



[Large photo caption here]. Inset: Downton Abbey actress Laura Carmichael and actor Allen Leech thank supporters of the campaign Haiti: Make Births Safe.

### How Do Safe Birthing Kits Get to Haiti?

*Hear from Jacqueline Klosek, a new mother who is making births safer!*

*500 safe birthing kits is A LOT of kits! How did you set this goal and what motivated you to do so many?*

In August 2014, I had my first child – a baby girl named Kayla Emerson. A feeling of overwhelming gratitude prompted me, along with Kayla’s father, to form Sunshine Girl Charities in her honor. We took on the birth kit effort as a first project because every woman deserves the right to a safe and healthy birth. I wanted to do as much as I could do to make sure that happens.

*How did you get so many finished? Did you have support?*

Yes! I could not have finished so many kits without the support of my family, including my mom and mother-in-law. My friends were also critical to my efforts. They included women from the “new mom’s group” at the Jersey Shore University Medical Center where Kayla was born, and the wonderful ladies in my triathlon training group, Jersey Girls Stay Strong Multisport Club.

*Continued next page...*

### Haiti: Makes Birth Safe Announces Winners of Downton Abbey Experience

Haiti Make Births Safe, a campaign coordinated by Konbit Sante and Haiti Hospital Appeal, continues our work to strengthen maternal and neonatal care in Northern Haiti.

Through our spring sweepstakes, we partnered with Downton Abbey actress Laura Carmichael, and awarded 2 lucky winners a trip to London to meet the cast and visit Highclere

Castle. Laura, a staunch advocate for maternal health improvements who traveled to Haiti and visited with our Haitian partners and staff, has been tireless in her efforts to strengthen health initiatives that benefit pregnant mothers and their children.

As Laura thanks all of you, our supporters, we thank her for her partnership!



Program Manager Miss Clotilde Josaimé St. Jean distributes kits at a mobile outreach clinic.

## Safe Birthing Kits *Continued*

*What, if anything, will you tell your own child about completing 500 birthing kits in the first year of her life?*

This project was done as part of our work with Sunshine Girl Charities. I hope Kayla will take an active part in the organization when she's old enough and pursue causes that are close to her heart. I plan on telling her that she's the reason that I founded our charity. More specifically, I want her to know that her birth inspired me to work with Konbit Sante to ensure successful, healthy births for other women.

*Contact us for information on how you can make safe birthing kits for Haiti!*



Konbit Sante's youngest volunteer holds a safe birthing kit.

## Konbit Sante Readies Our 16<sup>th</sup> Shipping Container from Maine to Cap-Haitien

What do 1000 safe birthing kits, 2 X-Ray machines, an infant incubator and an ultrasound machine have in common?

They are being crated and packed, along with hundreds of other pieces of medical equipment and supplies, right now in our Portland warehouse!

You can volunteer in person to help, donate supplies, or conduct outreach in your communities to help gather safe birthing kits and other supplies. Contact us directly at (207) 347-6733 and ask for Danny.

## The Journey From Maine Volunteer to Program Volunteer in Haiti

**Meet Sydney Ford, Konbit Sante Volunteer, who traveled to Haiti this June to support maternal health programs.**

*How long have you been volunteering with Konbit Sante?*

Since the winter of 2012 ... my junior year of college.

*What was it about the organization that motivated you to pursue a volunteer opportunity with us?*

I was really inspired by the determination to create a system that was sustainable and self-sufficient rather than just providing charity work. Working with Haitians to create Haitian solutions to Haitian problems; I thought that was really great and what drew me to the organization.

*What kind of work did you do initially a volunteer for KS?*

I started off volunteering in the warehouse – organizing, sorting, counting [medical supplies.] I also worked on a summary of service assessments done at the Justinien University Hospital (JUH). I compiled data from the Radiology Department. I helped out a little bit preparing for Maine Walks with Haiti last summer. I helped develop a donor packet. I did whatever was needed.

*More recently, you traveled to Haiti*

*with us to do an evaluation of one of our projects. What was that experience like?*

It was unlike any experience I've ever had in my life! It was my first trip to a developing country. It was so eye opening. It was exciting and a little bit sad and inspiring and a little bit discouraging ... it was a lot of emotions. But working on the project was great. I learned a lot about how things work in international

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“I was really inspired by the determination to create a system that was sustainable and self-sufficient rather than just providing charity work.”

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NGOs – the hoops that you have to jump through in organizing and coordinating things. It was great to meet a lot of people who are involved with Konbit Sante on the Haiti side. For me, it filled in the gaps. Working with Konbit Sante from the Portland, Maine side of things, I didn't really have an understanding of how programs got carried out. So, it was really interesting to meet Ms. St. Jean, and Adeca, and Jose and see what they do day to day. I'm really, really glad that I went.



Sydney Ford (right) working with two community health workers from ULS to conduct interviews evaluating the effectiveness of traditional birth attendants. They were joined by Leah Hoeniges (far right), Konbit Sante volunteer & mapping specialist.



# Medical Equipment Partnerships Matter

One particularly limiting factor – frequently identified by our partner clinicians trying to provide quality health care – is the lack of adequate and reliable medical equipment needed to do their jobs well. Konbit Sante has been working on this problem as one of our focused areas of partnership for many years.

While all supplies acquisition and management is complicated in resource-poor settings, there are particular challenges with obtaining and maintaining medical equipment. For example, some equipment that becomes available is particularly rugged (and desirable) because of its age and is offered to us simply because hospitals were upgrading to new models. Other times, machines have been taken out of service because they are at the end of their usable life span, and will certainly not survive in Haiti.

We have long benefitted from the time and expertise of technical volunteers like Mike O'Neill, who is a GE radiographic equipment technician that serves hospitals in Maine. With his acumen for biomedical equipment repair and maintenance, and the deep understanding of conditions in Haiti that he has acquired over time, Mike is a great resource in evaluating the condition and appropriateness of equipment that becomes available before we invest in sending it down. Even fully functional equipment operating under the best of conditions will need repair and maintenance, and Mike is one of our chief “resident” consultants assisting with that.

Mike has been a long-term

volunteer, most recently traveling with us for a week in June with his son Alex where he worked together with our Haitian technician, Josue Limprevil, to evaluate several x-ray and other imaging machines in the radiology service, operating room, and orthopedic service, to do repairs that were possible and to identify the parts that will needed to be replaced on his next



Volunteer Mike O'Neill and Josue Limprevil repair a portable x-ray machine.

trip. Mike and Josue were also able to identify and repair a problem with a circuit board in the newest and highest capacity sterilizer in the OR. In the US, this circuit board would have simply been replaced, but they were able to re-solder some problematic connections and get it back on-line. Mike will be further supporting Josue's work with newly planned monthly teleconference meetings at which Josue can seek technical support and assistance from afar for some of the very challenging equipment issues he is dealing with on a daily basis.

If you are interested in finding ways to support our improvements in delivering and maintaining medical equipment, please contact us.

## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear friends of Konbit Sante,

Immediately after this year's wonderful *Maine Walks with Haiti* event, I returned to Haiti just as the incidence of *chikungunya*, a miserable dengue fever-like illness, was peaking in the North of Haiti. It is transmitted by the same day-biting urban mosquitoes that are known to carry dengue fever. It is marked by several days of high fever, weakness, and intense pain in one's arms and legs.

In spite of new trials, progress was made on many fronts. Our program evaluation work certainly highlighted many areas in need of improvement, but there were high notes as well. The two most encouraging things were:

- Great progress that the Justinian Hospital has made in strengthening its financial management systems;
- Pediatric services dramatically improving their newborn survival rates.

As we were congratulating Dr. Dube (Justinian Hospital Executive Director) on his progress to date, he said simply “with patience and perseverance many things are possible.” I wrote that down, because it struck me as one of the true cornerstones of *accompaniment*. Accompaniment is actually a two-way street that involves patience with each other and with things beyond our control, paired with dogged perseverance to tackle the things that we can change. Both of these positive changes have taken a long time to be realized, but because of the “continuous positive pressure” from people on all sides of the partnership who cared to see things move in a positive direction, they did. It is being in the privileged position to witness that kind of change that inspires me to continue on this path, in spite of any challenges and setbacks.

Nathan Nickerson, DrPH, RN  
Executive Director, Konbit Sante



Dr. Paul Toussaint caption here.

# Konbit Sante

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## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Maine Walks with Haiti an Incredible Success!

*Over \$60,000 Raised to Support Our Work in Haiti*

Konbit Sante's 5th Annual Maine Walks with Haiti was an incredible success, with hundreds of participants, volunteers, walkers, runners and performers joining us for a day of activities in solidarity with people in Haiti.

We would like to thank our generous sponsors and all of our volunteers who worked tirelessly for months to make Maine Walks with Haiti a fun and enjoyable community event.

John Mayer  
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Portland Mayor Michael Brennan speaks with Konbit Sante founder Dr. Michael Taylor.

## 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](http://www.konbitsante.org).

**Thank you!**

### May we send you occasional E-news?

It's a great way to learn more about how Konbit Sante is working to improve health care in northern Haiti. To receive electronic updates, please visit [www.konbitsante.org](http://www.konbitsante.org) and look for Follow Us on the right margin. Also follow us on Facebook by clicking on the Facebook icon located at the bottom of the web page.

### We Welcome Your Comments:

[info@konbitsante.org](mailto:info@konbitsante.org)

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362 US Route 1  
Falmouth, ME 04105  
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E-mail: [info@konbitsante.org](mailto:info@konbitsante.org)

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