



HAITI HOSPITAL APPEAL

Life support

Issue 2

A message from Haiti

It's with great joy that we're able to write this second Life Support newsletter from the office inside the new children's home, which opened just a few weeks ago. As I write, our first handful of children are playing, while they're supposed to be getting ready for bed! It's amazing how quickly the first part of this year has gone, but also incredible to see just how much has been achieved.

We've had two voluntary teams take trips to Haiti, seen the opening of the new children's home, continued to provide health care at the clinic and beyond, while we further strive towards trying to offer Haiti more love through all we do.

Despite the current financial crisis the world is facing to one extent or another, we are extremely thankful for the loyalty that has been shown through our supporters. As always we offer our heartfelt thanks, on behalf of the whole team, to all those who have continued to give so generously in prayer, finances and time. While adjusting to life in Haiti over the last few months we've had the privilege of seeing miracles unfold, thanks to the outpouring of your compassion; the lives saved, the families transformed and the communities changed. It is true however, that just as we see the incredible difference you're helping to achieve, we are also faced with fresh challenges and constant reminders of the desperation of this nation each day.

A recent report by the International Crisis Group said economic and social conditions are even worse in Haiti than last April. When you look around at the continuing spiral of poverty it is all too clear and heartbreaking to see.

We hope this issue of Life Support will bless you as you read about the incredible difference you're making, but also inspire you to continue to be a part of the future of the Haiti Hospital Appeal. A difference that can only be made by supporters like you.

Carwyn and Reninca Hill (Co-founder, Trustee and International Coordinators)



House of Blessings opens

Just over a year ago the Haiti Hospital Appeal was impacted by the story of 2-year-old Priscaille, a girl with cerebral palsy, who had been abandoned at a Government Hospital in a rusting cot for over 4 months. Witnessing this story coincided with a call from God to open a children's home. As has always been the case with our appeal we took a huge step of faith, put our trust in God, and embarked on another God given dream. A dream that was finally realised when the House of Blessings opened, and was made ready to receive its first children, thanks to the generous support of many people, and the grace of God.

When the decision was made to expand our work in this area we had no confirmed funding, but just a few weeks before we were ready to open, we were blessed by the news that Jubilee Action had chosen to partner with us and help fund the running costs of the home for the first year. It's an honour to work with Jubilee Action, a UK charity that does an incredible job working with children at risk right across the world.

The home's primary role will be to support families with special-needs children through a respite care programme. The home provides care for each child for 3 or 4 days per week, rather than taking them full time. Like Priscaille, many impoverished families are forced to abandon their child, especially when they require such specialist care. The House of Blessings provides an environment where children can grow up with all the support they need, yet still within the community of their own families. Along with the overnight care, free medical consultations and medication are provided for the children, as well as food packages for the time they spend with their families. In the case where a special-needs child is abandoned or orphaned the home will adopt them as a family member, but do all we can to find a foster family to help look after them. The home will also run an outreach programme providing home support, education and training for families with special needs children.



News in brief



Gonaives at the present time, following hurricane devastation

- Thanks to the support of the Baptist Missionary Society 200 children in the badly hit hurricane area of Gonaives are still benefiting from the emergency education grant in 2008, offering them schooling for a year.
- We continue to work on setting up an HIV/AIDS programme in North Haiti in partnership with ACET, a UK based AIDS charity. The aim is to run a conference for 500 pastors, priests or community leaders, to help mobilise them into running HIV/AIDS outreach programmes. The estimated HIV/AIDS prevalence rate amongst adults aged 15-49 in Haiti is 2.2%. A recent report by USAID and the World Health Organization stated that 'Haiti bears the largest HIV burden in the Caribbean.'
- Our clinic continues to help serve the local communities in and around Quartier Morin. In April we'll be partnering with an American organisation, Meds and Foods for Kids, who have chosen our clinic to run a special food nourishment programme for malnourished children. This new programme will work alongside our already well-established partnership with the World Food Programme who support 100-150 families each month.
- Our 4x4 ambulance continues to battle each week with the harsh terrain of Haiti, bringing a fantastic service. In the last few months the ambulance has helped support a series of emergencies including, rushing a women in the first stages of labour to hospital to give birth, taking a badly injured mute teenager to hospital, who'd been thrown off the back of a vehicle and taking a seriously ill boy to the Dominican Republic for urgent help.
- A special thanks to Caroline Kerr and the 6 London schools who took part in the Last Choir Standing fund raising competition. Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, Christ Church School New Malden, Christ Church School Surbiton, Saint Luke's Church of England School, Grand Avenue Primary School, and Saint Agathas Primary School all helped to raise £6,000 towards the House of Blessings.

Wilnese, Widlin and Reubens

In the middle of January we met a mother and her 15-month-old twins, Widlin and Wilnese, at the Government run Hospital. Wilnese has cerebral palsy and was severely malnourished, weighing only 9 pounds. Their mother Mary-Lou is a single parent and has 6 children in all. Like many parents in Haiti she was desperately seeking help, feeling she had no choice but to give Wilnese away. The family live in a tiny dilapidated hut with no running water or electricity situated on the side of a steep mountain overlooking Cap-Haitien. The few shelves they have are barren, the children spend time playing clothed in old shabby t-shirts, and more often than not the family go without food.

Thanks to the House of Blessings we were able to take Widlin and Wilnese into our respite care programme and provide Mary-Lou with the support she needs. The twins spend 4 days a week with us providing Mary-Lou with the opportunity to find work in order to provide for her other children. She had been scraping her small earnings together to send two of her children to school, but thanks to a few Haiti Hospital Appeal supporters her other two children will begin school in September.

About three weeks after meeting the twins we were called to an orphanage where a father was trying to abandon his 3-year-old son Reubens who also has cerebral palsy. Again, thanks to our new home, the appeal were able to speak with the family and offer them the support needed to ensure Reubens isn't abandoned.

It's been incredible, even in the short time we've been working with the children, to see the difference made in their lives, and the lives of their families. Walking up the rocky mountain path to Mary-Lou's little hut every Monday morning is always a humbling experience. Not least just to witness the warm thanks offered by the family, who because of your help have been kept united and offered hope for the future. In the coming months and years we hope the House of Blessings will touch many more families and help in continuing to save some of the most desperately hopeless children in the world.



Two teams to Haiti



One of the highlights so far this year has been two overseas teams visiting Haiti. For many it was their first trip to Haiti, giving two weeks of their time, energy and money, but the results stretched beyond our wildest imagination!

In February we welcomed a team of 12 UK volunteers to help convert an old building into the children's home. The team worked tirelessly plumbing, painting, tiling, and doing lots of other DIY bits and bobs. Along with the DIY experts we also had a physiotherapist, Annie, who did some amazing work with the special-needs children we're working with, as well as running a two-day physiotherapy course for 25 people. Some of the team also managed to work in collaboration with Compassion and run some health education classes for about 100 children.

A small group managed to squeeze in a quick trip to Gonaïves to offer support to those affected by the hurricanes. East Sheen Baptist Church and Teddington Baptist Church in West London had asked The Baptist Convention of Haiti what help they could offer to the people of Gonaïves; the reply was Bibles. Many people had lost their Bibles in the floods and couldn't afford new ones; so over 300 Bibles were donated by the two churches, which were handed out on one of the Sunday mornings to 9 different churches. Some felt this was a strange request but it became very clear what an incredible blessing and gift of encouragement these Bibles were.

A few weeks after the UK team had left, 6 American pre-medical students arrived and worked for 4 days with our outreach doctor. During this time the students helped to support several mobile clinics, which saw over 500 patients. One clinic was held in the poorest slum in Cap-Haitien; when 150 people turned up, they were forced to improvise to provide a secondary room on a roof, made out of some old sheets. A highlight for the Haiti Hospital Appeal was taking the team to an area called Gros-Morne where they provided health care in an old clinic that had been closed since 1994, having lost its funding. It was the first time this clinic had been used since then, and the first time people in this community of 15,000 would have received medical care in many years. It was a humbling privilege to be a part of this great day for the community. There was such an overwhelming demand, that some had to be turned away, but it was still amazing to see this old clinic revitalised into life.

If you'd like to visit Haiti for a short-term mission trip, or for a longer period of time, please contact: leuan@haitihospitalappeal.org

Volunteering for Haiti

Much of the work achieved in the first part of this year has been made possible thanks to Julia, a Haiti Hospital Appeal Volunteer, who committed three months of her life to come and live in Haiti with Carwyn and Reninca. We took the chance to ask Julia to share a little about her experiences:

"Over the past 3 months, I've been lucky enough to see, and be part of, the transformation of a shell of a building into a working children's home. The work of the House of Blessing really is a blessing to the families, as we partner together to care for their children.

"An outreach programme has also been started on Saturday afternoons when about 40 local children ranging from the age of 3 to 16 are invited to the site to play football, take part in craft activities, to hear the word of God, and to share food together. It's great to see so many children in one place enjoying themselves.

"The majority of my time has been spent being involved in the House of Blessing, but I have also been able to experience the excellent work the clinic continues to do each day along with vaccination and food programmes. The work is so important for the local people, shown by the numbers that use it, particularly on vaccination and food programme days.

"Working with the Haitian people has also been an excellent experience. The Haiti Hospital Appeal has some fantastic friends and employees, who really want to see a change in their country. Whilst I have been here I've been fortunate enough to see just what can happen when the money arrives – the speed the wall had been built around the children's home was wonderful to see.

"Overall the time I have spent in Haiti with Carwyn and Reninca has been amazing and it is great to see the difference the work of the appeal is making and the hope and love they are showing to the Haitian people."



Outreach programme



Many of you know about the work of our clinic, but most are probably less familiar with our outreach work. In partnership with a number of other organisations, we support a Haitian doctor who travels each week to some of the most isolated and needy rural communities in North Haiti to run mobile clinics.

Dr Maklin often travels for up to 4 hours a day, to see some of Haiti's poorest people, in areas with no health care. Since working for us he has helped to provide urgently needed support for well over a 1000 people. We asked Dr Maklin to explain a little about his work with us:

"I have been working for the Haiti Hospital Appeal (HHA) for 9 months. I must tell you that it is a great experience for me. I have the chance to help a lot of sick people in different areas. Most of the patients have not seen a doctor for many years.

"We went to a place named l'Acul-Gros-Morne in order to hold a clinic there two weeks ago. It took us about 5 hours to reach Gros-Morne from Cap-Haitien. There was a regular clinic there, but it's closed since the year 1994 because of financial difficulties. People living in that area didn't have access to health care for many years, but the Haiti Hospital Appeal in partnership with the priest

of Gros-Morne parish held a clinic there to provide health care to that community. We were able to see 122 patients in one day.

"I must announce to all the donors that the assistance brought to the population of Haiti, is of utmost importance. One could note a great improvement in the field of health in various zones due to the intervention of HHA. In the name of the Haitian people, I thank all those who have contributed to the good work and the advancement of the HHA.

"May God bless you in abundance for all the assistance you bring to my fellow Haitians."

Dr Eugene Maklin

A message from the UK

For those of us based in the UK, 2009 has been a great year thus far. As you can see, reading through the newsletter, the Haiti Hospital Appeal is beginning to have a far more telling impact in the North of Haiti, and the bulk of this is due to the perseverance and servant-hearts of Carwyn and Reninca, with huge help from Julia. They have been doing and continue to do a fantastic job living out a life of faith amidst daily challenges. We also want to acknowledge the work of our Haitian staff. They carry the hope for justice in their nation, knowing that their efforts and hard work make a difference each day. Keep up the fantastic work!

We are thrilled with the progress of the children's home, albeit taking small steps to start with, as we take on new children

month by month. What is also exciting is the ongoing transformation in mindsets amongst the communities in Cap-Haitien and its surrounding towns and villages. The message spoken with actions far louder than words is that each child deserves a chance, a home, a family and loving care. Working in partnership with a family and sharing their burden in order to see their child become a joy and a light is an amazing privilege.

We continue to fund raise to see the building of the maternity ward completed. 70% of births take place without medical attention, aggravating the issues of child and maternal mortality, having a hugely degenerative impact on families and futures across the nation. This department will see, amongst other things, babies saved after

birth complications, a reduction in the spread of HIV from mother to baby and childbirth taking place in a more dignified manner. The money raised at our major fund raising events this year, the Dinner Dance and our presence at New Wine and Soul Survivor will go towards the construction of the maternity ward.

The ongoing work that you continue to be a part of is so exciting. We cherish all those who have joined in this endeavour to speak love, hope and justice into the lives of those who struggle to survive day after day. The Haiti Hospital Appeal continues in the knowledge that together we can make a difference. Stay in touch and be the difference.

Jonnie Horner (Co-founder) and the Trustees



To get involved or find out more please contact us:

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Please make cheques payable to 'Haiti Hospital Appeal'.
Taxpayers can download a gift aid form from our website, so we can claim back 28p from every pound given.

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