

LAMP HAITI

SHINING A LIGHT ON HEALTH, PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

Winter 2015



Grace visits a home beside the clinic; the clinic courtyard (photo by G. Harrison)

A Visit to Bwa Nèf — by Grace Harrison

Grace Harrison is a high school senior from Montclair, NJ, who recently visited the Lamp's clinic. She wrote this piece as a college entrance essay.

I stepped out of the van in Cité Soleil, Haiti. The powerful odors of pigs, dogs, goats and strewn garbage assaulted my senses. I saw

homes created from concrete slabs and children playing with empty bottles tied to strings, others splashing barefoot in filthy puddles. I saw a woman selling mud cookies, which hungry people use to trick their stomachs into feeling full. Two teenage boys played dominos, one with two guns strapped to his waist.

I followed the footsteps in front of me to the Lamp for Haiti. The safe, clean health clinic was an oasis. Dozens of people waited for care, including pregnant teenagers younger than me, elderly people who have lived a long hard life, and sick people with nowhere else to go. Here I was, a healthy teenager from New Jersey, in an impover-

ished community in Port-Au-Prince. I expected resentment, and yet a woman who had almost nothing shared her chestnuts with me and another woman reached out to hug me tightly.

The next day I watched two little girls sitting in a pile of indescribable garbage. We stared at each other as people from two different worlds. It felt like there was an unspoken agreement to keep a comfortable distance. And yet, when one of the girls began to cry I broke that distance and walked over to rub her back. She reached her arms around my neck and I lifted her off the ground. As she rested her tiny head on my chest, her tears stopped. Mine began. After a few



Lamp For Haiti News



♦ Thanks to some very special supporters, the Lamp now has a new vehicle for staff and emergency transportation! We can finally retire our much-repaired Montero.



♦ On the US side, we would like to welcome Christine Simpson-Mensah – our new Director of Development! She can be reached at Christine@lampforhaiti.org, or 973-638-1831 ext. 5, Monday through Wednesday.

♦ We have changed the timing of the annual Lamp gala. Watch for it in 2016!

♦ January 30th is the 7th annual concert for Haiti in Montclair, NJ. Get your tickets at <http://outpost.ticketleap.com/haiti-2016/>

♦ At the clinic, one of our buildings has been renovated and is being prepared to house our expanded pharmacy. Also a new shade roof!



A Visit to Bwa Nèf - continued

moments between us I put her bare feet back on the dangerous, debris filled ground. Walking away from her took all my strength. Her face will remain with me for the rest of my life.

That same day I joined nurses, doctors and Lamp supporters for a celebration of fried plantains and grilled goat that followed the annual board meeting. The manager of the Lamp, named Benoit, kissed me and said, "Thank you, Grace. You are helping to save lives. We appreciate all you have done." I was humbled because nothing I did compares to what the Lamp employees, both Haitian and American, accomplish every day.

I had learned about The Lamp three years ago from Dr. Jim Morgan, a physician in my town. I was moved by his words and knew I had to help. But how could a 16-year-old in New Jersey help people in Haiti? I felt powerless. Then, one day in chorus class, as I listened to friends

belt out high notes, I thought there must be a way to use our love of music to help others. I invited my friends to sing, borrowed microphones and cables, reached out to businesses for donations and sent out invitations to my Backyard Lamp for Haiti Concert. Dr. Morgan came to speak and told us that Cité Soleil was the only place in the world Mother Theresa called more impoverished than Calcutta. The event raised more than \$3000. The next year I organized my second concert, raising total contributions to \$7000. Then in October Dr. Morgan invited me to see first-hand how the funds I raised were helping. I got a typhoid shot and used my babysitting money to book a flight.

Can a person's life change in four days? Mine did. Haiti changed how I see

my place in the world. Organizing my backyard concert made me realize I can make a difference and being in Haiti made me realize that I must. After just three and a half hours on the plane, I was back home drinking clean water from the tap. Guilt coated my bones that night as I put the air conditioning on and fell asleep thinking of the girl I had held a world away.



A vendor sells mud cookies at the entrance to the clinic

Gifts for the holiday season

Purchase gifts of health and education and sanitation for your brothers and sisters in Haiti!

Just write the code for each gift - on check or the website - to let us know how to apply your gift!

A1: \$50 – HIV and malaria tests for 25 people

A2: \$100 – Full health services for 5 people, including examination, medicines, lab tests, and x-rays (if necessary)

A3: \$150 – Child nutrition program: six weeks of therapeutic nutrition for a severely malnourished child

A4: \$500 – One month of medical supplies for children, including cold medicine, pain medicine, de-worming and children's doses of antibiotics.

33% of Lamp's patients are under the age of 6!

B1: \$380 – Sponsor a child in school for one year!

Some efforts can't be broken down into smaller units. Here are two hugely desirable projects that will not occur without the support of a special donor:

C1: Sanitation Project (highest priority!): The area around the clinic is flat, easily flooded, and breeds mosquitos. A drainage channel will benefit all of the surrounding houses as well as the clinic itself: \$7,000

C2: Community Health Workers will allow the Lamp to reach out into the community – to take the Lamp to the next level of effective care: \$11,400 to train and employ three local CHWs for one year.

Every gift is hugely appreciated!



Lamp 2015 – Dr. James Morgan, founder and chair

It has surely been another successful year for all of us involved with Lamp for Haiti. Our continued hope is that you consider yourself as an integral part of that success.



"Bwa Nèf says Thank You"

Lamp for Haiti is about addressing healthcare as a means to build community. It's no secret that when one feels healthy, spirits are lifted, work gets done, families are fed. Our work *with* and *for* the marginalized poor, is necessary. It is a work born out of an epiphany of sorts, an eye opening experience that recognizes the huge economic gradient that exists between our country and our neighbors 90 miles off of Florida. It is a work that takes that recognition of existing despair and channels it enthusiastically and shines a lamp.

As we approach our ten year anniversary, all of us can take pride in what together we've accomplished from those early days when we provided care in alleys and empty buildings. Today our professional primary and urgent care health center sees more

than 1,000 patients each month. We have established a women's health program. We provide nutrition to malnourished children. We are utilizing an electronic health record that is providing us with hard data, data that not only is helpful for tracking patient trends, but also in staying transparent to oversight organizations and to donors.

Our courageous staff has weathered hurricanes and earthquakes, civil unrest and political turmoil, and continues to provide care with a smile. They can do so because of your continued support, and your continuing confidence in this project.

Our very best to you and your families this holiday season. Stay warm. Thanks again for helping us to keep the Lamp shining bright.



P.O. Box 39703, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Email: admin@lampforhaiti.org

Telephone: 267-499-0516

Website: www.lampforhaiti.org

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The story of Mr. Memnon - by Dr. Barrère Hyppolite, Medical Director

This is the story of Mr. Anderson Memnon, who is 55 years old, diabetic and with very high blood pressure. What is striking about Mr. Memnon is his deep appreciation for the LAMP Health Center. Every time he comes to LAMP he congratulates us for our presence and prays for us. He loves the welcome he receives at the clinic. He feels that the clinic has saved his life and made it livable.

He lives a very simple life -- he has no job currently and unfortunately he has a burden in his life: diabetes. Mr. Memnon represents the perfect example of the difficulty that this particular disease presents to Haitian people of modest or low income. Because he moved to an area far from the clinic he was not able to get treatment for his

diabetes. In fact, Mr. Memnon came close to dying because of this disease – he had no money to buy medicine, with the result that he stayed too long at home with a disease that was not controlled. Finally, he found enough money to travel to the clinic.

As soon as he arrived at the clinic the nurses recognized that he had a serious problem. He was very tired and sluggish, had difficulty walking. They checked his blood sugar, and found that it was extremely high. It was an urgent situation; if not treated quickly his medical condition could have worsened significantly.

Fortunately at LAMP we can provide the basic management for this kind of situation and we did. Since this event, we have arranged to provide him with drugs for

diabetes and also for his hypertension each month. Mr. Memnon has now brought his oldest daughter, who is also diabetic, to LAMP because he's very satisfied with our care. He would like to see our clinic have a special day for diabetics because this disease is a real burden for Haitian people.

