

HBS Newsletter

Hôpital Bon Samaritain

Limbé, Haiti



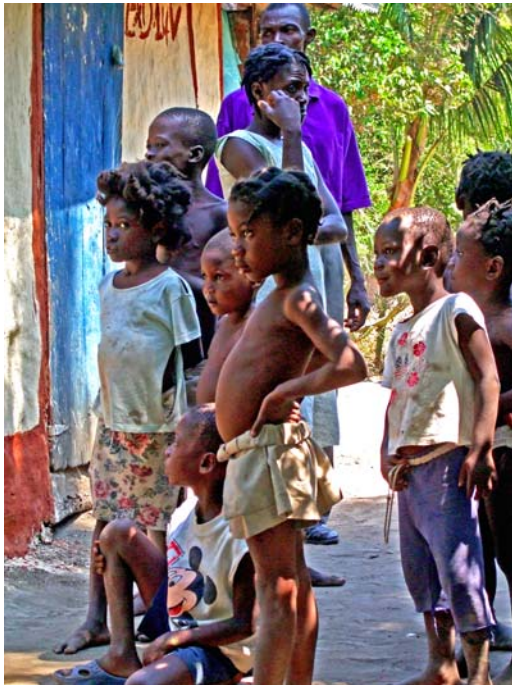
Summer 2008

HAITI

A beautiful country with a very rich culture



Haiti is considered the least-developed country in the Western Hemisphere and amongst one of the poorest countries in the world, with approximately 80% of the population living in poverty. In its earlier days, Hispaniola (Haiti/Dominican Republic) was considered one of the most prosperous colonies due to its abundant resources. Since then, overpopulation of over 8.5 million people with social unrest, climate changes and other issues have culminated to Haiti being what it is today.



Social unrest, economics and erosion have caused the decline in local agricultural production making it so the majority of Haiti's food today is being imported from other countries. Rising world food prices have resulted in great financial strain coupled with soaring fuel costs. The recessive economic situation in North America is having a direct impact on Haiti as Haitians living here normally send about 150 million USD per month in support of their families in Haiti. As many as two thirds of the Haitian people do not have formal jobs and most families rely on their relatives in the US and Canada to support them. Those who do have jobs earn an average income of 3 USD per day. Rice and beans which are the main staple for Haitians, has doubled in cost over the past year along with the cost of fuel.

For these reasons HBS is essential in providing medical care but also plays a very important roll economically as it provides many jobs. HBS has seen a change in patients, as those that come from far away

can no longer afford the transport cost to the hospital. We have been obliged to extend more credit and provide more free services although our finances are severely strained from all these additional costs. HBS fuel bills have doubled this last year as the hospital needs 1500 gallons of diesel fuel per month, now costing over USD 6,500, to sustain the production of electricity. The costs of supplies and medicines are also on the rise and have become more difficult to procure. We are in desperate need of additional financial support this year to continue its services. HBS had opened an Indigent Fund to be able to help all the people that need medical attention even though they might not be able to afford it.





Meet Justin, one of our Kai Mira children

Justin is a, sweet, happy, 12 year old orphan with cerebral palsy. He has a big jubilant smile and can say a few words. He can use his left hand and leg sparingly, but his movements are erratic. He is very cooperative and despite his disability strives hard to accomplish tasks. Justin loves cars and toys that move. He is quite intelligent and always wants to help where possible. In January 2007 he was given a wheelchair and he can now pull himself up into it. With his left foot he manages to push the chair across the porch. Of course he loves being pushed and always smiles when helped.

Cerebral palsy is a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and to maintain balance and posture. The disorder appears in the first few years of life but usually remains stable over time. Cerebral palsy happens when the areas of the brain that control movement and posture do not develop properly or get damaged. People with cerebral palsy may have difficulty walking and may also have trouble with tasks such as writing or using tools. There is no cure for cerebral palsy but treatment and therapy helps.



Update on Micheline

Micheline came to the hospital for a follow up and to change the dressing on her leg. She was the girl that was admitted to the hospital last year with cellulites of her left leg below the knee. At first we did not even recognize her. It was amazing to see her as she looked so good! She was walking with a stick to help her balance but it was wonderful to see her looking so healthy and strong. She still has to return for dressings but she is doing very well.

We know that Micheline has touched a lot of your hearts. (Newsletter Fall 2007) Thank you for donating towards the Indigent Fund so we can continue helping people like her.

Surgery

From January through May we have had a five surgery groups visit HBS. Each surgery team has their own specialties and performed up to 60 surgeries per visit.



We would like to thank the surgery groups for all their time and effort volunteering at HBS and for helping all the Haitian people that needed surgery, saving lives and alleviating suffering.



A note from Joanna



Hello everyone. I am in Florida, spending time with my family and recuperating before making my next trip to Haiti. On April 18th I celebrated my 85th birthday. Family came to visit me and brought me cake and beautiful flowers. I think I am doing very well, considering all. I have my little aches and pains but I am trying to walk a lot and do my exercises in the morning so I keep fit. I hope this newsletter will find you all in good health and spirit. Please continue to help us as Haiti is going through this difficult time. Thank you for your continued support!!

