

In the Cap-Haitien Community: Sister Rosemary's Feeding Program

The May 10, 2006 issue of The Christian Science Monitor carried a very good story about our friend, Sister Rosemary Fry, who runs an infant feeding program for children under five years of age in Cap-Haitien. The article is captioned, "Food for children, jobs for mothers."



Supply room at Sister Rosemary's

In addition to feeding about one hundred children at any one time, Sister Rosemary runs a micro-development program for the mothers and helps them learn to manage the small amounts of money they earn. She also places children in schools. A donation of US\$150 per year covers the

cost of school tuition, uniforms, and books, and usually includes one meal per day at school. Konbit Sante is happy to acquire and ship other supplies that Sè Woz (her name in Creole) needs including Flintstones vitamins, a TV/VCR for children's cartoons, commercial-size margarine tubs for serving meals to the children, and black school shoes (no sneakers or sandals) in good condition. Sister Rosemary is truly an inspiration.

Where Would We Be Without You?

Konbit Sante depends on the generous donations from individuals and organizations to fund our programs. Donations of cash, stocks, or in-kind items are greatly appreciated. For more information please visit our website at www.konbitsante.org.

We would like to thank the growing numbers of people who have encouraged and supported Konbit Sante during the last five years. Because our list of donors has outgrown the space available in the newsletter, donors are now listed annually on the Konbit Sante website (www.konbitsante.org). In the meantime, to all our donors and volunteers – you know who you are – we say thank you.

Konbit Sante Cap-Haitien Health Partnership is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation organized in the State of Maine. Contributions are tax-deductible and can be made to Konbit Sante, 320 U.S. Route One, Falmouth, ME 04105.

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The Konbit Sante Model and Mission

Our Mission: To support the development of a sustainable health care system to meet the needs of the Cap-Haitien community with maximum local direction and support.

Started in 2000, Konbit Sante is a Maine-based group of medical and non-medical professionals working to improve the desperate health situation in northern Haiti. Rather than developing a second, parallel system, our mission is to help build local capacity for Haitians to care for Haitians.



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CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

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CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP



Teaching at bedside while severely malnourished infant is weighed.

News from Pediatrics

Feeding Program for Malnourished Infants Re-Started

About ten severely malnourished inpatients, hospitalized because of the risk of death, are currently fed two times a day in Justinian Hospital until they are healthy enough to be home. Konbit Sante paid for the renovation of the kitchen and storage facilities, and also provides food and nutritional supplements for these infants.

For children under six months of age, the feeding consists of milk fortified with sugar and oil. For older infants, the feedings consist of rice, beans, and a bit of chicken. Caregivers (family members) administer the feedings and are also fed because they are often severely malnourished themselves.

Because there is very little technology available to Haitian physicians, their clinical acumen is sharp

Four Haitian Colleagues Visit Portland

During the week of April 3-7, four Haitian pediatric health professionals from Justinian Hospital visited Maine Medical Center's Barbara Bush Children's Hospital and also the College of Nursing and Health Professionals at USM. This was the third in a series of educational exchanges in Portland between Konbit Sante and health professionals from Haiti.

Our guests during April were Dr. Paul Euclide Toussaint, director of pediatric education at Justinian Hospital; Dr. Jacques Alain Pelletier, second year pediatric resident; Miss Marie Yvonne Vixamar Durosier, pediatric nurse educator; and Miss Fleurise Gourgue, pediatric nurse and re-alimentation specialist.

During their week in Portland, these doctors and nurses attended morning reports and went on work rounds with the pediatric teams at the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital. They also visited the Outpatient Services for children, the ER, the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. They participated in an asthma in-service and also learned techniques in feeding premature infants, play therapy, and reading cranial ultrasounds. Dr. Toussaint gave a noontime lecture to residents about malnutrition in Haiti, and Dr. Pelletier gave a brief presentation about pediatrics at the Justinian Hospital to the Konbit Sante board. The nurses spent a day at the USM School of Nursing learning techniques for training nurses in pediatric care. Dr. Ann Lemire, a member of Konbit Sante's board of directors, and Dr. Jaime Petrus, along with Cathy Caron, Brenda Cushing, Polly Larned, and Dr. Kim Moody lead Konbit Sante's volunteer pediatric team.

In addition to providing educational experiences, these visits provide opportunities to exchange ideas and strengthen our collaboration. During this visit, we identified subspecialty teaching

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SCI Honors Konbit Sante Founders

At their 50th anniversary celebration July 15, 2006 in Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International (SCI) honored Michael and Wendy Taylor as distinguished volunteers for their work in Haiti. Sister Cities International was founded in 1956 by Dwight David Eisenhower as a way to promote peace through citizen diplomacy. "We are honored to receive this recognition from SCI," says Konbit Sante president Michael Taylor, "but Konbit Sante would not even exist without the tireless efforts of our outstanding board, our staff, and many dedicated volunteers. We have been generously supported by individuals and by businesses including Maine Medical Center, Northern Data Systems, and Woodard & Curran, just to name a few," said Taylor.

City of Portland, Allen & Coles Donate Warehouse Space

Our deep appreciation goes to the City of Portland for donating space in their waterfront warehouse (formerly Bath Iron Works) for staging container shipments of medical equipment and supplies. Our sixth shipment is scheduled to leave Portland in August and be unloaded in Cap-Haitien in mid-October.

Allen & Coles has generously donated storage space and expertise to help us prepare for our August shipment.

Konbit Sante Establishes Office at Justinian Hospital

In May 2006, Konbit Sante established an office on the Justinian Hospital campus. The space, located behind the administration building and next to the laundry, is now the workplace of Dr. Fennell Coulanges, Konbit Sante Program Manager.

"Having a high-level, full-time person on the ground in Haiti representing Konbit Sante adds some critical capacity to our organization," according to Konbit Sante executive director, Nate Nickerson. "Dr. Coulanges will provide oversight, support, and troubleshooting and assistance to our partners. In addition to coordinating all of our sponsored activities, he will promote more collaboration between the different elements of the system that we support – from the clinical care at the hospital to community outreach."



People wait at the new pediatric outpatient unit.

New Pediatric Outpatient Unit Completed

In April 2006, a new outpatient unit was completed at Justinian Hospital. This small, neat addition more than doubles the space and greatly improves the physical conditions in which patients are evaluated. The new outpatient facility was made possible by Konbit Sante with help from a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Pediatrics *continued*

needs for both doctors and nurses at the Justinian, discussed ways to improve communications between physicians and nurses and jointly develop protocols, and



Pediatric colleagues in Portland

focused on the need for infection control at Justinian Hospital.

“For Konbit Sante volunteers and for the personnel of the Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital, this visit brought home the reality

of the material disparity between our two countries along with the common desire to care for children in order to assure a better future,” noted Dr. Ann Lemire. “This drives our work every day. Because there is very little technology available to Haitian physicians, their clinical acumen is sharp, and it was inspiring to see them eagerly share their knowledge and expertise.”

Our deep appreciation to Dr. John Bancroft, head of pediatrics at Maine Medical Center and to Dr. Kim Moody, College of Nursing and Health Professionals at University of Southern Maine, for arranging excellent educational opportunities for our guests.

On Friday, April 7, Rachel Talbot Ross organized a welcome reception, hosted by the City of Portland, to introduce our guests to a wider community and to celebrate

Portland’s Sister City relationship with Cap-Haitien. One of the many high points of the evening was Dr. Jacques Pelletier’s moving acapella singing of *Haiti Maman Cherie*, a love song to Haiti.

Update: Community Outreach Program at Fort St. Michel

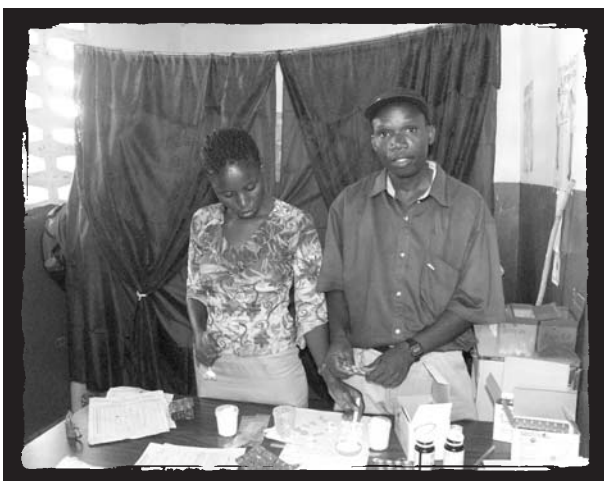
Konbit Sante has hired its third *agent sante* (community health worker), Ms. Gracilia Mondésir Sénat, to supplement the two *agents sante* already employed by Konbit Sante. These energetic outreach workers traverse the Fort St. Michel neighborhood on foot daily. They are a crucial new human resource for identifying people in the community with TB symptoms, bringing them to the clinic for evaluation, and supporting them through treatment.

To get her health message out in a community with low literacy, *agent sante* Gracilia Mondésir Sénat has written a song called *Thème Konbit Sante*. Roughly translated from Creole, it encourages everyone in the community to form a collaboration (*a konbit*) for health. It encourages people to stand up and be highly motivated to fight TB together.



Agent sante Gracilia Mondésir Senat calls people to neighborhood clinic.

Since September 2003, more than three thousand people in the community have attended educational seminars given by the *agents sante*. At any given time there are 80 people being treated for TB in the Fort St. Michel neighborhood, but given the national prevalence of TB, we know that there are many more cases that are as yet undiagnosed and in need of treatment. An energetic and very competent public health nurse named Viola Jean-Baptiste provides the day-to-day supervision of the TB program at the clinic. The addition of the Konbit Sante *agents sante* to her team has allowed her to expand her heroic efforts. The *agents sante*’ rapport with their patients, ability to provide very effective education, and persistence in following up with people, have resulted in a near-zero dropout rate from the six-month treatment.



Agents sante Betty Blanc and Jean-Claude Obas prepare TB medications.

Haitian Proverb

Lasante se pi gwo riches.

Health is the greatest wealth.

International Health Experts Evaluate Konbit Sante

Three experts in the field of international health traveled to Haiti in March with Konbit Sante leadership and heads of the pediatric and infrastructure teams. The on-site assessment was requested by Konbit Sante to assess Konbit Sante’s activities in Cap-Haitien and to discuss future directions for the organization. Visiting team members included Nancy M. Dorsinville, an anthropologist who leads the AIDS Policy Working Group at the Harvard Center for Health and Population Studies; Dr. Henry Perry, who has worked extensively on global health issues in Bolivia, Haiti, and Bangladesh and is currently Carl Taylor Professor for Equity and Empowerment at the Future Generations Graduate School of Applied Studies; and Dr. Jonathon Simon, Chair of the Department of International Health, Director of the Center for International Health, and associate professor of international health at the Boston University School of Public Health, and has worked in more than twenty developing countries. Selected notes from their report:

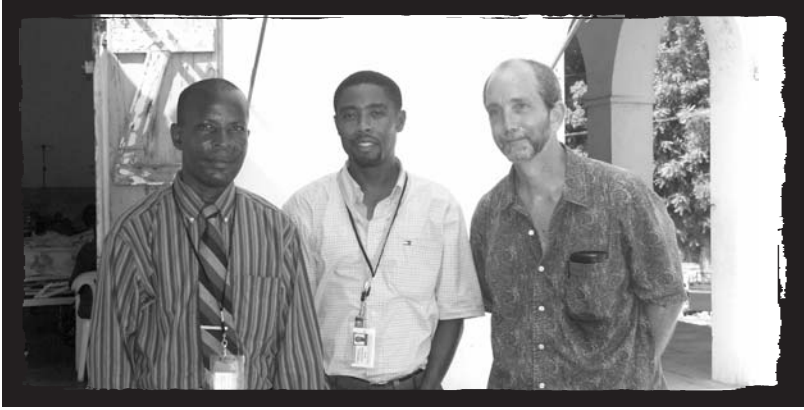
Given the turmoil in Haiti and the difficulties of carrying on collaborative activities there during the past several years, Konbit Sante has done a remarkable job supporting critical health activities in Cap-Haitien and building a strong partnership with the health sector there and with the civil society more generally. Furthermore, Konbit Sante has established a strong organizational and support base in Portland, Maine.

Konbit Sante has started a transformative process in the Department of Pediatrics that hopefully will be continued through time and extend to other departments in the Justinian University Hospital. The strengthening of the quality of the clinical services and the fostering of an environment that is striving for excellence amidst the challenges of provision of care in a public facility at this time in Haiti is impressive. This change is reflected in the Department of Pediatrics’ ability to recruit four interns into its residency program next year, an achievement which has not been possible previously. The “upward spiral” of knowledge-driven, evidence-based clinical practice has started with Konbit Sante’s help, but the material shortages and ongoing challenges mean ongoing support for this effort is required.

The salary support for three community outreach workers at the Fort St. Michel Health Center to strengthen the community-based TB program is a strong beginning of support for basic health care services. Expanding support for key outreach activities among the poor while at the same time continuing support for the Justinian University Hospital with training, supplies, and technical assistance for infrastructure strengthening will make it possible for Konbit Sante to leverage its limited resources for the benefit of the health sector and the health of the population.

Konbit Sante: On the Ground in Haiti

Konbit Sante has a strong team in place in Haiti providing a consistent medical and management presence, solving problems, and providing valuable feedback. Let us introduce them.



Dr. Fennell Coulanges (left) with Woody Paul and Nate Nickerson.

Dr. Fennell Coulanges, In-Country Program Manager

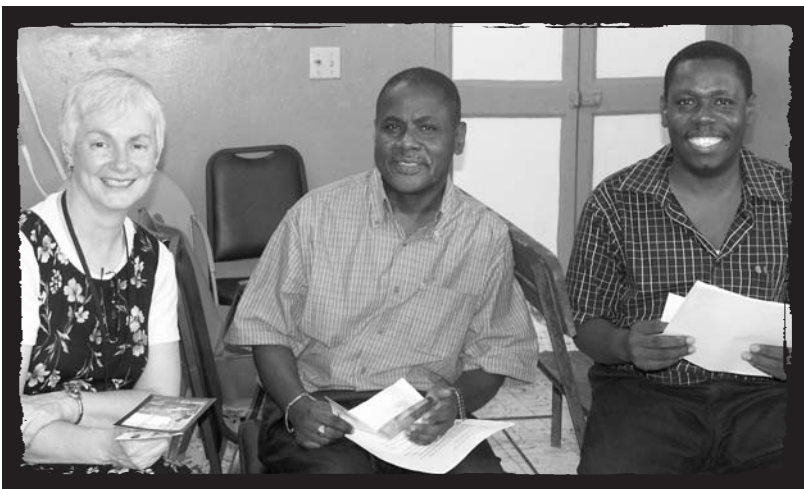
Dr. Coulanges is our newest addition in Haiti (March 2006). After receiving his MD in Port-au-Prince, Dr. Coulanges received an MPH from Loma Linda University in California. His presence will greatly enhance our joint planning capability, our communications, our project supervision, and our participation in meetings with the Ministry of Health, USAID, and other health care organizations. Dr. Coulanges also spends one day a week providing direct clinical care at the Fort St. Michel clinic, increasing physician coverage there and improving the connection between the clinic and the Justinian Hospital.



Dr. Michel Pierre and colleague.

Dr. Michel Pierre, Internal Medicine Educator

Dr. Pierre has run the educational program in internal medicine at Justinian Hospital for three years. He received his MD in Port-au-Prince and has completed advanced studies in gastroenterology and neurology in France and Martinique. In 2003, Konbit Sante renovated and furnished a conference/teaching facility for internal medicine. Dr. Pierre's presence has greatly enhanced education and patient care.



Dr. Paul Euclide Toussaint (right) with Dr. Ann Lemire and Dr. Serge Charles, chief of pediatrics.

Dr. Paul Euclide Toussaint, Pediatric Educator

Dr. Toussaint joined the Justinian Hospital medical staff in 2000 as a staff pediatrician and specialist in neonatal intensive care. In 2005, Konbit Sante, with a grant from USAID, was able to make Dr. Toussaint a full-time pediatric educator. His teaching skills and energy are inspirational, and he has already improved the reputation of Justinian Hospital as a place to complete a pediatrics residency. Konbit Sante also renovated and furnished a pediatric teaching/conference space.

Agents Sante at Fort St. Michel

Betty Blanc, Jean-Claude Obas, and Gracilia Mondésir Sénat are Konbit-Sante-sponsored *agents sante* (community health workers). These three individuals work in the neighborhood surrounding the clinic at Fort St. Michel. While their work focuses on education, detection, and treatment related to TB, they also provide community outreach and education on many other important health issues.

Dr. Joe Maxinau, Pediatrician

Dr. Maxinau, originally from Limbe, near Cap-Haitien, is a member of the Justinian pediatric teaching and provider staff who works with outpatients and provides liaison with OB/GYN. Konbit Sante supports part of his salary for education through a grant from USAID.



Miss Ivanne Durosier (center) with student nurses.

Miss Marie Ivanne Vixamar Durosier, Pediatric Nurse Educator

Born in Cap-Haitien, Miss Durosier works full-time on the staff of the Ecole des Infermieres Notre Dame de la Sagesse, the nursing school located on the Justinian Hospital campus. Her specific responsibilities are to train pediatric nurses, working closely with Dr. Toussaint and other members of the pediatric staff, and to improve communications and coordination between nurses and physicians.



Miss Fleurise Gourgue with patient.

Miss Fleurise Gourgue, Pediatric Nurse

While Miss Gourgue is not directly supported by Konbit Sante, we need to recognize the great work she does. Miss Gourgue has been on the Justinian Hospital staff for 20 years and devotes tremendous energy to the care of the babies on the ward. Her specialty is feeding malnourished infants, and she oversees the feeding program that Konbit Sante re-started in 2005.

Mr. Axnick Woody Paul, Administrator

Mr. Paul manages our finances in Haiti including financial reporting for our USAID grant. He assists with trip arrangements, in-country travel and accommodations, coordinating container arrivals, and setting up myriad meetings with people at the Ministry of Health, the hospital, the clinic, and in the community. Woody is also in charge of finance and administration for the University of Miami/School of Medicine Family Practice residency program at Justinian Hospital, and still finds time to teach economics at the Universite Notre Dame d'Haiti in Cap-Haitien.

In-Country Consultants

Dr. Andre Vulcain, director of the University of Miami's residency program in family medicine at Justinian Hospital, has been a good friend and advisor since the beginning of our program. He has recently become an official consultant to Konbit Sante, helping recruit and mentor our new in-country program manager.

Miss Guinie J. Zéphirin helps us part time with secretarial services; Mr. Michel-Ange Wolf Chaperon provides part-time technical support for the computers and internet connection at Justinian Hospital; Mr. Josué Limprévil provides technical consultation related to medical equipment and electrical systems at Justinian Hospital; and Mr. Henri-Claude Francois is our excellent driver who gets us around Cap-Haitien rain or shine.