




SANTE TOTAL

# Sante Total Newsletter

Spring 2021

*Healthcare for Haiti's Poor*





*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**

**October 2021**

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

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

## **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.

# COVID-19 Effects in Haiti



As of March 2021, there have been 12,788 cases of COVID-19 in Haiti, resulting in 252 deaths. Although this number is low compared to the Dominican Republic (DR), which has had 254,000 cases and 3,346 deaths, the testing capacity is limited in Haiti, due to the expensive costs and inaccessibility of tests. Furthermore, the positive test rate in Haiti is approximately 25%, which means 1 in 4 people who are tested for COVID-19 in Haiti test positive. By comparison, the positive test rate in the U.S. was 6.6% and in the DR was 11.3% as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. The high positive rate in Haiti means that they are not able to test enough people to identify contacts. A new collaboration with Massachusetts General Center for Global Health has been helping to distribute more tests to Haiti to help increase testing rates, and they now have 41 testing sites.. Haiti also now requires a negative test for all visitors arriving in the country.

Working and living conditions in Haiti have also made it difficult to quarantine and adhere to CDC guidelines, such as wearing masks and social distancing. There is also distrust of the government and some people believe that the government has exaggerated the situation to restrict civil liberties more.

In Jacsonville, there is a respiratory virus that is going around, with symptoms including runny nose, hoarseness, and cough; however, these symptoms are not severe enough to suggest COVID-19 infection. Gaby has been reaching out to households to make sure there are enough handwashing stations set up and soap at each station, as handwashing and proper hygiene is very important for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

To our knowledge, vaccination rates are almost nonexistent Haiti just received their first batch of approximately 725,000 doses the week of 4/12/2021. However, the political unrest in the country is making it difficult to develop a vaccination program. Given the particular political and socioeconomic situations, it has been reported that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be best because it requires “a single injection and does not require special freezers for storage”. The Astrazeneca vaccine has also been of interest to the Haitian community due to the expense of this vaccine. However, given the reports of these vaccines causing thromboses (although to a very low number of patients), while these effects are being investigating for both the Johnson & Johnson and Astrazeneca vaccines, it is unknown how this will affect vaccine distribution. Read more about the situation with vaccines in Haiti (published on 4/10/2021): <https://www.haitilibre.com/article-33448-haiti-sante-la-ministre-de-la-sante-veut-un-autre-vaccin-qu-astrazeneca.html>

## Sources:

1. World Health Organization (<https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/ht>)
2. <https://globalhealth.massgeneral.org/lab-collaboration-increases-covid-19-testing-capacity-in-haiti-bangladesh/>

# Jacsonville Efforts to Combat COVID-19

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Berteau Zephir continues to work hard to combat COVID-19 in Jacsonville and build up his community. He is currently working on a project planting fruit trees throughout the community to help feed the elderly using monthly donations (~\$300/month). Plenty International has graciously donated funds to help support the elderly meal project initiated by Berteau. Thank you for all your hard work to improve the community, Berteau!





# Project Updates



# Clinic Update

The clinic construction is almost complete, and we are working on putting the finishing touches on the building (installing glass windows, putting in a fence, and painting). The next step is getting furniture, including exam tables, desks, chairs, dental furniture and equipment, otoscopes, etc.

We are very appreciative of the donors who have helped us to fund the clinic construction completion and furnishing the clinic. However, we still need donations to complete the furnishing. At the end of the newsletter, we provide instructions on how to donate. The final step will be staffing the clinic once the building is complete. Thank you!



# School update from Eric



The students continue to attend school while trying to maintain social distance amidst the challenges of COVID. This year, the school yard was fenced in, creating a more safe and secure play space for the students. Using the recommendations from Pignon school principal and consultant Beatrice Hilaire, the school continues to make educational improvements to better serve the students and families of Jacsonville. Among the recommendations that continue to need support are: playground equipment and classroom activities for the pre-school; laptops and computer space for the elementary students and staff; and electricity (solar panels and generator) for the entire school.

Introducing a playground with a swing set, seesaw, jump ropes, balls, and frisbees would allow pre-school students to have more opportunities at free play and socialization. These seemingly basic items would foster teamwork and cooperation, important skills as they advance in their education at the school. Inside the classroom, introducing items such as blocks, manipulatives, stuffed animals, puzzles,

and shape toys would significantly aid in cognitive development, motor skills, and problem-solving. These early childhood interventions are critical to each child's sustained educational growth.

For the elementary students, a dedicated computer space with 25 lap top computers would provide a significant boost to the learning opportunities at the school. Providing internet access, would foster language development through access to online tutorials and would expand opportunities to connect with other students throughout the world. But, in order to open a computer lab in the school, the first, and perhaps most valuable, improvement is to bring electricity to the buildings, including solar panels and a spare generator. Without electricity the incredible opportunities that come from a computer lab are nearly useless. Not only will electricity allow for better control over the learning environment at the school, but powering the computers would allow the students to be educated in basic computer proficiency, giving them an invaluable leg up in the future job market.



## Meet and Greet: Eric Delss

Eric Delss, Board Member, earned degrees in architecture and urban design from Virginia Tech and Harvard University. Recently, he completed studies in land preservation and conservation planning from the University of Pennsylvania. Eric first visited Haiti as a student at Virginia Tech in 1998, where he met Gabriel Thelus and saw the foundations of what was to become the St. Rose de Lima School. For over twenty years, Eric has worked closely with Gabriel, his wife Erinn, and parents Charles and Carol Delss to grow a strong connection between Jacksonville and sponsoring communities in Maryland and Pennsylvania. As the son of a teacher and the husband of a teacher, he recognizes that the power for social change and improved community health rests in guaranteeing access to quality education. Eric is excited to contribute to the efforts of Sante Total and to continue this important and necessary work.







## Meet Bico, a future doctor for Jacsonville

*We at Sante Total are proud to support the education of future physicians and medical leaders in the Jacsonville community who are passionate about giving back to their communities. Read more to learn about one of the students who we financially support, Bico.*



My name is Bico Benson Jean Zephir, I'm Bertho's son (*long-time Sante Total friend and key community member of Jacsonville*). I am 25 years old, I live in the Dominican Republic now, but before I lived in Haiti, precisely Pignon and Cap Haitian. I did my primary study in Pignon and in Cap Haitian as well as my secondary study in Cap Haitian, precisely at the Martin Luther King College. And now I'm in UTESA studying medicine, this university is in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic.

For the Jacsonville community, I want to do a lot of things with the people of this sector. Here I'll briefly talk about my future plans: After my study, back in Haiti I want to work with them in what has to do with the necessary health, in civic moral education, and also....



## Meet Bico (continued)

...teach the students at Sainte Rose de Lima school, but also teach others who will accompany during my work time with the organization of Sante Total. For example, working together with Benben (*a Sante Total clinic translator and currently in pharmacy school*) and other medical staff at the clinic. I am doing my best to learn medicine properly so I do not miss a word that I should know. My main plans is to return to Haiti to work as a Doctor in Medicine in the Jacsonville community especially, and to work with the Sante Total organization properly. And after working for several years I want to go to another country more advanced than the Dominican Republic to be able to do a specialty in pediatrics and geriatrics in order to heal children and old people.

My goals are to:

- 1- Heal people as they should be healed
- 2- Heal children and old people
- 3- Teach health subjects at the Sainte Rose school in Lima
- 4- Carry out a vaccine campaign when an epidemic is suspected, but also to finish vaccination doses for children, which are mostly not finished.
- 5- Respect the laws of the clinic, especially as a doctor.
- 6- Help people to respect the green areas of the community and in the clinic
- 7- Help develop Jacsonville

**\*\*\*Please consider donating to Sante Total to help support the medical education of Bico, and other students like Bico who are passionate to give back to the Jacsonville community. Donation options are included at the end of the newsletter \*\*\***

# Q&A with BenBen



*Featured here is another example of a dedicated student who is passionate about giving back to the Jaconsille community. Myrbensly "Benben" is one of our very good friends who has been a valuable translator for the Sante Total clinic for years. Learn more about Benben in this Q & A, and please consider donating to Sante Total to support his education as we complete construction of the clinic.*



"My name is Myrbensly Desir, I'm 24 years old. I'm Haitian, I am a gentleman, I'm from Jacksonville (Haiti). I have four sisters and one brother, I don't have both parents because my father died since 2007; I was 10 years old. About my education: I did kindergarten to 9th grade at St. Rose of LIMA school and 11th to 14th grade at LYCÉE NATIONAL DE PIGNON. I finished my classic school in 2018.

Q: What I do like activity, profession in the community of Jacksonville?

A: I participate to different kind of activity in the community like: I work at Santé Total like translator, in the beginning of the Covid I did a perfect work in the motivation, prevention, sensitization for the people of Jacksonville (Haiti) and the others areas around us with the authorization and collaboration of Sante Total, I play music in the band, in the church, I cut hairs for the boys, I participate at cultural activities, I give my help also in the development.

# Q&A with BenBen (continued)



Q: Why I do like medical biology?

A: I'm a student of medical biology. I like it because I have a definite plan for my future and for the community of Jacksonville, for my country and for international. This is why we have people like dentists, nurses, and students of medicine. We even have a biologist of medicine but they can't do a good treatment without the help of the technologist. This help is just for detecting the pathology of the disease in the patient. This is why I'm so proud of medical technology.

Q: After finishing with the biology medical facility what I will do for work or activity? And what is my plan?

A: I would like to do a master's degree in the profession(field) for that I can have more skills after all I will able to give a help that'll very quality to the community specifically at Santé Total, at St Rose of Lima. According to the idea of functionalism, the individual is the product of the society.

Signed by Myrbensly Desir."





# Projects in Jacksonville that need your support



- **Medical clinic furniture and supplies:** The clinic building is almost finished, but we need additional money to buy medical exam tables and an ultrasound machine, which are expensive, and smaller items such as otoscopes, desks, and chairs.
- **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.**
- **Food for Seniors: \$200 will pay for a month of meals for the Seniors in Jacksonville.** Many of the Seniors in Jacksonville 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 \$15, 000 a year to support students from Jacksonville. 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. *Anything you can contribute to their support would be helpful!* Thank you!



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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, and wear your masks!



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