problems is the limited testing capacity in Haiti, resulting in an overwhelming backlog. Although there are 41 testing centers that could perform COVID-19 testing, the US manufacturer for one type of test is not able to distribute tests to Haiti. Only the Haitian National Laboratory and another lab can perform the test, but they are limited in the number of samples they can run a day.

Lack of trust in the government has led some Haitians to believe that the threat of COVID has been exaggerated and there is still a strong belief in Voodoo and superstitious causes for the increased number of deaths. Fear surrounding COVID-19 has also affected the healthcare community in Haiti. Some hospitals are being attacked, healthcare workers threatened and mobile testing teams attacked. We hope to help reassure the community that our efforts are intended to aid the Haitian community and to minimize the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Haiti. We will continue to provide advice and reassurance with respect to the questions and concerns that are fueling the fear-driven uprising against the medical community.

## Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Jacsonville

Dr. Barbara Weis, MD, MPH & TM

Unfortunately, the shutdown in March coincided with Gaby's annual visit to the US to speak to schools and other organizations. Fortunately, Gaby was so impressed with the gravity of the situation in the US that he returned to Haiti (on the last flight in before they closed the airport) energized to intervene. He immediately organized a team of outreach workers supported by Sante Total, including Ketteline, the nurse we have been supporting through school. They went from



*BenBen at Hand Washing Station*

house to house in Jacsonville showing people how to make hand washing stations that would work without running water and talking about social distancing and masks. They gave bleach and disinfectant soap to every household!

So far, Gaby thinks that there have been some cases in Jacsonville and Pignon, but it is hard to tell because there is very little testing. School has started back up with 16 hand washing stations! They have continued their efforts, holding educational sessions at the local markets and at school and will keep going until COVID is under control.

*Gaby speaking at the market*



## Jacsonville Efforts to Combat COVID

Berteau Zephir, a valued friend and advisory board member of Sante Total, has made impressive efforts to combat COVID in Jacsonville and the surrounding community. He organized an event where he gave out handwashing buckets, soap, and food to over 100 elderly community members to help with COVID. We are so appreciative of Berteau and those who have helped him to make sure the elderly have access to cleaning supplies to maintain good hygiene in this time of need. Thank you, Berteau!

*Giving handwashing buckets, soap, food to the elderly Jacsonville community*



## Sante Total Member Spotlight: Dr. MarkAlain Déry, DO, FACOI

### Battling COVID-19 in the New Orleans Community and Around the World

Dr. MarkAlain Déry is an infectious disease doctor and a valued member of the Sante Total team who has made many medical trips to Jacsonville from New Orleans with our organization. The city of New Orleans was lucky to have Dr. Déry when COVID-19 affected our area. He has been updating the community on the national public health policies and best prevention practices for COVID-19 and has also been providing updates on how the vaccination trials are proceeding and the best treatment options for patients with COVID-19.

Dr. Déry has been an incredibly important frontline physician for COVID-19 patients here in New Orleans. He worked in the first federal testing site as the medical director testing close to 500 people in one weekend in the very early days of COVID-19. He also managed a number of acutely ill COVID-19 patients during the peak of the epidemic and continues to stay involved in patient care as we anticipate the next wave.

In addition to direct patient care, Dr. Déry takes time out of his busy days to educate medical school students and healthcare colleagues about the most updated practices and treatments for COVID-19 patients and emphasizes the impact of COVID-19 on the global community so we don't lose perspective on the impact of COVID-19 on a global scale.

Dr. Déry is passionate about debunking and preventing the spread of myths and unsupported claims related to COVID-19. He started a podcast called NoiseFilter that reviews COVID-19 stories through the lens of social, economic, environmental and racial justice. The podcast is 10 minutes daily, and recently celebrated the 100th episode- you can subscribe to it on any major podcast platform. The podcast was picked up by Pacifica Radio and now broadcasts daily to tens of thousands of people daily! His involvement in this podcast supports his motivation to spread understanding and compassion amongst diverse communities affected by COVID-19.



Dr. Déry is passionate about serving the local community and supporting local businesses and musicians, while staying focused on the message for people to stay as safe as possible. He founded the movement entitled 'Mask Up Covid Down' with local musicians as a campaign to encourage everyone to wear masks when in public to prevent the spread of COVID-19. He understands the impact COVID-19 has had on our community and attempts to address these adverse impacts. Thank you, Dr. Déry !



*Dr. Déry examining a patient in the Jacksonville clinic, May 2019*

### Projects in Jacksonville that need your support:

Please consider donating and supporting one (or all!) of the ongoing projects listed below. We, and the residents of Jacksonville, are always appreciative of your financial support!

**Medical clinic furniture and supplies:** The clinic building is almost finished, but we need to raise \$6000 for exam tables, chairs and equipment for the new clinic, which will hopefully be finished in October

**Patient expenses:** We are unable to travel right now, but have continued to support the community by providing support for people who need medication and help with their hospital bills.

**School projects:** School has started again in Jacksonville, and they are trying to socially distance the kids more to help prevent the spread of COVID. We have raised the money for more benches and desks so that the older kids will not have to share benches. In addition, they will receive new bookcases in the classrooms, 3 new desks for the teachers and their old desks will be repaired.

**Eric Delss, our new board member,** and his family, coordinated this project, which provided 26 benches, 6 small tables for the pre-k and kindergarten, 9 bookcases, and the desks.

**School lunch program:** This program is vital given the current food insecurity secondary to COVID. This is often the only meal a child will receive during the day.  
**\$200 will provide school lunches for one child for the entire school year**

**Sponsor a student: \$200 will support one student for a year, paying for their school fees, uniforms and books.**



*School children eating lunch supported by the new program*

**Food for Seniors: \$200 will pay for a month of meals for the Seniors in Jacsonville.** Many of the Seniors in Jacsonville don't have access to enough food because of the economic hardship COVID has brought. This program supports weekly meetings and food distribution.

**Sustainable Agriculture Program:** FanFan is starting a "plow and oxen" project and they are continuing to work on other sustainable agriculture programs.

**Educational Support:** We are spending over \$10,000 a year to support students from Jacsonville. This money covers the tuition, room and board of several students: a pharmacy student, one University student (Maisson) who is studying education, a nurse and a medical student who is studying in the Dominican Republic. *We are trying to raise \$200 per student per year to further support education.* Thank you!



*New colors of the school and new uniforms*

## Meet the Future of Jacsonville Medical Clinic: BenBen and Bicovensens:



**BenBen** is in pharmacy school, and his education is supported by a generous donor. His goal is to work in a pharmacy, hopefully in the new clinic.

**Bicovensens** is in medical school and we are hoping he can work in the new Jacsonville clinic after his training.



## How can you donate to Sante Total?

We are running very low on funds because we have not been able to conduct our usual fund raising activities due to COVID. We are making progress, but please remember we still need ongoing financial support to continue projects throughout the year!

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, 2901 Ridgelake Drive, Suite 205, Metairie, LA 70002
3. **Send an automatic monthly contribution** through your bank.

**Thank you for your continued  
support!**

**Stay safe, wash your hands often,  
wear your masks.**



*New Clinic in Jacksonville*

**DONORS (9/20/19-9/15/20):**

Andrew Wallace  
Lisa Reed  
Dr. Barbara Weis and Mark Stiles  
Charlie and Carol Delss  
Karl Irikura  
Virginia Dixon  
Dr. Joel Goodman  
Michael Quigg  
Dr. Peter Poppinghaus  
Kris Kiefer  
Joe Trainor  
Dr. Charles Rene  
Marie Reed  
Dr. Paul Marquis  
Thomas Rowe  
Daniel Pierce  
Dr. Nicole DeValle  
Dr. Devi Yalamanchili  
Warren Weis  
Carol Dunahoo  
Cheryl and Steven Lapham  
Paul Reinstein and Maude McGovern  
Liliane Floge and S. Crawford  
Fr. Mark Carter, OFM, Cap.  
Hank & Mary Beth Wonders  
Paula Fredrickson

**BOARD MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE**

**Board Members**

Barbara Weis, MD, MPH&TM, Executive Director  
Alison Smith, MD, PhD  
E. Alton Sartor, MD, MBA  
Carl Mickman, MD  
Devi Yalamanchili, MD  
Serena Murphy, MD  
Violet Yeager, DO, MPH  
Edward Ready, JD  
Temrah Okonski, PT  
Christina Stiles, BS, MD Candidate  
Margarite Matossian, MD/PhD Candidate  
Julia Clemens, BA, MD Candidate  
Sergei Robinson, DO  
Eric Delss BA, MAUD, MES

**Advisory Board Members**

Gabriel Thelus  
Moussanto Dantil  
Berteau Zephir  
Ketheline Rock Dantil, RN

**Webmaster:** Julia Clemens

**Newsletter:** Margarite Matossian

**Treasurer:** E. Alton Sartor, MD, MBA