Haiti Medical Project  
2018 Year End Report

The end of 2018 is approaching, and I know that many of our supporters use the period of Thanksgiving, Christmas and the end of the year to consider new or on-going support of Haiti Medical Project. So I owe you a report.

First, a word about how we got here. Haiti Medical Project is a Church of the Brethren initiative that grew out of our strong support of disaster response in Haiti following the great earthquake in 2010 that took over 300,000 lives. Haitian leaders and members of a Brethren Disaster Ministries’ medical and trauma healing team were determined to see a longer range response focusing on health and poverty issues in Haiti. Out of their passion things began to happen and other Brethren caught the vision.

By 2012 a plan was put in place to begin medical clinics in individual communities where the budding Eglise des Freres de Haiti (Church of the Brethren in Haiti) was serving. From small beginnings Haiti Medical Project has grown amazingly, now serving 28 communities through medical care, rural medicine dispensaries, community health education, leadership training, agricultural projects, and providing pure water.

In the sections that follow I will overview briefly the varied aspects of this work and then review more in depth the new three year project to provide pure water in more than 20 communities.

**Mobile Medical Clinics.** The mobile clinic effort is a partnership with Haitian Brethren congregations that provide advance promotion and on-site arrangements. By year end we expect the clinic team to have conducted 257 clinics since 2012 widely dispersed across Haiti and resulting in approximately 38,550 patient visits! There are eleven team members and usually nine serve a particular clinic. Typically the team consists of 3 doctors, 4 nurses, a logistics coordinator and a driver. As with all our on-site leaders, all are Haitian.

Clinics treat all sorts of conditions, including many cases of infectious disease caused by poor sanitation and contaminated water. The team is based in Croix-des-Bouquets but ranges as far as an eight hour drive to serve, in some cases requiring a two or three-day trip to serve perhaps two communities. We hear many testimonials about the quality of the medical care provided. The clinics are a source of encouragement to the congregations and communities served.

Brethren Disaster Ministries has provided funding just this month to enable our team to provide four additional clinics in communities near the northern coast where an earthquake was experienced on October 6. The quake was centered in Port-de-Paix, a city just minutes away from Brethren work in San Luis du Nord where some Brethren had homes damaged or destroyed.

**Income Generation.** Haiti is an economically deprived country, with by far the lowest GDP in the western hemisphere. Unemployment is over 40%, and under employment perhaps 30% more. The resulting poverty is a prime cause of conditions ripe for disease, resulting in mortality of infants to age five, inadequate educational opportunities for one’s children, and making it
very difficult for adults to find a better life. It is tough to get ahead. So efforts to boost family income are important in raising the quality of life in Haiti!

A member of our community development team specializes in economic projects for women, helping them develop projects for sale through sewing and providing enhanced projects from local resources (peanut butter, fruit products, etc.) and helps them learn how to market these to provide increased income.

In 2015 some agricultural projects started by Brethren Disaster Ministries became part of Haiti Medical Project and have been expanded significantly. Farmers are taught improved methods of crop farming. Staff work with small animal husbandry, utilizing a “share the gift” method pioneered by Heifer International to overcome the cost of starting a new enterprise. Goats and rabbits are popular projects that can support income growth.

A new ingredient in our efforts to support boosting income is fish farming. Our staff has received training in this area and is continuing to learn the basics of fish farming best practice. We are helping several groups of farmers take first steps with fish farming and we will continue to learn through these experiences. It looks promising.

Gullies are a fact of life for many of our small farmers in the mountains. We work with groups of farmers to clear unproductive underbrush, create soil conservation terraces, and to reforest with fruit and lumber producing trees. We have started a nursery with 25,000 tree seedlings to support this effort.

**Community Health.** Community initiatives begin with volunteers called out by the community to give leadership in improving the health of the village. Leaders called out receive training from our staff and enter into a partnership with Haiti Medical Project to set priorities and think through ways ahead.

A very popular activity in many communities is mothers clubs, building on the strong motivation of pregnant women and young mothers to learn to be more successful raising their children. Teaching provided by our maternal care nurses, regular weighing and charting the growth of the infants, and a growing enjoyment of coming together to learn is proving very popular and worthwhile. These clubs meet monthly and consider a range of nutritional and better health possibilities.

Many of our villages are in remote country, a long way from a pharmacy. Transportation options are limited. So rural medical dispensaries of the most commonly needed drugs are made available. We provide an initial set of medicines and a cabinet, and from there the dispensary is run on a self financing basis. Accessibility is an important criteria in making care available. The dispensary is managed by a volunteer member of the town’s community health committee and serviced by one of our maternal care nurses.

**Pure Water Projects.** The biggest project Haiti Medical Project has taken on to date is a three year plan to help 20 communities get pure water through a total of 24 projects by the end of 2020. Our goal for 2018 is eight pure water projects and we are getting close to achieving this initial goal. Water projects are carefully planned by our staff and
community leadership. (The photo at right shows the Cap Haitien Pure Water committee and staff at work.) Water is provided through drilled wells, roof top catchment of water into large cisterns, or by capping a spring or a creek. Local communities cannot provide much money, but do provide local building materials and labor as well as a management committee. We understand that local commitment to the project is crucial to its long-term viability.

We have resources to provide the staff services needed for these project through the on-going flow of giving to Haiti Medical Project. However, we need help with the special investments beyond the norm to enable the capital costs of the water projects.

The projects planned for 2018 include the following:

--A drilled well in Croix-des-Bouquets, in the eastern suburbs of Port-au-Prince, funded by the South-Central Indiana District and the residents of Timbercrest Home ($10,000, completed.) Funds from this district also helped complete a reverse osmosis project in Gonaives in late 2017.

--A drilled well in Bohoc, in the central plateau, funded by the North Liberty congregation ($10,000 completed.)

--A drilled well in Marin, a community in the far northern suburbs of Port-au-Prince, funded by a Pennsylvania Brethren woman ($11,000 completed.)

--A drilled well in Tom Gateau in the southern mountains funded by the same Brethren woman ($11,000, completed.)

--A rooftop water catchment with a large cistern and sand bio filter purification in La Ferrier in the central plateau, funded by the Brethren Mission Fund (10,000, in process.)

--A drilled well in Cannan to be funded by the Christmas offering of a large congregation in Pennsylvania ($10,000, in process.) Cannan is a new but already large large city that grew up as part of the rebuilding in the wake of the 2010 earthquake.

If you are counting, that makes six projects assured for 2018. How about the other two needed to meet our 2018 goal? Let me tell you about Gran Bwa and Cap Haitien.

Gran Bwa is a very remote mountain village near the border with the Dominican Republic. The supply of water to the town is a spring fed small creek through the edge of the community. The ravine is being cleared, fenced and reforested to preserve the water flow. The spring will be capped and water piped to distribution points above through a pump powered by a generator. Purification via a sand bio filter will be added. The project is estimated to cost abut $15,000 with gifts (including the Sunday School offerings of the Chiques congregation and a gift from Middle Creek) totaling about $7,000 to date.

Cap Haitien is a city on the northern coast. Its congregation, with some help from the Brethren, bought a church building a few years ago on a lot with an established well. Their need, as will be the case for several communities in the future, is the addition of a reverse osmosis purification system. We find that in our larger population centers, it is a useful ministry for the local congregation to sell the
water to the wider public, thereby increasing greatly the reach of the pure water. The sale is for pennies a bucket, far less than the local water trucks, but generating funds helpful to the congregation’s work. Local government requires reverse osmosis treatment to allow the sale of the water. The system needed for Cap Haitien will cost about $15,000. To date about $3,000 is assured.

In both of these cases we will be able to move ahead as additional year end funding is received for this purpose.

Here is a brief overview of how Haiti Medical Project is funded. Two foundations (the Royer Family Foundation and Growing Hope Worldwide) together provide about $200,000 this year, toward the overall budget of $389,000. What wonderful support. And we look to our core Brethren donors (individuals, congregations and groups) to contribute about $100,000 of regular Haiti Medical Project giving and another $90,000 or so in special water gifts. It looks likely that together we can achieve these goals.

I think without fear of overstating that much excellent foundational work is being done in efforts to combat disease and poverty and to enable and strengthen local leadership. Our work parallels the growth of Eglise des Freres du Haiti from an initial congregation just 15 years ago in 2003, now to 26 congregations and preaching points widely dispersed across Haiti. What a satisfying partnership we have with this strong new and growing national church and how we rejoice in their congregations’ commitment both to evangelism and to community betterment!

May we respond to this opportunity as God moves us.

Dale E. Minnich
Volunteer Staff, Haiti Medical Protect

Send gifts to Church of the Brethren, PO Box 1451, Elgin, IL 60120. Indicate that the gift is for Haiti Medical Project, and if you wish to support a water project please indicate this as well.