

## Cité Soleil Heats Up



Route 9, the major road through Cité Soleil

This article is written as an appreciation for the fortitude and perseverance of our staff (pictured inside).

Cité Soleil has long been touted as an unstable and dangerous locale. In the past it has been the scene of tremendous violence due to the encouragement of gang warfare by political actors.

In 2006 and 2007 the UN mounted full

scale military campaigns, including use of tanks, against gangs in these densely populated neighborhoods. These were the years when the Lamp was first established. The building in which the Lamp clinic now resides was in fact the home of a nationally-known gang leader who was jailed at that time, his property confiscated. Those UN operations also had strong political overtones. Nowadays, however, this

politicization of gangs has faded away (for the present), to be replaced by something more banal ~ turf wars and simple crime.

Cité Soleil is an area in which the police have little power. Like the UN before them, the police content themselves with patrols on the main streets and military-style raids into the residential areas. For

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Rock-Solid Staff

Quite a few changes have occurred at the Lamp over the past six months and it seems a good time to celebrate our staff, many of whom are new. In November, we lost the services of our previous manager Myrlène Dominique. It was a tumultuous time but, as it turned out, we were tremendously lucky in our hiring efforts. Benoit Florestal ~ whose article is on page 4 ~ grew up at St. Joseph's Home for Boys, a street kid who just needed an opportunity. He has been the manager of a home for physically and mentally challenged children, the accountant for three charitable organizations, and the lead dancer and choreographer of a dance troupe (at St. Joseph's).

Dr Hyppolite was another terrific find. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame

d'Haiti, he has marvelous professional skills and has provided strong and compassionate leadership in his role as In-Country Medical Director. Dr. Dorsainvil too, has been a marvelous boon. He worked as our primary (but "temporary") doctor for almost a year and we are extremely glad that he decided to sign on with us as a full team member. Our newest two hires have been Youseline Saillant, a registered nurse, and Noé Sanon, our driver.

All this to say that the leadership and professional skills of our whole team is remarkable; one couldn't hope

for better staff than this. We are standing on a rock-solid foundation and it is certain that our future activities can only gain strength from this base.



Ms Youseline Saillant in the new reception area



The staff (clockwise from top left): Claude Thomas (Triage and Registration), Astrude Tabois-Cangé (Head Nurse), Youseline Saillant (Nurse), Ylienne Georges (Nurse), Benoit Florestal (National Program Manager), Noé Sanon (Driver), Aline Succès (Lab Manager), Dr. Jude Dorsainvil (Physician), Dr. Barrère Hyppolite (In-Country Medical Director)  
Opposite page: Moza-Flaure Alcius (Nurse)



## Title story continued:

many years the Lamp was able to avoid the direct cost of this state of affairs but over the last year the security situation has become significantly worse.

Our greatest problem is in getting to work. The roads through Cité Soleil, including the main, crowded thoroughfare of Route 9, are the location of daily robberies. Twice now our vehicle, with all of our staff on board, has been stopped and robbed by large groups of gun wielding bandits.

At the clinic itself, it is safer, since the community provides very substantial protection for us. Safer but not safe. There are areas in Cité Soleil where the community, not the gangs, are in control;

but Bwa Nèf ~ where we work ~ is not one of them. Visits by local gang members demanding money have been increasing. Occasionally the gangs walk up and down the road in front of the clinic, guns drawn, threatening anyone who dares to look at them. A few weeks ago two men were shot dead at the entrance to our road. The next day a UN military police vehicle came to Bwa Nèf to ask some questions of passers-by. They did not get out of their vehicle. Our manager noted that this was the first vehicle, other than ours, that he has seen on our road since he was hired in November 2011.

The residents of Bwa Nèf have to live with this type of insecurity on a continuous basis. There is not a person in Bwa Nèf

that can feel that his or her safety ~ on any given day ~ is assured. In this environment it is truly inspiring to see our staff providing their professional, caring service day after day. Our clinic is an oasis of care in a harsh world and it is only the perseverance of the staff (and you, our supporters) that makes it so.

[Next newsletter: Some of Lamp's responses to the realities of working in a difficult environment]

More stories at the Lamp's website:  
[www.lampforhaiti.org](http://www.lampforhaiti.org).



## Training for Women's Health: A New Experience

Moza-Flaure Alcius, Nurse, Lamp for Haiti (translated from the French)

I worked for two years at the clinic in Bwa Nèf, Cité Soleil. In addition to my normal nursing duties I was in charge of a nutrition program that involves treating children, from 0 to 5 years old, who are suffering from malnutrition. Then, a few months ago, I was invited to participate in a training program for midwives. The program is an initiative of an organization called *Midwives for Haiti* and is located in Hinche, a three hour drive north of Port-au-Prince. It is a 10 month program and I jumped at the chance to gain a different kind of experience and acquire new knowledge about health.

unity health and are taught in Creole.



As with the other successful candidates, I went through an interview process in November, and started the courses in mid-January. There are 16 students in the course, 14 women and 2 men, all with different backgrounds and experiences. They come from many different places in Haiti. The courses are not hard and are becoming more and more captivating. They are based on obstetrics and comm-

On some days we learn theory in class, and on other days we are given practical training at the hospital. The practical work in the hospital is very helpful; it allows us to encounter cases that we have not yet learned about, and later we discuss these cases in class. We also participate in mobile clinics that may go to very remote areas. In these areas pregnant women may easily die due to complications, because of

the lack of health services. We saw one patient in her fifties who had already had several children. She said that she was in her fourth or fifth month of pregnancy, but when we examined her and gave her a pregnancy test, we discovered that she was not pregnant. When we explained that she was going through menopause, she did not want to believe us and said she would consult someone else, because she knew she was pregnant.

Experiences like this show us how much we can offer; being a midwife is no small affair. Women without means, whether in remote areas or in Cité Soleil, need care to ensure that they have a healthy pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnancy should not be a life-threatening affair because of a lack of care or lack of education. I am proud to take part in this program because it will permit me to do my part to reduce maternal mortality in Cité Soleil, to empower women to take control of their own childbearing, and to bring healthy babies into the world.

## New members on the Lamp Board

The Lamp for Haiti is proud to announce the recent addition of three new Board members ~ Dr. Dianne J. François, Ms. Georgette Delinois, and Ms. Cornelia Suskind. The new Board additions represent varied professional backgrounds, and promise to strengthen an already committed and hardworking Board of Directors.

Dr. François lives in Haiti and has had extensive experience in clinical management of patients as well as with the Haitian Ministry of Health. Ms. Delinois and Ms. Suskind live Stateside.

Ms. Delinois has worked extensively to support the varied Haitian organizations aiding the poor of Haiti. Her professional life centers on social services for women.

Ms. Suskind has substantial experience in development with several US based nongovernmental organizations. She has been a friend to Lamp for several years.

Whenever we add a new face to Lamp, that person must

pass the litmus test of the “3 C’s – competent, committed, caring.” Each of these professionals pass with flying colors. Please join us in welcoming them!



Not a board member... yet

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## Message from the National Program Manager — Benoit Florestal

When I agreed to take the position to work for Lamp, I was well aware of what lies within Cité Soleil but it didn't stop me from making the most tremendous choice ever. In spite of the hardships of the transition and all the time it took, I came to understand that there are great and valuable reasons for the Lamp to exist. Cité Soleil is not the easiest place to be or to work but it is the place where you can help people to grow and help them to live differently. Cité Soleil is really in need of an organization such as The Lamp for Haiti. In fact, we need many more, because the more activities we have the more people down there will see how much we care. The Lamp does care and is caring for the forgotten of the poorest area in Port-au-Prince. Lamp for Haiti, by the way, is the only active organization in Bwa Nèf right now giving free primary medical care; Lamp for Haiti is the only organization

who decides ~ in spite of knowing that Bwa Nèf is a 'red zone' ~ to stay there among the community. I believe we can do more and we will strive ourselves to do more. Lamp for Haiti is a great help in such a zone and stands as a model in the reconstruction of Haiti.

We know what it costs to provide primary healthcare in a third world country. With your support, we are giving the best possible care, but we want to do more. I celebrate this day for all those who are supporting this wonderful work; I celebrate the Board of the Lamp for Haiti for their ongoing commitment for Haiti, I celebrate the founders, members and all those who are putting together the pieces of the puzzle to promote healthcare and to help let the light of the Lamp shine in Haiti's

darkest places. I celebrate the Haiti staff side for their courageous hearts and their willingness to help keep that light shining. I celebrate the Lamp for their endless commitment and long term plan for Haiti. 'Let there be light' and there is Lamp for Haiti.



*Benoit (left) talks with community members*