Dear Members, Volunteers & Friends of AHDH & Haiti:

On behalf of the Executive Committee of AHDH, Inc., we take, once more, an immense pleasure to share with you our latest mission report, AHDH’s Winter 2018 Medical & Educational Mission Report, our 71st since 1986, which took place from February 9 thru 26, 2018.

As usual, a real challenge to reflect fully such an infusion of blessings along our humble 31 year old AHDH, as each mission keeps on expanding, by ITS grace, with more and more solidly motivated strong souls. This trip, a total of 44. The crowd you ever want to be with from from several US states, and an inspiring mosaic of backgrounds: Egypt, Belize, Brazil etc., or just from the town next door, Jacmel, or further out Port-Au-Prince, from the central area of Haiti etc. So many talents, so many gifted, generous colleagues and friends of AHDH, how privileged to be in such company.
Today, we are very tempted to use a sort of chronological order, as we suspect you might have a more concrete take on the mission, and it may be easier for the editor. **You be the judge.** All we want is share with you the AHDH experience, some of us are privileged to have been part of who for the last 31 years, some for the last 26 years, the last 16 years etc...

**Friday, February 9:** 24 of us landed in PAP, 4 already in the country, waiting for us, days before. A 15 minutes flight, with MAF (*Thanks, Benita, Gary..*), ...
...we are in Jacmel (with its beautiful new terminal, but still with a land strip awaiting extension for larger planes), where our vans are waiting (Thanks Claude, below, left, white top; Elie, right and Fanfan)
A pleasant 40 minutes drive up in the mountains of La Vallée de Jacmel, west of Jacmel, we are at the Auberge du Mont St. Jean:
After a relaxing night, Saturday morning, it is time to:

1-Don our jeans and start preparing for the busy week ahead: cleaning the ORs:

**Ophthalmologists:** Welcome back Benjeil E.MD:(below left with team leader, Anika M.), and below right: John D. right green top, and Shan T. anesthesio, white top.

While at the clinic,below left, Tenesha B., OD. (*Welcome back, and Thanks for introducing Barbara M. See OB-Gyn pg. 18*) and Beatriz M., and Stephanie M., below right, unpacking and getting ready for the Monday crowd.
Main OR: Welcome back home: Sandra B.R., RN, (below left) on her 50th (?) trip, since 1991, and a good dancer also (below right); Diane L.,RN, (below, 2nd row) on her 15th year precisely this month: Can’t be any better qualified as “Senior Angels”. We miss husband, Leroy C. and his music, so did the Church Choir, the 2 High schools who were ready for him.

And a special Welcome to the AHDH Family, Shan T. MD, Anesthesiologist (below), who wasted no time to take charge. We pray he will adopt our mission, as we are already under the charm of his extraordinary demeanor and wisdom.
The different clinics, unpack and get **our pharmacy**, well supplied thanks to unwavering support from P.I., Blessings International MAP and Savoy Medical Center, well furnished. Welcome back Suzan V., pharmacist (*below left, yellow top, meet husband later on with eye group*) and welcome to your new home, Melina T. (*ultrasound, orange top, we shall meet also later at ultrasound*).

Preparing the **Recovery Room**: Nicole V.M., MD, center, directing our recent RN graduates from UNDH, which you will meet at every clinic (*see Summer 2017 Mission Report, for that big celebration for the La Vallée graduating youth*)
and the domain of Madeline M-D, RN’s (below left), “Senior Angel” for a decade and half now

2- Dispatch an eye team to CME (Centre Medical Emmanuel), in Cayes Jacmel, under the directorship of a long time supporter of AHDH’s mission, surgeon Dr. Louis P., is ready for them, for consultation, recruitment for surgery: Left to right: Hostess, Mrs. Wilbert, Stephanie M. (Opht. Tech.), Peter V. (Pharm), Tenesha B. (Opto), Linsey W. (Opht. Tech.), Weber P.L. (cytol), Michelle I.G., MD, Ange L. (Community leader), Muhammed E., MD and Beatriz M.
Welcome back Muhammed E., MD, below right, and as promised is back with fiancée, Beatriz M., readily put to work. We’re still look forward to welcoming mom & dad (MDs) in the furture.

Welcome back also Peter V., Pharm.; we missed you over the last couple of years …

And Michelle I.B., MD, below left, flower top (on many fronts, see below, La Montagne clinic, pg. 19)

And as promised Tenesha B., Optom., below, pink top, is back, and with company (see, Barbara M. at Ob-Gyn Clinic, pg. 18), Weber P.L., Cytol, on his 3rd mission, everywhere he is needed, and Welcome Stephanie M. (below, 1st from left) to the AHDH family mission.
Came the evening, back to the Auberge, it was time to convene and enjoy a well earned (in ITS eyes, we hope) diner, partake a good typical Haitian cuisine and …

Celebrating Weber’s birthday: Thanks again for celebrating your “13th “(finally a teenager) with us.
**Sunday:** was mass time and completing of the cleaning and preparations for the week ahead, while additional staff joined: Welcome back Drs. Marie May L.F., General Surgery, Phoebe Jovin, ENT, CRNAs Nadeige D., and Stephanie P. and for the first time, Hamiltong P. Surgery.

**Monday morning:** The crowd is at the rendez-vous:

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**So was our staff:**

**Eyes (Ophthalmology):** In just one week, 832 patients were seen at the clinics, 400 pairs of new reading glasses and brand new distance glasses, dispensed; 58 surgery cases performed (despite the electric power we faced, see page 23), thanks in large part to the brand new portable autorefractor that was purchased with the fundraiser initiated by group leader, Anika M.; besides providing transportation for patients that were seen at our off-site clinics who needed surgery at our home base.

**Clinic:** Our recent RN graduates (below, left, Audith J.L., and right, Osner A.) are busy developing specific skills, Nicole V.M., MD(white top), leading, and patients calmly waiting for turn.
While the OR was ready as well, or Dr. Benjil E. will show you the way: below left and right

So was John D. MD, below left, and staff, Linsey W. below right

And Muhammed E., MD
While more being screened and patiently waiting their turn, encouraged by administration staff (Renald P., below left)

And grateful patients honoring our staff (Dr. Anika M., leader of the group, first from left) and next row:
We would like to insert this special note to share with you how delighted we were to welcome back Dr. Ritza E.C., Ophthalmo, who offered the strongest support to our program a few moons ago. We apologize for not having a photo available. At her next visit, it certainly will be the first photo we will ask our photographers to shoot.

**Main OR:** 21 general surgeries, 2 gynecologic surgeries

Once more AHDH was blessed with a full surgery staff: 3 general surgeons, 1 Ob-Gyn:
-Marie May L-F, MD, *(affectionately called M&M)*, below, left and right, who untiringly, since 2010, barely miss any of our missions. We love our Dr. M&M.

And she doesn’t intend to keep to herself what she loves: A colleague of hers, Hamilton P. MD, *(below, left and right)* had almost no choice, but to come and experience AHDH mission: Very professional, skillful. Hope a future “Senior Angel”. Welcome again Dr. P.
ENT: And as a year ago we stated “If you have had an opportunity to read our mission reports before, you must remember our excitement, a few years ago, when for the first time we could find an ENT doc to join us”. Dr. Phoebe J. (below, center, with Dr. E.H) didn’t just join us for a trip, adopt our mission. Welcome back!
We will not fail to mention the brief participation of Louis P., surgeon, (see Cayes-Jacmel above, a strong supporter of AHDH mission over a decade, but who could not stay for long.

Our beloved CRNAs, from central Haiti, would not miss it either: Below, left to right, Stephanie P. and Nadeige D. who have been very faithful to our mission over the last 5-6 years. Mercis encore fieres compatriots. We missed your buddy, Vilia L., *(Scrub tech).*

![Image of surgeons and medical staff](image)

We know much can’t be done either without Sandra, below left, and Diane, below right

![Image of doctors and medical staff](image)

**Internal Medicine/Family Practice/Pediatrics:**

Once more, Coordinatrice Anisa S., MD, Geriatrics Medicine *(below. Left, and right visiting local school with Milena T. Ultrasonographer, see further in page20)* did a difficult job for the success of our 71st mission, while offering medical care...Diabetes, hypertension, preop consultation etc.
We can not be more grateful to see her invest so much energy for the last several trips, besides initiating what we call the Ohio Frontiers, which have brought so much support to the mission, from her friends and organization from that area…MOCHA, Dr. Sophia D-A.. There is no doubt she is more than entitled to join the group of “Senior Angel” (angelos: messenger).

Among her Ohians, we have been priviledged to have join us several times also, Angela A-H., MD, Fam. Practice (below left, white top), aided, for translation, by Mrs. Yolande P-B., (former expatriate, back home). Dr. Angela A-H, has been investing every minute of herself to see the children, the future of La Vallee and Haiti. Thanks Angela you are leaving legacy in HIS fields.

2nd generation Haitian-Americans: A very sweet surprise to this trip was the participation of Mrs. Gerta V. and her daughter, Ramona V., MD, Emergency Medicine Physician (below left), our
very first ED specialist in our mission. We tried our best not to burden her, but we couldn’t hide our extreme hope she will help us build that department at Hopital St. Joseph. She is not sure yet, but we are praying on it, and we bet on the good job mom has done so well which brought her here today, and the photo below, left, seems to reassure us also: Welcome home Dr. V

**OB GYN:** Tens of patients seen (with 47 Pap; 3 colpo-biopsies):

As the crowd was also at the rendez-vous (below, left), we had nothing to worry about, as we were once more blessed with help: A NP-F, Barbara M., (below right, blue top) was in charge while training one of our recent graduates, Marie Florence J. *(below right, green top)*

She wasted no time enjoying her new environment (below left with Milena, see Ultrasonographie, pg. ) as she intends to adopt AHDH as her favorite mission and we can’t be more grateful to Tenesha B., O.D., who kept her promise to come back and bring company *(below right, green stripe top)*
Thursday was LA MONTAGNE clinics day: As mentioned in the last 2 previous Mission Reports, a new “frontier” in AHDH mission was opened a year ago by our colleague Michelle I-G., MD, Rehab. strongly supported by Weber P-Ls. (2nd row, right). New site we have dreamed of for years, but when Michelle found out one of her best friends had retired there, all the pieces were falling in place: Below, left, Michelle and friend, Olga Ludmilla J., RN. And Michelle meant it with all her heart, for her country.

And the rest is history, as they say: Giant clinic every 3 months. By His Grace, La Montagne will be more and more covered.
**Father of Imaging at H.St.J, back home:**

Mike B., Faculty at BRCC, AHDH’s extraordinary blessing since November 2003, is back home, and, almost like Bill Cosby put it, with (pleasant)company: A colleague of him, Ultrasonographer Melina T., *(below left)*: A graduate from his school in Baton Rouge, she didn’t waste any time to just take over, giving him the relief he so well deserves: She is in the OR *(below right, scanning a kid’s eye, with Ophthalmo doc)*, taking charge of Mike’s students: 2nd row, Jeannot D. *(right)* and recent RN graduate, Narline P. *(center)*. We know how elated Mike is: one of his pet dreams, connecting La Vallee and Baton Rouge academically, slowly but surely shaping up. We will make it Mike, with your perseverance and AHDH’s sharing the same dream. Mille Mercis encore.

As Melina came all equipped to spoil her patients with gift: below right
Then two other birthdays were in order: Lindsey W. (below left) and Gerta V. (featured above, pg. 18)

A special group of AHDH’s mission supporter: fellow former or current expatriates not bargaining their support for translation when in town: Yolande P-B. (see page 17) and Louise L., (below left) who don’t miss any chance to pitch in their support. (being hugged by Sandra)
TUESDAY, 2nd day of mission a major challenge faced us: Electrical Power gone
Our beloved, 30 KW, 11 year old generator (red in back ground), a gift from the Florence Mauboule Charity (Crowley, LA), got closer to its life expectancy, broke down on us. Which put to an uncomfortable still all our ORs, as the surgeons are nervously waiting.
It was time for Community Solidarity to be put in motion: After our small home units, (below, yellow) Yolande P.B. (mentioned above, page17) and husband Leon, right away responded; brought in their 10 Kw (below, green unit), while Joel K., entrepreneur in Jacmel joined the effort also with another 10 Kw. (below, 2nd row, left). It was an opportunity for community solidarity to be expressed at its best.
Thanks so much.
But, above all, the engineer was in the house, once more. Assisted by our photographer and handyman, Carl V. *(above right, blue top)* and Illfrance T., orderly

Do we need to present Georges L., as he is been featured in every one of our mission reports, since he adopted AHDH’s mission with the Winter 2008 one. The diagnostic of the current problem was made *(water pump gone)* and part ordered in Port-Au-Prince, but we had to wait...”mardi-grassing”. We know, it’s past time for a new unit and we are trying our best.
No word can thank you, Georges. Mille mercis for every piece of love to the mission. **Please, help if you can.** We already have an estimate (pro format, $10,000).

**Outpatient Clinics status:** It’s hard to figure any one more disappointed than us. The progress of the constructions is most disappointing, reflecting the general conditions of the country, which, in the first place brought some of us back home in 1986. *(below, left, general view from the hospital, and right, inside, the general waiting area).*

We tried to understand...the general difficulties of the country to buy materials, etc., but serious meetings had to be had, quite a few dots were to be put on the “I”s, and time now is for progress or else. Deadlines are set: **In 6 months the first floor must completed, and roof underway.**

We hope our fundraiser efforts will continue and we will be ready for **Phase-4 funds.**

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**Our students at Université Notre Dame d’Haiti, Jacmel Campus:**

Now, our 14 RN students have graduated with their diplomas, and you can see them mentioned above, throughout every facet of our medical care. A special thanks to all the “parrains and marraines” who accepted such load along AHDH over the last 4 years.

We have now 3 sophomore Accounting/Management students doing very well (a fourth one could not make the grades), and we are already drawing their post graduate road, see “Team-2” below, with an experience manager from Fribourg, Switzerland, on his way.

Big Thanks again to Rickie and Ronda J., Nilam and Jagmohan B, and AXA.

You are role models. Thanks for sharing their dream. Those future professionals are most grateful.

Again: **Remember there is no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates ripple effect with no logical end.**

You are no more just ordinary people, when you are doing such extraordinary things!!

**Team-2:** February 17-26.
On the medical front, Team-2 was dedicated to continue Ob-Gyn clinic services, with maximum use of our recent RN graduates, with emphasis on offering the best screen to all the pregnant patients with ultrasonographic evaluation, lab etc…. sorting out High Risk vs. Low Risk; as the abnormal Pap Smear patients from the Fall 2017 mission, and before, are offered colposcopy and biopsy/conization as needed.

Now, let’s take a pause to renew our gratitude to a colleague, A. Claude L. MD, Pathologist, in Port-Au-Prince, who graciously, untiringly offers his support to the mission for the last 10 years. Mille Mercis, Claude.

The rest of the time was business/administrative time, meetings with CODEVA, management students, Rotary Club of Jacmel etc.

With the intense search of Charles R, (below, 1st from left), expatriate living in Switzerland for decades, president of Solidarité Fribourg-Haiti (SFH), another ball of positive energy is being added to AHDH’s mission.

SFH must be a familiar name now for some readers of our mission reports.

Since January 2010 a strong, intense, synergistic relationship developed between AHDH and SFH, be it when we decided to acquire the land next to the hospital, where currently the Outpatients Clinics is been built; find the funds for the construction, and more recently joining CODEM to build reservoirs on top of the wells drilled by CODEM with the support of Water for Life (go to www.AHDHhaiti.org, click on Mission Reports and choose Winter 2017, and go to page 14) the only concrete, serious response to the cholera plight etc.

One promise from SFH was to search an expert in management, to bring our management students to par and ready to assume the management of their own village hospital. Promise kept: Mr. Philippe B., (below, 2nd from left) is ready and made his exploratory trip with us and is enchanted with his new mission in life, as his expertise triggers interest at many levels: Besides the management of the hospital, is highly interested the Vocational School of the Brothers, the farmers/entrepreneurs (Vanite and Ange L., below 3rd and 4th from left), and possibility of cooperation of Jacmel and Fribourg Rotary clubs. (below, 2nd row)

It is such a blessed privilege to witness great dreams unfolding.

Like the other one said, with other words, it is already a success to be close to the mountain top, even if we don’t quite make it to the Promised Land yet.
So much positive energy can but open up better days for the future generations, as best as we can read history of humanity.
Mille Mercis Charles R, and glad to welcome you, dans la famille AHDH, Philippe B.
A bientot, in May, if all our plans go as we wish and pray for.

**Mission Support Angels: MSA:** Our new category of “Angels” who can’t make it for the mission but dedicate so much effort to its success…medical supplies and equipment, financial support for our meal voucher program, CRNA’s (nurse anesthetist) stipends. We take great pleasure (and pride) for your friendship. A few to mention:

1- **Alcon:** Our ophthalmology performance (hundreds of cataract surgeries) would not have been possible without you. Thank you so much.
2- **Plenty International,** religiously takes charge of about half of our medicines bill, usually via
3- **Blessings International** who offered us a special discount; and
4- **MAP International**
5- The Florence Mauboule Foundation (Crowley, LA)
6- Jonathan Z., MD (*new operating microscope for eye surgeries*)
7- Nicole V.M., MD.
8- Savoy Medical Center: John P.’s and Cheryl L.’s kindness to process our orders is well appreciated
9- Eurydice M. and Herb L.
10- Yvette H. (RN), (*for the medical supplies*)
11- Angela A-H, MD.
12- Diane L. RN
13- Claire M., RN
14- Sharon S. Pharm.
15- Mr. Ted, Mrs. Judy C. and Dean B.
16- AND so many more, for their prayers and good wishes

And to ALL of you, **praiseworthy volunteers,** thank you for your extraordinary accomplishments.
We know you had to sacrifice a lot to be with us – vacation, family obligations, financial resources, you name it - but it is so heartwarming to see that you chose the **Preferential Option**
for the Poor and Vulnerable - enhancing a little bit more solidarity across our little fragile blue planet.
There are no words to thank you.
And I am sure you all know HE is taking ample note of your acts (James 2:20 and Mat. 25:14 on) and His blessings will be visiting you – but most of the time in very subtle ways.

Un gros merci encore à tous !!

Très Cordialement,

Charles
(Charles René, M.D., F.A.C.O.G
Co-Founder, Treasurer, Director of Projects in Haiti
Association Haitienne de Développement Humain, Inc.)
www.haitiahdh.org
chasrene46@bellsouth.net

P.S: Summer 2018 Medical Mission, # 72: June 22 – July 1 (Team-1) and June 30 thru July 7 (Team-2).
Please, HURRY, call or send a note AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if you intend to join, as we have Team-1 aBOUT full, before this report is even out: 26 already have registered.
Please, help us get better and better organized by registering early.

Version françaixé

La Nouvelle-Orléans,
Le 13 mars 2018

Chers Membres, Volontaires et Amis de l'AHDH et d’Haïti :

Un gros Bonjour !


INEFFABILISIMO !! (Plus qu’Ineffable!)
Difficile de trouver un mot qui puisse englober l’entièreté de cette dernière tournée médicale: Tant de talents, de bienfaits, d’humanisme, tout a contribué à en faire une autre mission de très mémorable.

A partir de ce paragraphe, vu les difficultés techniques à insérer toutes les photos déjà présentées ci-dessus, on va compter sur l’indulgence des rares lecteurs qui ont des difficultes avec l’anglais, de nous faire signe pour la traduction française.

Cordialement,

Charles

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Gallery of Photos:
Thanks a million Mike, Carl, Weber and others
Délices du Cap Lamandou
Beauté du pays lacaille

Désir d’apprendre
Supporting the local economy, in La vallée. While sightseeing.
Jacmel airport

Eglise St. Jean-Baptiste, le moteur du développement de La Vallée depuis 1910
Des rues de La Vallée

Rue de l’Hopital
And work and fun.. Bravo Peter and Susan V.
Supporting the local economy, in Jacmel

MISCELLANOUS
Feedback:

AHDH's Mission Report: Winter 2018
Preparations for Summer 2018 Mission

New Orléans, LA
March 13, 2018

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Friends of AHDH & Haiti:

On behalf of the Executive Committee of AHDH, Inc., we take, once more, an immense pleasure to share with you our latest mission report, AHDH’s Winter 2018 Medical & Educational Mission Report, our 71st since 1986, which took place from February 9 thru 26, 2018.

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This trip, a total of 44. The crowd you ever want to be with from from several US states, and an inspiring mosaic of backgrounds: Egypt, Belize, Brazil etc., or just from the town next door, Jacmel, or further out Port-Au-Prince, from the central area of Haiti etc. So many talents, so many gifted, generous colleagues and friends of AHDH, how privileged to be in such company.

To share with us such an experience, please, go to our website, www.AHDHhaiti.org, click on Mission Report, choose Winter 2018.

Please, share with friends, and maybe those not yet friends, and who will be grateful to you, and don't hesitate to share comments and questions.

Un gros merci encore à tous !!

Très Cordialement,

Charles
(Charles René, M.D., F.A.C.O.G
Co-Founder, Treasurer, Director of Projects in Haiti
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Hi Charles,

I have some left over medications from the small rehab clinic where I work. If you want them, you can contact me at +12252476483.

Elsie Colin

Thanks for sharing!
Wow Charles, your cups runneth over! I’m so happy and continue to pray for the ever expanding vision to bring forth such a blessed harvest.
I’m looking to return to Haiti with you in the fall...

Love and Prayers for safe travels,

Renee

Good to hear from you and extraordinary the feeling you carry AHDH close to your heart.

Our Fall 2018 dates: Nov. 10 thru 24, divided in 2 teams.

Stay blessed and in touch.

Charles

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When is Feb 2019 trip scheduled Dr Rene?
Merci
Barbara
Thanks for your commitment.
Winter 2019: March 1 thru 10, Team-1, March 9 thru 16 Team-2.

Thanks again

Stay in touch.

Charles

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Ely, Wes <wes.ely@vanderbilt.edu>
To
chasrene46
Today at 9:30 AM
Charles, I am here right now in Haiti on our dental pediatric mission. Have seen about 2500 children and having a great week and Ridoré and LaVallee area. I see the new building going up next to the old hospital. What do you plan for this? Tell me more?

Wes Ely, MD, MPH - sent from iPhone so please excuse typos & transcription errors

Good to hear from you, Wes.
Thanks so much for keeping up with the dental pediatric mission, in La Vallée.

I think it’s time to connect you with Dr. Sophie Duval-Austin, Pediatric Dentist, in CC, of Haitian descent, in practice in the Cincinnati area, who has been joining us for the last two summer missions (see Summer 2017 Mission Report, page 7) with husband (Internal Medicine) and children.
Some coordination is probably well appropriate.

Regarding the Outpatient Clinics, that’s what the building is about. An update is in page 25 in our current Mission Report (already posted on www.AHDHhaiti.org). It’s a challenge to run clinic in the same space than the hospital’s. I don’t have a current blueprint, but the last. before some modification, is in attachment and can give you an idea. As we will change the management landscape (same report, page 26), with my presence more and more prolonged, when you come for your mission, you will have all the facilities you need, besides our 14 RN graduates.

We certainly have a few more miles to go and any philanthropic support will be most welcome.

Stay in touch.

Charles

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Merci Charles. Je publierai.

MC

Thanks, Maxime.
Hi Charles!

I hope that all is well. I cc Dr. Reynald Altema in this communication. He is a physician/internist in practice in Florida. He is trying to reach you because he would like to write and publish an article about your work in La vallee de Jacmel. I think it is a good thing and I am always telling Jacmeliens in my network about the extraordinary changes that you are making to improve access to good health care in their department. Dr. Altema write well and his writing will be shared in many professional circles, and hopefully bring more enthusiasts, hopefully some with money, to La vallee. Many intelligent and concerned Haitian and non-Haitian students are looking for opportunities to learn from mentors like you, and they will also contribute over time. So this will not be a futile exercise, and his effort will not be lost. I want to continue to push for recognition of honest and consistent efforts by our colleagues.

You have my full appreciation.

Best to you and your family,

Nicole

Our CONGRATULATIONS, Charles, for the monumental work to which you have dedicated yourself since 1986.

Cordially,

Toto et Marlene Apollon

Sent from my iPad

Tu veux dire que tu avais bien investi, cher ainé-collègue.

Jean-Pierre Julien <julie1jj@msn.com>
To Charles Rene
Today at 12:48 PM
Good job, colleague René!
My patient I referred you for inguinal hernia repair was very grateful and I am very pleased and proud of you and your team...
God bless you all
Jean-Pierre Julien, M.D., FASE.
Tenesha Bazemore, an optometrist, provided eye care for underprivileged patients on a mission to Haiti.

Tenesha Bazemore led a yoga class on a rooftop in La Vallée de Jacmel during a medical mission trip to Haiti.

Barbara Morrison, a physician assistant with Sentara Medical Group, provided women’s health care and internal medicine on a mission in Haiti.

Yoga friends and Norfolk residents Tenesha Bazemore and Barbara Morrison recently joined more than two dozen healthcare professionals from across the country who gave their time and paid their own way to provide free medical services to Haitians last month.
Subject to hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes and mudslides, Haiti is one of the poorest, most under-educated and medically under-treated countries in the world. That is why Haitians living in New Orleans founded AHDH, the Association Haitienne de Developpement Humain, a nonprofit that organizes visits to the country each year. This trip was to La Vallée de Jacmel.

Morrison, a physician assistant with Sentara Medical Group, described it as “a sprawling and beautiful town 2,400 feet up a winding road overlooking the Caribbean Sea.” She said the patients were mostly “subsistence farmers, living on what they can grow in their gardens and keeping chickens or goats.”

“There is no ability to treat one’s pain, as there is here, and they do not expect to be cured of common aging problems. They are stoic but grateful for what care we offer. They do not insist on testing as people can do in the U.S.”

While Morrison focused on women’s health and internal medicine, Bazemore, a self-employed optometrist, did eye exams, fitted people with donated glasses and treated glaucoma. She also gave pre-and-post-op care for people having cataract surgery. She described her patients as “beautiful, hardworking people. Some dressed in their best for the examinations. It was endearing.”

However, “A few people couldn’t be helped. One patient had something neurologic, maybe a stroke. He had lost his vision and was very depressed. We did all the tests we could, but there was nothing we could do for him.

“His sister, who had brought him in, started weeping. Then the volunteers were weeping. We sent him to a hospital in Port au Prince.

“Not every story had a happy ending.”

Morrison has her own sad story to tell: “There was a woman in crisis – septic shock – and it was past our ability to care for her. We arranged for transportation to take her to a hospital, but we never found out what happened to her. She had recently had a baby. Maybe we will see her next time.”

Why do they do it? For Bazemore, who went to Haiti last year and has also done mission work in Guyana, it is “to help people who might otherwise not get help. And because it helps me get out of the mode of healthcare in the states, which is so complicated.”

“Working with the less-privileged helps me get a little bit of perspective,” she said.
Morrison has also been to Haiti before, as well as Honduras. “It is gratifying to work with people with limited resources,” she said. “We take so much for granted, but they are very grateful for whatever you do for them.’

Overall, it was an uplifting experience for both women, and they will return on future missions, taking their own supplies, equipment, gifts for the school and children, plus their yoga mats – they led classes for the volunteers.

For gifts, Bazemore took crayons, pencils and lunch boxes. Morrison took copies of maps for the school. Others took things like snacks, hair ribbons and burp cloths for babies.

And small mirrors. “The little girls just loved that,’ Morrison said. “They don’t have cameras or mirrors, so they don’t know what they look like.”

“We have so much.”

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