



between

FRIENDS

News from Friends of the Children of Haiti

March, 2009

Friends begins trial program with Medika Mamba



CYVADIER, Haiti – In Haiti, hunger hurts health – and it's especially tough on children.

In the poorest county in the Western Hemisphere, food shortages continue in the aftermath of hurricanes and tropical storms that devastated the country last year. Now at least 13 percent of Haitian children are malnourished. These youngsters can't stave off disease when their bodies function poorly for a lack of food. That's a big reason why one in eight newborns don't make it to age five.

And that's why Friends of the Children of Haiti has started a trial program to help reduce the high volume of young malnutrition patients at its clinic – with, of all things, peanut butter.

Meds & Food for Kids (MFK) is a St. Louis-based organization that aims to cure malnutrition in Haiti. The centerpiece of its

program is Medika Mamba, an energy-dense peanut butter rich in protein and nutritional supplements. It needs no cooking, preparation or refrigeration. And, just as with children and peanut butter in America, Haitian kids love it.

MFK says the transformation begins quickly. Within just six to eight weeks, children gain enough weight to be considered normal for their height. Their eyes become clear and bright, and their sparse, reddish hair grows thick and black.

Friends launched the trial program with Medika Mamba in January, testing its application with six children, ages 2-5 years old. Sue Behrens, APN, worked closely with parents and caregivers to explain the instructions for feeding the children. During initial evaluation, each parent was asked how often the kids eat. Some ate only once every two days.

"These parents just don't have enough to feed their children," Behrens says. "They were very happy about participating in the program."

The parents were given an initial supply of Medika Mamba with instructions to return to the clinic soon for check-ups. Two weeks later, Friends founders Dick and Barb Hammond examined the children. All had gained weight and looked healthier. Each parent was given additional supply of Medika Mamba and was scheduled to return on a regular basis for follow-up.

"The children liked the Mamba," Dick Hammond says.

“The children liked the Mamba”

– Dick Hammond

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CALENDAR

March 16 - 27, 2009

General practice team
Cyvadier, Haiti

May 11 - 22, 2009

General practice team
Cyvadier, Haiti

July 13 - 24, 2009

General practice team
Cyvadier, Haiti

August 3, 2009

Golf Outing event
Arrowhead C.C.

Sep 7 -18, 2009

General practice team
Cyvadier, Haiti

Nov 9 - 20, 2009

General practice team
Cyvadier, Haiti

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The Hammonds are documenting the progress of the children in the trial program closely for Friends' Medical Advisory Committee to evaluate in June. If recommended, the use of Medika Mamba could be integrated into Friends Medical Guidelines as standard treatment for severely malnourished children.

"We are very hopeful that the trial program with Medika Mamba proves to be successful and viable for Friends because it could directly benefit the children who are hurting most," says Behrens. "That's why we're here."

Please see related video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QitHQ_Hlw9g

Friends launches 'Voices' blog



Now there's a way to "travel" to our clinic – without ever leaving home.

"We're telling the stories of the people we treat, life at the clinic and the important work that goes on there," says Leigh Behrens, Friends Foundation board member and creator of "Voices from the Clinic," the new blog that's spreading the word about our group.

Launched during the January clinic effort this year, the blog is updated daily by team members in Cyvadier and has already become popular. Page views – the measure of how many times people read the posts and view the pictures – are continuing to grow. And comments on the blog are coming in from those who know about FOTCOH's work, and those who are just discovering it.

"It's gratifying to be able to introduce FOTCOH to people all around the country and the world," says Behrens. "Especially in these times, we want to do all we can to let people know that their support is much needed and much appreciated."

Find the 'Voices' blog at www.fotcoh.org

Just updated:

September team leader named, seeks volunteers

Friends has named Bob Hoy, PharmD, as September 2009 Team Leader. Hoy, 59, of Bloomington, Illinois, is a veteran Friends volunteer and team leader having worked previously with 13 teams at the Friends clinic. Bob is seeking both medically trained and non-medical volunteers for the September team. In particular, physicians, mid-level practitioners, physician assistants, dentists, dental assistants, nurses, laboratory technicians and pharmacists are needed. "Are you ready for a real-life adventure?" says Hoy. "The need has never been greater." For more information, please contact Bob Hoy at bobhoy@aol.com.

Friends Golf Outing

The 11th Annual Friends Golf Outing event will be held August 3rd at Arrowhead C.C. in Edelstein, Illinois. Please "save the date" now on your calendar and plan on participating in Friends biggest single-day fundraiser event. Contact the Friends Golf Outing Committee at: 309-691-4846 for further details.

BETWEEN FRIENDS is distributed quarterly to inform supporters about the Friends of the Children of Haiti (FOTCOH). Submissions for BETWEEN FRIENDS are welcomed for consideration and should be sent to: email@fotcoh.org Friends of the Children of Haiti is a non-profit organization.

FRIENDS OF THE
CHILDREN
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