

Volunteers hear call to action for first September mission



– Dr. Bryan

FOTCOH took another great stride forward with the successful completion of the organization's first September medical mission. Led by FOTCOH veteran Anne Hramec, the initial September team succeeded only because several new volunteers heard the last-minute call to action. In fact, at mid-summer, the mission sometimes seemed in doubt - but then volunteers like Dr. Kent Bryan came through.

"The disease, poverty and suffering in Haiti were greater than I ever imagined," says Bryan, from Peoria. "These diseases were just heart breaking."

Over eight clinical days, the 2,000 patients examined exhibited a wide range of maladies rampant around

Cyadrier: infection, worms, scabies, malaria, TB and AIDS. But several extraordinary cases wore on the hearts of the mission's 14 volunteers:

- A young man with a traumatic blinded eye and a large, drooping mass enveloping the other side of his face and eye. The injury had been caused by a cow, which gored him as he was leading it to pasture a full year earlier.
- A 2-year-old girl with AIDS, weighing a mere 14 pounds, carried in by her 65-year-old grandmother. The baby's mother had died one year before from AIDS and her father had been murdered in a drug deal.
- An 18-year-old man suffering from hepatitis and dehydration whose uncle claimed was possessed by an evil voodoo spirit. FOTCOH staff rehydrated the patient and transported him to St. Michel Hospital; later, his uncle carried him back to their village to expel the evil spirits in a voodoo ceremony.

"They are the most appreciative patients I have ever seen."

Dr. Bryan (joined on this mission by his wife Linda, a registered nurse practitioner who had previously worked with FOTCOH) found himself in awe of his patients. "The Haitian people carry these burdens with an unrealistic acceptance. They are the most appreciative patients I have ever seen. Despite their burdens, they are happy and friendly."

"I was exhausted at the end of every day, not from the physical but rather the emotional demands. Yet, every day we all felt, 'This has been a great day.' For every day we all received far more than we gave."

"Thank you FOTCOH for making this all possible!"



Container released, arrives in Cyvadier

November team departs, Feb. plans underway

Not only did the September effort further FOTCOH's goal of continuing care for patients through quarterly missions, but it also created the opportunity for Haitian-American health-care workers to serve their native country: Miami registered nurse Sandra Antor, whose sisters Sheilla and Bruina came from Port-au-Prince to aid FOTCOH's non-medical volunteers; and Dr. Marie-Florence Shadlen of Seattle, who brought her children Joshua, 18, and Juliana, 15.

"I was born in Jacmel in 1957 and have a particular attachment to that small, seaside city and its inhabitants," says Shadlen, an assistant professor of Medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle, who twice previously had returned to the southern peninsula to assist the Missionaries of Charity.

Joshua helped team pharmacist Bill Maher of Washington, Ill., while Juliana's duties included mixing rehydration formulas and feeding babies. At night, the family would review the day's treatments and reflect on their experiences, with Shadlen gaining newfound insight from her children.

"If you feel sad it's usually all about yourself," Shadlen says. "If you step outside of yourself, then you can see that there are many ways that you can do something for someone else - instead of thinking only of yourself. I couldn't have expressed it any better than my children have." "The three of us felt that we left Haiti richer than when we arrived. We are grateful for the friendships that we made and miss Haiti already."

Go to: <http://www.fotcoh.org/gallery.html> to see a photograph of FOTCOH's first September Mission Team !

Just updated:

Nearly a year after departing from Peoria for Haiti, FOTCOH's shipping container has been released by Haitian customs officials and has arrived in Cyvadier.

The container, provided by the Air-Land corporation, was packed full by Caterpillar Inc. personnel last Fall ('02) at Gray Interplant Systems in Peoria. Hundreds of useful new items are now in Cyvadier for mission use and distribution including everything from medical, surgical, dental and ophthalmological instruments and supplies to bed frames, buckets and mops. There's a sonogram unit, instrument sterilizer, eye examination chair, x-ray gear and a dental chair air compressor. IV poles, gooseneck lamps, walkers, crutches, canes, leg braces and slings are all part of the shipment along with additional furniture, shelving, a stove and refrigerator and boxes of children's school supplies, toys and - shoes, shoes, shoes!

- The November '03 Mission is currently underway at press time for this edition of *Between Friends*. We will report next month on this mission effort lead by Team Leader Bob Hoy.
- February '04 Mission Team Leaders Eric & Sue Behrens say that plans are well underway for the February trip with strong medical and non-medical personnel returning again in '04 and that the team hopes to include new volunteers who will lead FOTCOH's first dental care effort! Call 309-699-3707 as soon as possible if you are interested in volunteering with the February Mission.

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.

CALENDAR

Feb. 3-17, 2004

MEDICAL MISSION

Cyvadier, Haiti

May 10-21

MEDICAL MISSION

Cyvadier, Haiti

Sept. 13-24, 2004

MEDICAL MISSION

Cyvadier, Haiti

November 1-12, 2004

MEDICAL MISSION

Cyvadier, Haiti

FRIENDS OF THE

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