

OUR MISSION:

VILLAGE PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL SEEKS TO DEVELOP AND ENHANCE COMMUNITIES WITH PROFOUND NEED. THROUGH PARTNERSHIP, WE SEEK TO STRENGTHEN THEIR MEDICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES. WE ARE SEEKING TO HELP MAKE THE WORLD A STRONGER COMMUNITY BY SHARING GOD'S LOVE, ONE VILLAGE AT A TIME.

"Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we might find ourselves treading on another's dream. More serious still we may forget that God was there before our arrival."

Anonymous



Village Partners International
partnering to help people help themselves

SPRING 2015

Mobile Medical Clinic * Haitian Partners in Action

Since 2013, Village Partners International has provided funding for Mombin Crochu Hospital to conduct Mobile Medical Clinics. Twice each month, a dedicated team of Haitian doctors, nurses, and public health workers travel by truck, motorcycle, donkey, or foot to serve remote regions of Northern Haiti. Thanks to these providers – and the invaluable support from VPI donors – thousands of women, men, and children receive basic medical and preventative health care they would otherwise not.

During the February 2015 Medical mission trip, I had the honor of volunteering with a mobile clinic and watching our Haitian partners in action. Below is my story from that day:

"We're late, but not to worry. My team went ahead and we can make up the time" said Dr. Renée, one of two full-time physicians at Mombin Crochu Hospital. We walk quickly out of Mombin and before we know it the sounds of a bustling city on market day have vanished. We walk for miles, up and down, up and

We arrive at the day's clinic site, a small home on a family-owned farm. The farmer welcomes the mobile clinic whenever they come, knowing the vital services they provide his community. Nearly a hundred patients – men, women, and children of all ages – crowd the front yard. Signs of need are everywhere. Children with the sadly familiar signs of malnutrition sit propped against their mothers, too tired to play. An elderly woman is helped to a chair; she is wearing a brace on her knee made of leaves and twine. Many others lie on benches or the ground.

The Haitian nurses and public health workers have already set up and

down, along dusty, well-worn paths. I try not to let Dr. Renée see me breathing hard, though I suspect he sees when he tells me "This is an easy one."

are hard at work. The nurses sit in chairs at the entrance of the house, filling out forms, taking vital signs, and preparing patients for Dr. Renée. The public health workers sit behind a long



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Jennifer Reynolds

Mobile Clinic . . .

table filled with health education materials and testing strips. They are testing for HIV, TB, and other sexually-transmitted diseases and providing treatment and counseling. I see them discreetly pass out condoms and I am so thankful. Having taught HIV/AIDS prevention in Haiti before, I know the importance of condoms for preventing transmission and how difficult it can be to access them in remote areas. Dr. Renée rushes into the farmer's home to conduct his patient exams in private.

VPI volunteers Terry Deal, Sam Steckbauer, and I set up our "eye clinic" on the remaining table outside. There is a flurry of activity for the next several hours as we distribute nearly 100 pairs of glasses donated by the Jubilee Community in Asheville, North Carolina. After a long week in the hospital, it is a welcome relief to sit in the sun, helping patients select eye glasses, "ohhhing and ahhhing" at the colors and designs they choose. The patients smile and laugh with us. The Mobile Clinic team works quickly and efficiently. Every waiting patient is seen. Medications are dispensed. Instructions are given. By late afternoon, all the supplies are packed and the nurses and public health workers are gone. On the long walk home, our day's duties complete, we are able to relax and talk with Dr. Renée. He tells us about his family. He and his wife are both physicians. They live apart all week – she works in Hinch while he works at the hospital in Mombin – but see each other on weekends. He becomes sad and serious when he mentions his son. Five-year-old David is living in the Dominican Republic with a grandmother. Dr. Renee could not visit last year but hopes he can soon. I immediately think of my own two daughters at home in North Carolina. While on this medical mission, I cried from missing them after only 9 days. And here is Dr. Renee, separated from his son for years at a time, in hopes that David will have a better education and more opportunity than he would in Haiti. Meanwhile, Dr. Renee stays in Haiti to walk these roads, heal the sick, and provide opportunity where there was none." - Jennifer Reynolds, MPH, CHES

"My favorite part of the mobile clinic is that it truly is a testament to VPI's mission of 'helping people help themselves.' A relatively small amount of funding enables a dedicated team of Haitian medical providers to serve their community in a way they were unable to before. We so often focus on the sacrifices that 'we' make - to make a donation or go on a mission trip - but I was blown away by the sacrifices Dr. Renee (and I am sure others) make each and every day to make their communities better."

Jennifer Reynolds





Papoli, Uganda * A Shining Example of Progress

Village Partners International was recently blessed with and an extended visit to the Tampa area from Emmanuel Ofumbi of Papoli, Uganda. Mr. Ofumbi is the in residence guiding force and day to day leader of all of our efforts in this tiny village.

This visit came about as a result of Mr. Ofumbi's invitation to attend a Symposium and Panel Discussion on "Healthy Populations in the 21st Century: International Trends" which was sponsored by the University of South Florida School of Public Health. It was indeed an honor for Emmanuel to be invited to participate in this symposium along with several other internationally known experts. The particular lecture and discussion which addressed Ugandan health issues was conducted by Mr. Ofumbi and drew standing room only attendance. The enthusiasm to hear Emmanuel's lectures was a result of the widespread interest in the "Papoli Story." Emmanuel presented the background and current status of the rise of a small, impoverished village some twelve years ago to what is today- a shining example of progress. Specifically, this progress is in the areas of education, health related programs and training in self-sustainability.

Those of us at Village Partners could not be more excited about the continued interest and commitment by USF Public Health in addressing both current and long range health concerns in Papoli. We join Emmanuel and the PACODEF organization in Papoli in pledging to work toward an ideal environment for future student internship and study and to give our full support to other opportunities that may arise.

It was indeed an added bonus that Mr. Ofumbi was able to spend an extra two weeks in Tampa after the USF symposium. We feel that this time was spent in a most beneficial manner. Mr. Ofumbi was able to address various support groups at Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church as well as other individuals and groups whose support has been so essential to the success of our efforts. Emmanuel attended the Board of Directors meeting of Village Partners and at this time gave an extended report of the current status of existing programs and additional programs in progress.

Space does not permit any great detail of Emma's report and the success story of what has been done and what is being done for the people of this humble village. Suffice to say that today children are being fed and are being educated. Adults are being trained and given hope for a better life. Health care emergencies that once resulted in poor outcomes are routinely handled successfully on a daily basis in our clinic and health care center. All in all, we could have not been more excited and pleased with the report Emmanuel gave.

For all who have supported Village Partners and the Papoli effort in the past, Emmanuel's parting words were a heartfelt "Thank you and God bless you." As Emma returns to Papoli we feel refocused and rededicated in our commitment to this dream and add our own "Thank you and God bless you" to all of you who have made this possible. - Paul Clark

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USF Studies Entrepreneurial Alternatives for Papoli, Uganda

The dedication and tireless efforts of Sam Bell and Betty Castor toward the betterment of the people of Uganda and particularly those in the village of Papoli goes back for more than a decade. Their support and commitment to Papoli, in particular, is reflected in much of the success story that is evident in that tiny village in Central Uganda.

The commitment of Sam and Betty has resulted in the the establishment of a long term relationship between Papoli and the Department of Public Health at the University of South Florida. This relationship, which has been in effect for several years, has many facets. Students are sent to Papoli to live in residence while conducting studies and being of direct assistance in the field of public health.

Recently, due to the initiative of Sam and Betty there has been a new effort begun which could have a dramatic effect on the sustainability of the projects and services available to the people of this village. The plan, which is already underway, is to involve a

wide range of the resources of USF to study entrepreneurial alternatives which would generate income for the village and furnish employment opportunities to the residents.

The team which has been assembled to study the feasibility of income producing alternatives involves both the Department of Public Health and the Muma School of Business at USF. The service of Dr. Richard Berman, who is a visiting professor at the Muma School of Business, has been

enlisted as an advisor to the group. Dr. Berman is an internationally renowned consultant on entrepreneurial feasibilities in third world countries.

Additionally, the study team includes members from Village Partners International. These VPI representatives will work closely with the study team as will Emmanuel Ofumbi, the Papoli leader of PACODEF which is the onsite NGO and governing arm of the village.



Village Partners is indeed excited about this continuing relationship and is thankful and appreciative of the efforts of Sam, Betty and the entire USF family. -Paul Clark

VPI Volunteer Spotlight Sigsby Gayle, MD

Village Partners International wishes to express deepest gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Sigsby Gale who has served as a core member of the VPI Haiti Medical Team for 19 mission trips. Whatever Dr. Gale did, he did through great faith and love. In his words, "The journey has been exciting and challenging, and the friendships will last forever." Dr. Gale will continue his work in his church and in the Crossover Free Clinic in Richmond, Virginia.



"Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before-- more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle, more loving."

Photo by: Haiti Medical Mission Volunteer, Adicia Bathon, RN