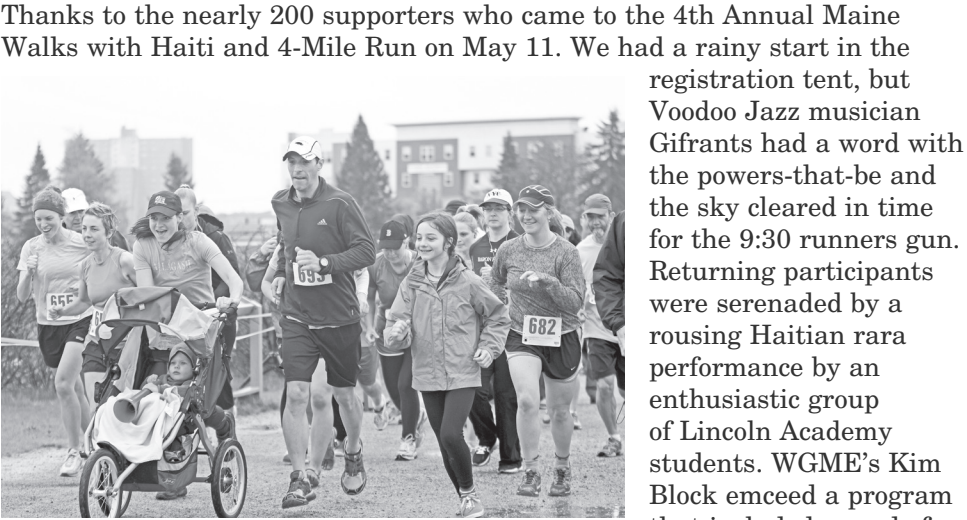


Maine Walks with Haiti a Success!



Thanks to the nearly 200 supporters who came to the 4th Annual Maine Walks with Haiti and 4-Mile Run on May 11. We had a rainy start in the registration tent, but Voodoo Jazz musician Gifrants had a word with the powers-that-be and the sky cleared in time for the 9:30 runners gun. Returning participants were serenaded by a rousing Haitian rara performance by an enthusiastic group of Lincoln Academy students. WGME’s Kim Block emceed a program that included awards for the top male and female runners. The crowd also enjoyed DJ Harold Similien, musician Gifrants, and storyteller Charlot Lucien. Special thanks go to our many sponsors including WGME 13 and our Gold Sponsors – Maine Medical Center, Sabre Yachts & Back Cove Yachts, Portland Rotary and the Hagge Family, and Matt Liang and Diane Garthwaite. In addition, this event would not have been a success without the scores of volunteers, in-kind donors and the many students, groups, individuals and families that raised money on our behalf. *Mesi anpil* to all!

Become a member of our supply chain

We invite your help to acquire more of the medicines, equipment and supplies that are in constant need. Opportunities to redirect valuable items to Haiti arise when a medical facility closes or is renovated, biomedical equipment is replaced, or family members no longer require a wheelchair, crutches, or other medical aid. In addition, we invite individuals and groups to assemble birthing kits that are distributed to expectant mothers. To learn more, contact Danny Muller at (207) 347-6733 or danny@konbitsante.org. A list of urgently and always needed items can be found at www.konbitsante.org/get-involved.

May we send you occasional E-news?

May we send you occasional e-news? It’s easy, it’s green, and it saves money for Konbit Sante. To receive electronic updates, please visit www.konbitsante.org and sign up.

We Welcome Your Comments:

info@konbitsante.org

How You Can Help

It is the generous donations from individuals and organizations that support our work to improve the health of Haitians. Please consider making a contribution today. For your convenience you can use the enclosed remittance envelope. Or to donate online, please visit our website at www.konbitsante.org to make a donation on line.

Thank you!

The Konbit Sante newsletter is published by:
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Konbit Sante

CAP-HAITIEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2013



Happy and healthy children are the best proof that the health system is meeting the needs of its citizens. Together with our partners, Konbit Sante improves the essential building blocks of the health system, so that Haiti can one day have a health system that really meets the needs of its people - from door-to-door community outreach all the way to hospital care.

The Essential Building Blocks

KONBIT SANTE’S MISSION is to support the Haitian vision of a strong health system to improve the health of the people in northern Haiti. In Creole, a *konbit* refers to a traditional method of working together to till your friends’ fields as well as your own. The people working together side by side as equals toward a common purpose, each contributing what they are able, form the *konbit*. *Sante* means health. The health of the Haitian people is our common purpose, and the *konbit* includes everyone with their “shoulder to the plow”- Haitian community groups, the Haitian government, US and international funders, and you, our supporters and volunteers.

How does our *konbit* help build a strong, sustainable health system?

Like any structure, a health system needs the right building blocks, including:

- Well-trained workers,
- Medicine, supplies and equipment,
- Infrastructure like safe buildings, clean water, and sanitation, and
- Quality health care services

Together with our partners, Konbit Sante improves these building blocks, so that Haiti can one day have a health system that really meets the needs of its people - from door-to-door community outreach all the way to hospital care. The goal is always to enhance the capacity of Haitians to provide care to their citizenry.

In this issue of our newsletter, we want to share with you how your contributions have improved these essential building blocks.

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends of Konbit Sante,

Latin American writer Eduardo Hughes Galeano is quoted as saying “I don’t believe in charity. I believe in solidarity. Charity is so vertical. It goes from the top to the bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other person. I have a lot to learn from other people.” I think that this is a provocative but eloquent way of framing our aspiration for *accompaniment* and *konbit* in our daily work; work based on respectful and mutual relationships focused on the shared purpose of developing a stronger health system to serve the Haitian people. Of course, we all sometimes fall short and slip into the more prescribed and well-trodden roles of givers and receivers of charity, whether that is of knowledge or other resources. To get beyond that takes face time, frank talk and working together on hard issues.

I am encouraged whenever I see evidence of growth in solidarity and mutuality, because I believe that the gains made in that context are the lasting and sustainable ones. They are real because they are born of the collaboration, and are not simply imposed solutions to complicated problems. I hope that this newsletter gives you a glimpse of some of this work. As always, I invite you to continue to walk together with us in solidarity. To us your contribution, in whatever fashion it takes, is not charity; but rather an investment in people who have earned our respect and work that deserves our support.

Peace,
Nate

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Well-trained Workers

Improved hospital financial management



We were thrilled to be asked by the administration at Justinian Hospital to work with them to strengthen their financial management systems. In response, a team of volunteers and staff conducted a comprehensive review and made preliminary recommendations. Developing stronger, more accountable and transparent systems will be a major step forward in the ability of this critical part of the public health system to be self-sustaining. Improvements to the financial systems will improve collections resulting in the hospital's ability to improve patient care and treat more people, and to better extend services to those without the ability to pay.

Distance learning a reality

The high cost of travel to Haiti for staff and volunteers is no longer a significant barrier to education, training, and the regular communication necessary for program successes. Medical residents and doctors at Justinian Hospital (JUH) are now able to meet face to face with specialists in the US - by webcam - courtesy of Konbit Sante's teleconferencing initiative. For instance, we now host the Haiti Medical Education Project's weekly interactive trainings on a wide range of topics. In addition, Konbit Sante volunteers, in collaboration with Maine Medical Center's simulation lab, are designing remote clinical trainings using manikins or volunteers posing as patients to simulate real clinical situations. The recently completed electronic inventory of all medical equipment at JUH allows the simulations to be customized to the diagnostic tools the Haitian clinicians have on hand.



Regular meetings and training are now held in our conference room in Haiti that holds over 40 people. The integration of teleconferencing reduces costs, strengthens relationships, and dramatically improves access to medical information throughout the hospital.



An important element of the first phase of the financial study was to look at how patient payments are made, recorded and reconciled throughout the hospital, such as at this station where patients are paying for their prescriptions.

Medicine, Supplies and Equipment

Electronic tracking for hospital supplies



Recent MPH grad and volunteer Bretta Hixson just completed an 8-month project improving supply chain management at Justinian Hospital. Working with hospital and Konbit Sante staff, she designed a customized electronic database for medicine, supplies and biomedical equipment to replace the paper system. These improvements will guarantee more transparency and accountability to donors of supplies, and allow information to be shared throughout the hospital campus about what is in stock. The new system will be managed by local staff and integrated into the hospital's purchasing system. Kudos to Bretta and depot staff for their important work!

Delivering life-saving supplies

Ever wondered how needed supplies reach our partners in Haiti? We collect purchased and donated supplies in warehouse space generously donated by JB Brown & Sons where staff and volunteers organize, pack and catalog every item. When we receive enough funding we contract for a 40-foot shipping container that travels by truck and by sea to its destination. Our 15th container full of urgently needed biomedical equipment such as five infant incubators, an anesthesia machine, fetal monitors, and EKG machines is on its way. The container also includes over 1,000 birthing kits sent to us by supporters from across the country! A special thanks goes to the dozens of groups from schools, churches, universities, and local organizations that assembled and donated them.



Bretta (far right) works with depot staff to input medicine, supplies and equipment into the new electronic database.



The containers we fund and send are only one element of the many ways that Konbit Sante helps acquire, deliver and manage drugs and medical supplies to assure they reach patients in need. We also partner with Hope International Development Agency and Direct Relief International, who send regular shipments of requested supplies to our partners. We thank them for their exceptional cooperation and commitment to improving the quality of health care in northern Haiti.

Quality Health Care Services

Quality improvement in pediatrics



Adopting quality improvement (QI) techniques is a milestone for medical facilities in a country like Haiti. It takes courage to admit a problem exists and to shift the focus away from assigning blame to look instead at how changing the process can solve the problem. The steps in the QI process are: identify a problem, measure it, agree on how to correct it, set a goal, and measure ongoing progress toward that goal. Two years ago, Konbit Sante pediatrician Dr. Rony Saint Fleur with help from volunteer public health students began a QI process with the staff at Justinian Hospital to improve the rate at which pediatric patients receive the medications prescribed. We are happy to report that their efforts have paid off with a decrease in missed medicines of 57%. By being brave enough to identify a serious problem and creative enough to find feasible solutions, the staff in pediatrics can be proud of this result. This significant improvement translates into better outcomes for the children in their care, and has already inspired other similar efforts in the hospital.

New partnership to expand primary care

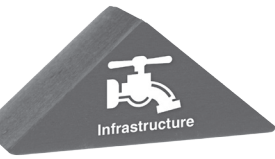
An important part of our work is to build the capacity of Haitian organizations dedicated to improving health. With funding from Chemonics, we are excited to support *Unite de Lutte Pour la Santé* (ULS) whose impact in the community was limited by lack of personnel, supplies and management skills. In the first two months of start-up, we have helped ULS to: establish prenatal mobile clinics where 79 pregnant women received consultation and essential meds; train 20 traditional birth attendants to perform clean and safe deliveries; and develop a basic system for financial management as well as a basic inventory system for medicine and supplies. Our work with ULS reinforces the Haitian Ministry of Health's goal to reduce maternal and child mortality by 50%.



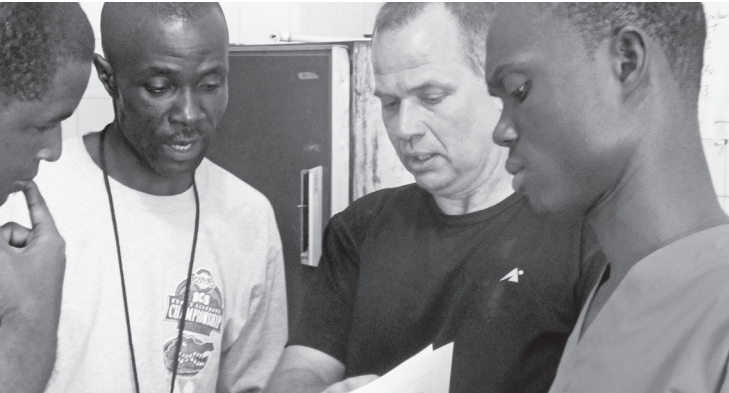
ULS is a non-profit founded and operated by a group of young Haitian nurses and physicians to provide primary care in Bande de Nord, an underserved area in the mountains north of Cap-Haitien. Dr. Maudelin Mesadieu (far left) serves as director.

Infrastructure

Safer surgeries



Our team of volunteer engineers and other professionals has spearheaded many projects over the years to improve the water, sanitation, and safety at Justinian Hospital. Thanks to members of the team who traveled this winter a sterilizer donated by Mercy Hospital in Portland is now operational. Placed adjacent to the operating rooms, this high-capacity machine helps improve efficiency and infection control for the OR service, translating into better care for surgical patients.



Volunteer and US board chair Hugh Tozer (center) trains hospital technicians who are responsible for operating the sterilizer.

Meet ULS Mothers Club member César Guerda



One of ULS's initiatives has been to organize clubs for mothers and fathers to promote basic health practices. Mrs. Guerda, shown here addressing the other mothers of her group on their graduation from a series of classes, is one of 54 parents so far to have joined the clubs. As a mother of four, she is proud to report that she now knows how to make sure her drinking water is safe and what to do when her kids are sick. She has enjoyed the other mothers in her club and now plans to teach her neighbors what she has learned. Empowering community members at the grassroots level is a significant part of ULS's work.