Konbit-Sante

Cap-Haitien Health Partnership

ONBIT SA

ANNUAL REPO

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Letter from the Executive Director

"I think that we have mistaken empathy as walking in someone else's shoes. Let us be clear, you can't. But what we can do is witness, and accompany." Lennon Flowers

Have you ever heard the expression "that's a firstworld problem" bantered about in jest? While I do not subscribe to the idea that there is more than one world and believe that we need to learn how to better live together in our one world, there is a germ of truth—or recognition—in the phrase.

Those of us fortunate enough not to have to worry about our daily personal safety or what we will eat today sometimes count mere inconveniences or annoyances as "problems." The everyday reality for many of our partners and friends in Haiti, and especially the communities that they serve, is outside of the experience for most of us, but shouldn't be outside of our sphere of concern and action... precisely because we are one world.

While it has not always been on the front pages of U.S. newspapers, this has been an extraordinarily difficult year for the people of Haiti. Soaring inflation, fuel shortages, perceived corruption, and food insecurity have frustrated many and fueled a movement to bring down the government, worsening an already fragile security situation. Like most of us in our one world, people want basic peace, security, and a system that works to address their rudimentary needs and human rights.

Nate



The good news is that there are people in Haiti who want to provide the essentials of basic, decent health care for their communities. If you had to boil our approach down to its most simple terms, it can be thought of as accompanying those who are trying to make that positive difference and doing what we can to help them be successful. It is there and in them that we find hope for a better future in the midst of difficult times. It is in helping the people who have a passion and a vision for the future to be successful that we have always found hope.

This report describes just a few of the ways we have worked together toward those shared ends this year and were able to make progress against stiff odds. There are many ways that people contribute to this effort and join this "konbit," and we are grateful to all who accompany us on this journey.

With gratitude,

Nate Nickerson Executive Director

Workforce & Development



The cornerstone of Konbit Sante's mission to strengthen capacity for health in Greater Cap-Haitien is its partnership with four healthcare facilities in the area. And an important part of any health facility's care involves outreach and connection to the community it serves. That's why we provide funding for community outreach programs and salary support to agents de santé (community health workers) at Fort St. Michel Health Center (FSM). The agents de santé are the direct liaison between the health center and its patients, and do everything from making referrals and administering vaccinations to educating the public about nutrition, disease prevention, pre-and post-natal care, and more.



aguy Cenatus, 50, is a trained auxiliary nurse from Port Margot who has been a Konbit Sante-supported agent de santé at FSM since 2010. While some community health workers focus on one specialty, she covers a wide array of issues and often leads activities in the field. Like the other nine agents de santé at FSM, she completed three months of initial training sponsored by Konbit Sante, which is then supplemented as needed.

For Maguy, the job is both challenging and rewarding. She must wear numerous hats: facilitator, educator, data collector, advisereven family counselor. As such, she has developed a personal rapport with the people in the community. "Some of the people refuse to receive vaccinations from anyone other than Maguy, because they know she will do a good job," said Josaime Clotilde St Jean, community program manager with FSM and Konbit Sante.

While Maguy is often the first point of contact for patients at FSM, Saminetha Joseph, 30, of Limonade, helps ensure they get the care they need once they arrive and that they receive follow-up care when necessary. Saminetha began her career at FSM as a volunteer nurse in 2013, and her attention to detail and willingness to put in whatever time was necessary to complete a task made a positive impression on St Jean. When the position of assistant project manager came open in 2016, St Jean recommended her for the job.



vaccination clinic in Cap-Haitien. (Photo by Rod Harmon, weighs a child at a Cenatus

Saminetha's responsibilities include coordinating community activities, vaccinations, and family planning outreach. An important part of her job consists of collecting and collating data for monthly reports. She sees every woman who comes to FSM for prenatal care and assigns them to agents de santé working in their areas for follow-up visits. If a child is born at FSM or in the community and the baby's family doesn't bring it in for vaccinations, it's her job to find out what happened. Did the family move? Did the child die? Was it abandoned?

"Whenever there is a problem, we talk about it and try to do something about it," she said.

The challenges of providing health care to the Cap-Haitien community are numerous, and they have increased considerably during the past year. Both Maguy and Saminetha say they've seen a significant increase in child malnutrition cases at FSM and in the communities it serves.

More than a year of political unrest, rampant inflation, and high unemployment have taken their toll on the populace."There are a lot of malnutrition cases," Maguy said. "A lot. It makes me very unhappy." Sometimes, she will give money out of her own pocket to families so they can feed their children, but she can only do so much.

The situation in Haiti is dire-but not without hope. Saminetha recalls the recent case of a severely malnourished infant who was referred to FSM by an agent de santé. The staff was able to nurse the child back to health by feeding it fortified peanut butter, educating the parents about proper nutrition,

and successfully urging the parents to make regular visits to the hospital. The child is now a healthy toddler.

And Maguy proudly relates the case of a pregnant woman she met in the field who had swelling in her legs and feet, a critical sign during pregnancy. After three months of prodding from Maguy, she finally relented to seek treatment at FSM. Because of that intervention, the woman survived and gave birth to healthy twins, a boy and a girl.

"Working in the community is not something you can do by yourself," said Saminetha. "It requires collaboration."

'Working in the community is not something you can do by yourself. It requires collaboration.'

This is why Maguy, Saminetha, and other employees in the community health program do what they do. The challenges may be great, but the satisfaction of saving lives is greater. Without their work on and off the field-without their home visits, their referrals, their community rallies, their ceaseless efforts to advocate for those with the least in this nation of little-many would not receive health care. Their work makes a real difference.

Pediatric Advanced Life Support Training

Volunteers teach courses at JUH

In October 2018, Konbit Sante pediatric volunteers from Connecticut Children's Medical Center continued their long and consistent support of Justinien University Hospital (JUH) by providing two courses on Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) for newborns to JUH pediatric residents. PALS was developed by the American Heart Association to improve the quality of care provided to seriously ill or injured children. The need and content of this training, like many of our activities in support of the pediatric service, are informed by what is learned during the service's monthly mortality reviews in which the CCMC volunteers regularly participate.



Dr. Adam Silverman of CCMC, second from right, teaches PALS to JUH pediatric residents. (Photo by Tracey Proulx)



Antepartum **Care** Meetings

Partners address WHO quidelines for care during childbirth

In late 2018, the World Health Organization updated its guidelines and recommendations for antepartum care for expectant mothers, addressing the quality of clinical care as well as dignity issues. Konbit Sante organized a series of meetings throughout the year that included maternity staff from JUH, FSM, and Haitian Baptist Convention Hospital (HCBH) to discuss ways they could address the new standards. They explored areas in which they could work together and looked at priority areas in need of improvement at their facilities. FSM's quality control committee began to include antepartum care in its assessments, and introduced the recommended practice of allowing women to deliver in the position of their choice.



Health Facility Infrastructure

New ULS clinic serving crucial role in Bande du Nord

In 2014, we began working with our partner ULS (United de Lutte pour la Sante, "Fighting Unit for Health") to build a new health center for the community of Bande du Nord (Fort Bourgeois), a population of about 25,000 situated in the mountainous rural outskirts of Cap-Haitien. Thanks to the support of our donors, we raised **more than \$200,000** for this project.











he new facility opened this past spring under the direction of Dr. Maudelin Mesadieu, and is now offering primary care and preventive medicine education on topics such as family planning, pre-natal and post-natal care, and proper nutrition for young children. Additional work has continued since the opening to complete the facility and address infrastructure issues; for example, robust retaining walls and drainage systems were built to stabilize the mountainside site and prevent water and earth slide damage from affecting the people living below.

We are currently working with a benefactor and partners at JAMES (Justice and Mercy Engineering Society) to provide a large solar panel array for the clinic, which is not hooked up to the electrical grid and is relying on only two solar panels and an inverter for power. This project, which is scheduled to begin in January, will also make ULS less reliant on gas-powered generators, which are becoming increasingly more expensive to operate due to a severe gas shortage in Haiti.

(Clockwise from bottom left): A mason works on one of the retaining walls at ULS; the exterior of the completed ULS clinic; an expectant mother gets her blood pressure checked; retaining walls after completion. (Photos by Rod Harmon)

(Right): A boy from the community helps move supplies on opening day. (Photo by Maudelin Mesadieu)



Management

Pediatric management meetings initiated, facilities manager hired at JUH

As with other healthcare services in Haiti, the pediatric service at Justinien University Hospital (JUH) has faced many challenges over the past year. But in the midst of that, there has been positive change.



ealizing the need for an informed response to ongoing challenges, Konbit Sante has worked with the leadership and staff of JUH pediatrics to organize weekly meetings dealing with management issues that compromise patient care and outcomes identified during monthly mortality reviews. The most immediate goal is to focus on the most easily actionable items and to practice addressing things from a management perspective. This is the first time the hospital has conducted meetings of this type, and the staff participation has been both robust and enthusiastic as a result.

As part of this collaborative effort, JUH also hired a facilities manager, Martial Velouse, who is dedicated to supporting the new pediatric building. Martial has a degree in engineering from Technological University of Santiago in the Dominican Republic, and spent seven years in Cap-Haitien working on child relief efforts.

At JUH, she is engaged in most issues that are not directly clinical in nature, allowing the short-staffed department to concentrate more on patient care. Her focus includes facility infrastructure (water, ventilation, power, etc.), hygiene and infection control, security, and overseeing inventory, maintenance, and repair of medical equipment. This type of position is unprecedented in the hospital, and we hope it proves to be a great model for other services.

Martial has shown a great willingness to work with Konbit Sante to address issues in the pediatric service, and has received support from Konbit Sante staff on how to manage and track tasks. Melick Derius, a Konbit Santesupported employee at JUH who provides maintenance and inventory support for the pediatrics building, is expected to be working closely with Martial to help ensure that facility issues do not negatively impact the care of patients in the service.

Research, Data, & Evaluation

Resident project nears completion

eliable data is essential to all fields of medicine. Without being able to accurately identify problems and develop a plan to address those problems in an informed, deliberate fashion, improvements to patient care and outcomes cannot be accomplished in a manner that is effective and sustainable.

In 2019, Konbit Sante continued to work with Haiti Medical Education (HME) and the administration at Justinien University Hospital to develop a research program at JUH that helps residents fulfill graduation requirements while identifying and studying areas that impact patient care.

Throughout the year, residents received training on how to conduct research from A to Z—everything from identifying a topic

and getting approval from an IRB to analyzing literature, collecting data, and presenting research findings. Konbit Sante and HME recruited volunteer physicians from the United States and Haiti to help mentor the residents throughout the process.

The hope is that the research program will not only make the residents more skilled health providers, but that the data collected will help strengthen capacity for health at JUH and throughout Haiti.

"We want to build capacity so that the Justinien Hospital can carry on outside of Konbit Sante and HME and train their residents," said Dr. Nancy Sohler of HME, who is heading the program with Konbit Sante Executive Director Nate Nickerson. "In addition, all the resident projects are quality improvement projects, so we are hoping that by residents looking at how the care is given here, they can actually improve care or at least get people interested in having a culture of looking at care improvement."

Residents in all services at JUH participated in the program, and are currently in the research phase of their projects. Topics run the gamut from examining satisfaction of care among diabetes patients to comparing and contrasting the methodology of prostate cancer treatment between Haiti and the U.S. They are expected to present their findings in December.

Much of the research has never been conducted before at JUH. Dr. Jean Richard Pierre, a third-year pediatrics resident, is part of a group that is studying staffing in the pediatrics service and how it affects patient care. Using a computer program to randomly select times of the day and night, they conduct Dr. Sohler is encouraged by the enthusiasm of the residents, and by their dedication. Delays caused by political protests and other factors often meant residents couldn't come to the hospital, so the timetable was extended by six months. Some of the program participants have already completed their residencies, but have requested that they can remain in JUH housing so they can complete their research projects. "Quality improvement in the States often means that people invest time and money, and that's hard to do in Haiti," she said. "So what we're trying to do is help them come up with small, feasible ways to make improvements. And they are pretty committed to making that happen."

personal visits to pediatrics and compare staffing levels with actual staffing needs. This includes tracking attendance of everyone in the service, from cleaning crews to physicians.

"The quality of care we provide depends on the workforce, the types of people and the number of people (who report to work)," said Dr. Pierre. "... There are a number of things that contribute to the mortality rate here, and we are wondering if (attendance) is one of the issues."

Dr. Pierre is grateful for the experience, and hopes that JUH will take further strides to incorporate research into resident training.

'If you can see things more clearly, that's how you can improve things.'

– Dr. Jean Richard Pierre

PAHO study completed

Konbit Sante partnered with the Haiti Ministry of Health Northern Department on a \$30,000 grant from PAHO (Pan American Health Organization) to identify factors that promote the implementation of quality improvement (QI) initiatives at healthcare facilities in Haiti as well as factors that impede their progress. As an indication of how important and relevant this research is to many low-resource settings, it was chosen as one of only 13 projects to be funded out of 240 proposals from 22 countries, and was the only one from Haiti. The study has been completed, and addressed case studies of QI efforts on which we have been collaborating with our partners at JUH, FSM, and HCBH. We will be sharing the results when they are finalized.





(Top): Dr. Jean Richard Pierre examines a child suffering from malnutrition at JUH. (Bottom): Eugene Fritzner, a former HCBH patient and current teacher, prepares to work out at HCBH's sports center.

Supplies & Equipment



Konbit Sante delivers muchneeded materials to partners

In August, Konbit Sante reached an historic milestone: Our 20th shipping container was loaded with more than \$100,000 worth of supplies and equipment for delivery to our healthcare partners in Cap-Haitien.



Melick Derius, stock manager of pediatrics for Konbit Sante, checks the inventory at JUH. (Photo by Rod Harmon)

he 40-foot-long container was packed with a vast array of materials, from ultrasound machines, exam tables, and birthing kits to file cabinets, oxygen concentrators and tanks, exercise equipment, office tables and chairs, and much more. Hurricane activity delayed delivery of the container until October, but the contents have now been distributed to our partners.

Konbit Sante has been sending one or more shipping containers per year to Cap-Haitien since 2002—a cumulative value of \$2.5 million to \$3.5 million worth of supplies and equipment. None of it would be possible without the financial support of our donors; the work of volunteers who help pack, organize and load the materials; or the warehouse space donated by J.B. Brown & Sons of Portland.

Since Konbit Sante has legal status in Haiti as a humanitarian organization, we were also able to receive and manage the distribution of supplies and equipment from other donor organizations in 2019 to support health facilities in Haiti.



We are making real progress because of our supporters and volunteers.

Direct Relief International, which works to equip doctors and nurses with life-saving medicines and supplies, experienced difficulties getting materials into the country through Port au Prince, so we agreed to consign all of its pre-positioned Hurricane Relief Modules for the country. The container arrived during the summer, and the contents were shipped to their intended destinations.

In August, we received and distributed a large container of supplies from Hope International Development Agency Canada, including our first order of IV and syringe materials from Becton, Dickinson & Co., an American company that manufactures and sells medical devices, instrument systems, and reagents. If this works well, we will no longer have to collect and sort those supplies at our Maine warehouse.

We consigned a much-needed Universal Anesthesia Machine (UAM) for Citizens of the World Foundation for delivery to HCBH. The UAM is specially-designed for use in resource-poor contexts in which electricity is not reliable. We also delivered a UAM machine that will serve a health center in Limbe that does emergency C-sections.

(Left): Volunteer Steve Connolly helps load our 20th container at the Maine warehouse. (Photo by Rod Harmon)

Other Developments New website

We launched our new website last spring featuring a userfriendly design, easy-to-navigate pages, and features such as a Newsroom section that provide up-to-date information about our work. The website is constantly being updated with new photos, resources, news items, and other material, so check back regularly.

Visit us at Konbitsante.org



(Photo by Leslie Wagner)

10th Maine Walks with Haiti Raises over \$24,000

The 10th annual Maine Walks with Haiti 5K walk/run, "Building Bridges," was held on June 8 in Portland's Back Cove Park, and featured a special performance by Pihcintu, a nationally renowned choral group. The walk/ run raised more than \$24,000. The 11th annual MWWH is tentatively scheduled for June 27, 2020. We hope to see you there!

Want to get involved and make a real difference?

Compete for Konbit:

Creating your own campaign is fun, rewarding and is a great way to contribute to the mission of Konbit Sante.

During the summer, we revived Compete for Konbit, a fun and easy way to support Konbit Sante while competing in favorite pastimes and passions. Whether you are a fitness enthusiast who runs, bikes, or swims, a food challenge competitor, or just someone who enjoys a good contest, you can create your own Personal Campaign Page on our website and garner pledges that benefit Konbit Sante while enjoying your activity of choice.

Contact us at info@konbitsane.org and we'll help you set it up.

Volunteer Profile Mike Kilmartin

'I keep doing it because I enjoy what I'm doing, and I think it's valuable to someone.'

ike Kilmartin has been volunteering for Konbit Sante almost since its inception. He has served as treasurer on the Board of Directors, digitized our financial record-keeping system, helped load containers and track inventory at our Maine warehouse, assisted with our Maine Walks with Haiti annual fundraiser, and more.

But when you ask the 85-year-old Westbrook resident about it, he talks less about what he does for Konbit Sante and more about the "great folks" at Konbit Sante that he works alongside, from staff and board members to volunteers and advisors. He exudes a quiet modesty and a selflessness that underscore his value to the organization.

'I enjoy working with the folks here. There are some fantastic people, dedicated people here who know what they're doing.'



"Mike is one of those people who has quietly and unfailingly rolled up his sleeves and made major contributions wherever and whenever he can for many years, and consistently has done it with great humor and humility," says Executive Director Nate Nickerson. "Whether it has been helping us to balance the books, load a container, or register people for Maine Walks with Haiti, he is there to help make it happen. His generosity of spirit really reflects what it means to work together in 'konbit'."

Mike has spent most of his life working in the healthcare system. As a teenager, he worked in Maine Medical Center doing a variety of tasks, including helping out in the kitchen. After serving in the Korean War, he completed a two-year program at the Bentley School of Finance in Boston, then went on to get a Bachelor's degree in healthcare administration from the University of New Hampshire. He returned to Maine Med immediately after graduation to work as an accountant and remained for 38 years, eventually becoming associate vice president for finance.

Mike retired from Maine Med in 1998, but didn't stay retired for long. His boss at Maine Med, Donald McDowell, was now president of MaineHealth, and he asked Kilmartin to come work for him again as assistant treasurer. He did that for another 15 years.

It was also McDowell who introduced Kilmartin to Konbit Sante in 2006. McDowell was on Konbit Sante's Board of Directors, and he asked Mike if he would be interested in helping convert the organization's financial system from a simple bookkeeping practice to a digital version capable of providing detailed Excel reports. This proved crucial to helping Konbit Sante's Board of Directors understand how the organization operated from a financial standpoint.



Mike served on the Board of Directors from 2006 to 2010, and currently serves on the finance committee. Whenever there is a task to be done, he's ready and willing to help, from registering participants at Maine Walks with Haiti last June to helping keep track of inventory that was loaded onto our 20th shipping container to Haiti in August.

"I keep doing it because I enjoy what I'm doing, and I think it's valuable to someone," he says. "I enjoy working with the folks here. There are some fantastic people, dedicated people here who know what they're doing." And he'll continue to volunteer with Konbit Sante, he says, "until they throw me out!"

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Financial Information

October 1 2018 — September 30 2019



Total Expense: \$816,756

25.8% (\$210,875) Medical Supply Chain **23.8%** (\$194,644) Community-based Health Programming **18.6%** (\$151,954) Facility-based Health Programming **16.4%** (\$133,959) Administration **10.4%** (\$84,781) Infrastructure Programming

5% (\$40,543) Health Education, Management, & Quality Improvement



50.3% (\$352,453)

Foundations and Grants - Program

31.9% (\$316,450)

Donations (includes designated contributions)



In-kind contributions

For full financial information, including recent Form 990s, please visit: konbitsante.org/financial-information

Total Income: \$798,506*

Revenue does not reflect value of volunteer time

and skills contributed. Value of the professional time /olunteers spent in Haiti is estimated at **\$34,535**

27

\$10,000 & over



\$5,000 - \$9,999

Amitie Hispaniola Dr. Matthew Liang **Raymond Nickerson Daniel Raymond Nickerson Foundation** George W. & Kate M. Rowe Fund Dr. Carlyle Schlabach WestWind Foundation

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Anonymous **Eyecare Medical Group Kate Healy** Dr. Steve & Polly Larned **Bob MacKinnon** Nate & Nancy Nickerson Marianne Ringel Michael Ryan & Mary Lou McGregor **The Michael T. Sherman Foundation** Sheri & Dr. Billy Traverse Pamela White Nathaniel & Sara Zilkha

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Dr. Warren & Heidi Alpern Anonymous Anonymous **The Apple Lane Foundation**

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\$500 - \$999

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\$250 - \$499

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All photos by Rod Harmon except *

Top left: Fort St. Michel (FSM) community health worker Fabien Daniel conducts a home visit.* Top right: Winners of the 2019 Maine Walks with Haiti 5K walk/run display their prizes. Middle left: Justinien University Hospital (JUH) pediatric residents take a blood sample from an infant. Bottom left: FSM employees prepare wound care supplies.

Bottom right: Former patient and current trainer Eugene Fritzner works out at Haitian Baptist Convention Hospital.







Top left: Children attend a Christmas party at JUH.*

Top right: Dr. Paul Euclide Toussaint examines a patient at the JUH pediatrics facility. Middle left: Dr. Nancy Sohler, left, assists Dr. Jean Richard Pierre on his resident research project at JUH. Middle right: Konbit Sante Community Program Manager Josaime Clotilde St-Jean looks over a report with FSM assistant project manager Saminetha Joseph.

Bottom left: Pediatric Program Manager Dr. Rony Saint Fleur consults with a patient's family at the JUH pediatrics facility. Bottom right: Pediatric residents go over reports at JUH.







Strengthening capacity for a healthier Haiti.

Want to become involved?

Konbit Sante relies on donations and actions, both big and small, to help sustain and build on what we do. You can also contribute by volunteering your time and talents locally by helping out in the office or warehouse in southern Maine, or by applying to volunteer in Haiti.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our long-term sponsors who help make our work possible. Your ongoing support is invaluable to the efforts of Konbit Sante.

🕀 Learn more: Konbitsante.org



To our donors and volunteers—you make our efforts possible. Thank you.

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USAID Project Santé – Caris Foundation: Supports capacity building work at FSM.

to by Rod Harmon

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*Konbit Sante also supports the salaries of more than 40 workers embedded in the Cap-Haitien healthcare system.

in 🕑 🧭 🗗 YouTube

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