



*HDF Clinic patient*

# Haitian Development Fund Newsletter

## 2010 Wish List

- Funds to ship supplies to Haiti
- Antibiotics
- Basic dental supplies
- Over-the-counter drugs for kids

*Please consider making a gift to HDF for one of these urgent needs.*

*Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

## HDF Board

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## Heartbreak in Haiti

By Jenny Carter

This past June, I traveled to Haiti and had the experience of a lifetime. This trip opened my eyes in more ways than one. As a local Springfield #186 teacher and Family Support Worker at the Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery, I thought I had seen it all when it came to families and children. I did not expect to be surprised.

### The Baby

My first day at the clinic, something happened that most people find hard to believe. I was sitting in the courtyard helping children with their coloring projects when a woman walked up to me with the most beautiful baby. I asked her through our translator if I could hold the baby. The woman smiled brightly and handed me the child. The infant was beautiful, and I told that to the mother. I found out that she was only four months old.

After about twenty minutes, I had rocked the baby to sleep. Just then, the woman spoke some Creole words to the translator, who looked at me and said, "Do you want to keep her? She wants to know if she could give her baby to you?"

Of course, the first thing out of my mouth was, "Is she joking?" The translator said no, and that she was serious. I very politely said no to the woman. She gave me a big smile and thanked me for holding her baby.

I was immediately appalled at this situation. How could this woman give her child away to someone she just met? Why did she not want her? What was going to happen to that baby?

I could not get this situation out of my mind, but after time I did start thinking differently about it. Did this woman truly want the best for her child and knew she could not provide that? Instead of lacking love, was there so much that she looked past her own wants to her child's needs?



*Life in Haiti is hard for both the young and the old.*

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## Heartbreak in Haiti

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*Many Haitians still have no food, water or permanent housing.*

Thinking about this saddens and inspires me to help mothers in Haiti get the help they need to raise happy and healthy children. I will not only continue to help our local families, but families overseas as well.

### **The Elderly Lady**

On the second to last day of our trip, I experienced one of my most heartbreaking moments. A very elderly woman came into the clinic and told Dr. De Land that she had not eaten in quite some time. This woman was skin and bones and very malnourished.

Dr. De Land asked Peter, our translator, and I to walk her home and get her some food. As the three of us walked down the streets of Sarthe, all of the neighborhood kids started to follow us.

As we walked through the tent city to take the lady home, many people yelled at me saying they were hungry and needed help. I felt totally helpless and embarrassed that I could not help them all.

After we took the lady to her tent, we left for a restaurant to get her some rice and beans. The restaurant was a tent with a picnic table underneath. Flies were swarming everywhere. Once we got the food, we headed back toward the elderly woman's home.

When we got to her, the woman started sobbing and shoveled the food into her mouth. She reached up and grabbed my hand to pull me down. Then she kissed me on the cheek and thanked me.

That's when I lost it. I probably looked like a fool. I was a white, middle-class American crying my eyes out in the middle of a tent city where people have no food, water, clothing, or shelter and are still mourning the loss of so many loved ones. I could not help but be emotional.

This woman was in her eighties, and the fact that she has to scrounge around for food was heartbreaking. No one should have to live that way.

This experience put a lot of things into perspective, not only about Haiti, but in my own life as well. I am so lucky to have the things I have, but I can truly say I have not seen anyone as gracious as that woman was that day.

*Editor's Note: In June, Haitian Development Fund volunteers Jenny Carter, Sylver McGriff and Connie Nottingham, led by Dr. H. Brent De Land, visited the HDF Clinic for a week and treated 521 patients.*

## 2011 Mission Volunteers Needed

*Have you ever considered being a mission volunteer? If so, now is the time to act. By the end of September we expect to set the dates for 2011 trips. Medical training is a plus but not required. The cost will be \$1,600 (double room); \$2,000 (single room). HDF will help raise funds for the trip. Given the very high airfare rates and the increased rates for hotels since the earthquake, HDF does provide some funding but it is limited. Repeat volunteers receive a larger subsidy. For information call 217-546-6360. Don't delay as space is limited.*

## Special Thanks

The Haitian Development Fund wishes to thank all of our supporters both following the earthquake of 12 January and during our general operations. Because of you, HDF has treated well over 70,000 patients since our founding in June 2002.

We have received funding or in-kind support this year from:

- AlternaCare-Home Health Agency
- Birk Family Foundation
- Dewan Foundation
- Dominican Sisters; Poverty, Justice and Peace Fund
- Hospital Sisters of St. Francis; San Damiano Outreach Fund
- PDR Network
- Vitamin Angels

We could not treat so many patients without our dedicated volunteers.

### MISSION VOLUNTEERS

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| March 2010                  | Jen Nicholson, R.N.<br>Nick Stojakovick<br>Akudo Unanwa  |
| June 2010                   | Jenny Carter<br>Sylver McGriff<br>Connie Nottingham  |
| November 2010 (Anticipated) | Kathy Baker-Bowan, R.N., Esq.<br>McFarland Bragg<br>Dwight Lucas<br>Dalitso Sulamoyo<br>Cassie Trummel, R.N., B.S.N. |

## Clinic Photo Gallery June 2010



Staff with Drs. De Land and Moise. Not pictured: staff pharmacist.



Worker removes debris from the Clinic's second floor collapse.



Connie Nottingham fits a Clinic patient with reading glasses.



Jenny Carter takes a patient's blood pressure.



Say "Ah!"



Pharmacist Jean-Luc dispenses prenatal vitamins.

Special thanks to Photographer Sylver McGriff for the photos in this issue of the Newsletter.

## My Heart Is Full

by Sylver McGriff



My heart is full as I write this. There is no better feeling than receiving more than you have given. After my experience at the Clinic, I returned home with powerful emotions. One of them is that I have zero tolerance for complaints—mine or anyone else's.

Whenever I catch myself moaning about some perceived discomfort or infringement on my peace of mind, a memory surfaces of a baby who came to the clinic with scabies eating away his tender skin.

Or, I think about the man with the withered limbs in the makeshift wheelchair who manages to have the most positive, uplifting attitude despite the fact he cannot and will not walk again.

Then I remember the sweet, smiling girl burned over the majority of her little body, who created the most amazing crayon artwork I've ever seen.

While we enjoy the comforts of the first world, Haitian quake victims are drinking murky water...a tent camp baby died of heatstroke yesterday...an 80 year-old Haitian woman will go hungry today because she can't get around in the thick, rainy-season mud to find food....a Haitian mother of four will be raped in her tent tonight but will 'get over it' by morning to find breakfast for her children.

I have no words for the emotions that are swirling around my soul as a result of this mission to Haiti. I thought I was going to help Haitians but instead the quake-victims helped me grow in ways I never imagined. I am indebted to them all and will continue to repay them through presentations I created to give at schools, civic organizations, businesses, and anyone else who will allow me to introduce them to a beautiful, resilient people.

## Every Drop Counts...

By Connie Nottingham

Everyday words lose all meaning in Haiti—words like clinic, waiting room, pharmacy, school, yard, road, and many more. What comes to mind when you say those words simply does not apply. The clinic has no running water and electricity is by generator. The "waiting room" is outside in the "yard" or inside the clinic.

Even inside, the "clinic" is open to the elements. The "yard" is all gravel with a few mango trees and tarps for shade. A "school" across the yard from the clinic is a cinder block room with no windows and an opening for a door. It is smaller than a lot of master bathrooms. Our worst "roads" here are better than the best "roads" in Haiti.

I could not grasp the reality of life in Haiti until I saw it. Yet, this seems to be the norm for the people in the Sarthe neighborhood. They genuinely appreciated what was being done for them at the clinic. There is just so much more that needs to be done, not only for the physical wellbeing of the people but for the clinic structure as well. I felt that what I accomplished was a drop in the bucket of what needs to be done, but *every* drop counts when you're filling a large bucket.



### Check Out Our Website

HDF recently launched its new website. Visit us at [www.hdfund.org](http://www.hdfund.org) to learn more about us or to donate by PayPal.