

VILLAGE PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL



"partnering to help people help themselves"

December 2010

Uganda Mission

ELECTRICITY

IS ON ITS WAY:

Electricity is something we all take for granted. We flip on a switch, and there it is. But in the village of Papoli and the Robert Cooley Safe House and Clinic there is no electricity or running water. **But we have some exciting news!** Thanks to God's blessings and a sizeable contribution specifically earmarked to bring electricity to the Robert Cooley Clinic, we are now in a position to do just that. In fact, the electricity will even be extended down the road to the Papoli primary school. What will this mean to the village and clinic? The possibilities are as great as our vision will allow it to be. Initially, it will allow the clinic to operate more efficiently and be available for service at night. It will enable the use of vital medical equipment and eventually supply the clinic with running water. Electricity will offer a convenient means for villagers to charge their cell phones and batteries for power tools such as drills, saws, etc. Electronic educational aids can be introduced into the schools. The nearby village center can tap into the electricity for business purposes such as automatic grain grinders and other business equipment. We could go on and on but the fact is, electricity will be a fantastic aid to improvement of village life and provide the village with income opportunities to help sustain and expand all of the projects that have been introduced there.

MEDICAL CLINIC AND SAFE HOUSE

The Robert H. Cooley Pediatric Clinic and safe house for children with AIDS is a wonderful blessing to the villagers in this part of Uganda. It is far surpassing our initial expectations. The clinic is staying quite busy with an increase in patients as well as expanded services. The original purpose of the clinic was to care for children with HIV/AIDS. However, the clinic health aides that personally visit the homes of villagers discovered something that could not be ignored. They came upon several very poor families that did not have sufficient crops or funds to provide their children with enough food to maintain proper health. They found several children who were extremely malnourished and required immediate care. These children were brought into the clinic and provided with nourishing meals, playful exercise, storytelling and love. There were drastic changes in the health and morale of these children in just a few days. Most of the children enjoyed the clinic so much they wanted to stay on. The clinic health aides provide continuity of service by following up on the progress of these children at home and talk to the families about proper nutrition, hygiene and other health measures.

In our last Uganda newsletter it was mentioned that the villagers were so excited about what the clinic was doing, they decided to help by planting nutritious sweet potatoes and greens on the property. Now guess what they are doing? They are harvesting those vegetables and helping to feed the clinic children. The original sweet potato cuttings were obtained from a research station and are a special high protein breed specifically developed for people that are malnourished or suffering from HIV/AIDS. The villagers are expanding the

gardens at the clinic and have even given cuttings to villagers to improve the malnutrition problems in the area.

Many of the children that are cared for at the clinic come from extreme situations of poverty, loss of family members to AIDS, sickness, etc. and are in need of professional counseling. Well, where there is a need God can provide the means. It just so happens Samali Myabeli, a former student in Papoli had a goal of becoming a social worker and work with orphans and vulnerable children. Thanks to an education scholarship through the Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church scholarship program, Samali was able to complete high school and went on to obtain a university degree in counseling. Samali has returned to Papoli and is now providing counseling to the children at the clinic and within the village. Samali is employed by the NGO we established which goes by the name of PACODEF (Papoli Community Development Foundation).



A child being treated at the clinic

The clinic has also expanded their services to some elderly women in the area who cannot afford or are unable to travel to far off clinics for health needs. The clinic charges a small fee for these services and raised \$400.00 last month. The earnings were used for stocking more drugs. This extension of services and the fees charged is a way of preparing the villagers for the planned outpatient facility to be built on the property and the charges would be made for those outpatient services. Emmanuel Ofumbi stated that community members are in high spirits about the outpatient clinic and have embarked on making bricks for that future facility. So far they have made about 30,000 bricks. Thus far, funds are not available to build the clinic.

Also employed with PACODEF are Japheth who is from Papoli and specializes in community development and Grace who specializes in micro-economics, sustainability and health insurance. Japheth and Grace have expanded their services to village zones adjacent to Papoli. They are providing services in community development, village savings plans, construction of pit latrines, home improvement, etc. Village leader, Emmanuel Ofumbi stated that this was not just an expansionist move but a strategy to serve other communities, tap into possible government resources and other development partners and also move beyond Papoli village so that nearby villagers can see that the services provided by VPI and PACODEF are not restricted to Papoli.



A child receiving an IV at the Robert Cooley Clinic

HAITI MISSION

Our Man on the Ground

You may recall, Will White, from our previous newsletter on Haiti. Will is our man on the ground in and around the Port au Prince area. With VPI's assistance, Will has been able to provide immediate assistance to individuals and organizations in desperate need following the earthquake of January 2010.

Will is still at it. He is made aware daily of much needed assistance in the areas of health, education and employment not being addressed by other organizations. He has witnessed many hand-out programs in the area that simply maintain an existence of life. Will wanted to do more. He wanted to invest in Haiti's future, in projects that would provide sustainability and improve the quality of life. Will was aware of several situations where people were trying to establish small businesses but lacked sufficient funds to make them successful. Will wanted to get involved with projects that help people like this. Will said that he really liked these types of projects because they have more of a chance of being self sustaining and really help people for the long term. The VPI board agreed that this was an area in which we should get involved. Will was so excited about going forward with this that he provided immediate assistance to several struggling entrepreneurs who needed a little boost to help make their business a success. But Will did not just hand out funds. The assistance was made in the form of micro loans. This way, the repayment of those loans would keep working for other businesses in need. Will linked up with Fonkoze USA, an American 501 (c)3 organization dedicated to securing financial aid & technical support for its Haitian partners. Will and Fonkoze work together in finding business situations that Will feels strongly about, businesses he would be able to monitor and businesses that coincide with VPI's mission.

With this resource and Will's awareness of needy situations, VPI has been able to assist many businesses or business start-ups in the form of micro loans. Here are just a few of those projects.

Purchase of a small generator and freezer for Merlande Dormeus to expand her refreshment stand business: This allowed Merlande to expand and hire two employees.

Provided funding to a business to produce an alternative to charcoal from waste material: The technology would be shared with companies making charcoal in hopes they would convert at least a portion of their business to this new method. This funding would increase employment and provide a much needed alternative to wood-based charcoal as a heat producing product.

Allow expansion of a small pig and fresh fish farm that had suffered from the earthquake: This would increase the food source, add new jobs and help maintain current employment in this rural area.

Purchase of a corn mill for a local organization: This would allow them to purchase whole corn from local farmers and mill that corn thus lower feed costs, increase production and hire more workers for their chicken business.

Assist Hands Together Coop that produces hand-made paper jewelry from rolled recycled news paper: This employs many non-skilled workers and provides them with a craft they can expand on their own.

A man named Johnson, who formerly worked with Will White quit that job in order to finish his education. Will was fond of Johnson and impressed with his communication skills and understanding of the needs of his fellow Haitians. He was almost killed when the school he was attending collapsed during the earthquake. Johnson was then able to find a job with a security company. He noticed that in the evenings the youth in the area had absolutely nothing to do. Some of those youths and his friends would come into his home to use his internet service. Johnson recognized an opportunity there and used all of his extra earnings to open a small cyber café and free game center for youth. Johnson needed some technical equipment to improve and expand his business. Will felt this was a very worthwhile cause, so he provided Johnson with the

funds needed for the equipment through a micro loan. Below is a picture of Johnson overseeing his cyber café business.



We are confident that the above programs and others that have been assisted will promote business, offer employment opportunities and provide additional goods and services to the Haitian people. **We also give our heartfelt thanks to Will for all of his hard work in assisting VPI with its Haiti mission.**

Recent Trip to Haiti

Our own Sylvia Campbell and her good friend Jeanne Gres recently returned from another trip to Haiti where they provided much needed surgical and other medical treatment. Here is Sylvia's observation resulting from that trip.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI NOV. 6-13, 2010

We arrived in PAP on Sat morning, our flight delayed by the after effects of Hurricane Tomas. The airport remained broken, but had improved since our last trip in April. This trip Jeanne and I were to work with Project Medishare, run through the University of

Miami. They have moved out of the tents near the airport, which were set up after the earthquake, and now are a functioning Trauma Center in the city.

My mind flashed back to January when we arrived immediately after the earthquake. The chaos was gone, the rubble cleared from many of the streets, but buildings still stood in ruin, tents made of tarp filled all open spaces, and people with sad acceptance of their fate stared out from makeshift homes, trying to survive as they again and again are struck down.

This time, this trip, the desperation of winter and spring had calmed-but a new disaster has fallen upon these people. The insidious spread of Cholera, not seen for half a century, is spreading its tentacles throughout this country, rapidly taking life after life if treatment is not quickly found.

We were privileged to work beside people from all over the United States and Canada on this trip, where we all joined together to do what we could to help those who have such desperate need. We experienced patients with incredible illness, and saw loss of such innocent life. A 10 year old girl lost her life to diphtheria, a preventable illness if the vaccination is present. A 25 year old mother lost her life to TB, leaving behind a family of young children. A five month old baby died of malnutrition, a young woman of heart failure. Injuries were seen not unlike here, but without the technology of our world, leaving care to be done as possible. Yet in the despair there was also hope, and healing.

A diagnosis of appendicitis was made on a young man in the cholera tent, and he was able to have surgery and return home the next day. A nine day old baby was operated on, and his sepsis improved. Countless patients who came unable to walk due to the effects of cholera were able to receive hydration, and healing, and return home. Trauma patients were treated and released, and hundreds of other patients received care.

Story after story, each with its own pain and suffering. Yet even in the midst of this, these people have an incredible strength and an unwavering faith, which carries them through these times. It is up to us, who

have been given so much, to respond to their need, and their pain, and help in any way that we are able.

And so we return to the mountains of Mombin Crochu, Haiti, to work at the hospital in the village, in January.

Below are some pictures taken during Sylvia and Jeanne's stay in Haiti.



Jeanne in the Cholera Tent



A post op visit from a young patient



Sylvia holding a baby prior to surgery



Volunteers at the hospital

We at Village Partners International feel privileged to be an active part of all that is being done in Uganda and Haiti and we thank you, our supporters and friends, for helping us make it happen with your gifts, your encouragement, your support, your prayers and your love for our brothers and sisters in need throughout the world.