



between

FRIENDS

News from Friends of the Children of Haiti

April, 2006

Remote villagers seek help at Friends clinic



Sharon Lukas, R.N. examines one of Maryange Azol's two sons at the Friends of the Children of Haiti medical clinic in February 2006.

Azol shakes her head sadly about her children's health outlook.

CAP-ROUGE, Haiti – In an ignored outpost of despair, hope somehow flourishes, even as the people of this remote mountaintop village face a daily struggle to survive amidst the worst poverty in the Western Hemisphere.

Each day, the villagers here poke the red dirt to coax out coffee, cabbage and grapefruit. Mostly it's subsistence farming. But, occasionally, trucks rumble up the mountain to haul scant produce to the port of Jacmel, leaving Cap Rouge peasants with a pittance for their labor.

The meager coins are usually not enough to help when disease or injury strikes. The only local medical facility is a dispensary staffed by one nurse's aide, once a week. Regardless, most locals can afford neither the \$1 consultation fee nor the medication that starts at about \$4.

Maryange Azol, 35, and her farmer-husband have two children, ages 4 and 12, both of

whom have asthma. But Azol cannot afford to buy them inhalers. So usually the kids have no choice but to sit in the family's wooden hovel, their childhoods arrested by prevalent wheezing.

Azol shakes her head sadly about her children's health outlook. So do other mothers here when talking about their kids' problems.

In the past, some villagers had ventured several hours on foot to get to the clinic run by Friends of the Children of Haiti. However, because of the constraints in medicine, manpower and time, the clinic is not always open to serve all would-be patients, including many from Cap-Rouge.

However, at the February clinic, Azol and her children were able to see medical providers at the clinic. The boys got medicine, including inhalers.

The clinic hopes to serve the family again in the future - just as it hopes to one day - have enough medicine and help available to turn away not even one patient.

CALENDAR

May 22 - June 2, 2006
MEDICAL MISSION
Cyvadier, Haiti

August 28, 2006
GOLF OUTING
Edelstein, IL

Sept. 11 - 22, 2006
MEDICAL MISSION
Cyvadier, Haiti

Nov. 6 - 17, 2006
MEDICAL MISSION
Cyvadier, Haiti

February team has extended stay

May mission dates changed, Sept. Team Leaders named, Golf Outing event announced

The 21 volunteers with the February mission team had already provided care for 2297 patients and were finishing-up a comprehensive clinic inventory when they found out that American Airlines had canceled their scheduled return flight to the U.S. "We were packed and ready to go," said February Team Leader Eric Behrens. But growing tension in the country since the recent presidential election had forced the closure of Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince leaving the team without any definite departure date.

The volunteers monitored the situation closely through Friend's Haitian staff and the internet connection at the clinic and was able to pursue contingency plans via satellite phone with Friend's travel agent at Suzi Davis Travel in Peoria, Illinois.

"It was impossible to know for sure when flights would resume but Dee Gauf at Suzi Davis Travel just did an outstanding job for us (with the airlines) throughout our extended stay," Behrens said. "She was able to get everyone booked on the earliest flights that became available back to the U.S. once the airport reopened five days later."

The February team's travel delay didn't come as a complete surprise. "The election was scheduled to occur during the February mission and we had advised our volunteers ahead of time to be prepared for potential uncertainty in our travel plans," said Behrens. "Everyone just pulled-together and handled the situation with patience and enthusiasm."

Go to: <http://www.fotcoh.org/gallery.html> to view a photograph of Friends' Feb. 2006 Mission Team.

Just updated:

- **May 2006 Team Leader John Krajewski** reports that the dates for the May mission trip were changed to later in the month this year (to May 22 - June 2) to accommodate volunteer schedules. The team is now fully staffed with 11 medical and 9 non-medical volunteers who will be packing supplies soon for their May 22nd departure.
- **Friends Golf Outing Committee Chairpersons Larry & Kay Shank** have announced that Friends 8th Annual Golf Outing event will be held on Monday August 28th at Arrowhead Golf Course in Edelstein, Illinois. Please circle that important date on your calendar now and plan on participating in Friends biggest single-day fundraiser event!
- **Kent & Linda Bryan will be leading Friend's September mission this year,** their 4th in a row as team leaders. Anyone interested in participating in September should contact the Bryans (bryans1381@aol.com) for further information about possible volunteer opportunities with their team.

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

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The Friends of the Children of Haiti is a non-profit organization.

FRIENDS  OF THE
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OF HAITI

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