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CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF HEALTH, PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

SUMMER**2021**

A Celebration of Lamp for Haiti

by Kelli D. Herd

It may seem odd that I would write this piece in celebration of Lamp's 15 years. I only started working for Lamp in May. I have not had the pleasure of meeting all the in-country staff, nor have I had opportunity to visit the Lamp Health Center in Cité Soleil. Fifteen years is monumental! Yet, one could argue that I am looking at it with a fresh lens. Still, anyone following Lamp can without a doubt sense the genuine spirit of benevolence of all the friends, staff, donors, and volunteers working to make Lamp for Haiti a success.



Over the last fifteen years, Lamp for Haiti has experienced extreme challenges and changes. However, the organization's beginnings were somewhat uneventful. In 2001, helping a friend chaperone a group of high school students, Jim Morgan, Lamp's founder, visited Haiti. He was struck by the extreme poverty and living conditions that ultimately deprived residents of resources, like clean water and healthcare—resources that many take for granted. Jim went home but made a promise to himself to return. In 2006, he did just that. Returning with a backpack full of medicine and other



supplies, he administered free health services to as many as he could. Over the next year, Jim would leave and return, each time building friendships and establishing relationships. Finally, he secured three small buildings in a corner of Cité Soleil, a neighborhood often regarded as one of the poorest and most dangerous areas of the Western Hemisphere. Here, Lamp established a clinic and small pharmacy. Lamp had planted roots.

Over the years, the Lamp for Haiti family grew. Through the efforts of the new board members, increased numbers of staff, donors, and dedicated volunteers, Lamp gained the respect and appreciation of the people it served. By 2010 the Lamp was well on its way to establishing itself as a formidable entity in Cité Soleil. And then, unimaginable tragedy. One of history's deadliest

Jim compares notes with Dr. Hypolite

natural disasters, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck, shattering Haiti's fragile infrastructure, killing over 220,000 people, and leaving hundreds of thousands in dire need of already scarce resources. Lamp staff and volunteers went to work, providing medical care and supplies, and reaching out to its donors and friends to help support and care for those in need – and especially the residents of Cité Soleil who are almost always forgotten.

That was over ten years ago, and while many organizations have come and gone, leaving Haiti and Cité Soleil, Lamp remains strong. In fact, since that time, Lamp has increased its in-country staff to 15, including some tremendously capable Haitian professionals, built an impressive health and wellness clinic serving over 14,000 clients yearly; administered tens of thousands of tests at Lamp's own laboratory; and so much more! Stateside, Lamp for Haiti continues to diligently work hard at increasing awareness of its work and the people of Cité Soleil. Volunteers commit their time and tireless efforts holding numerous fundraisers and events to raise money for Lamp.

(continues inside)



**A satisfied client of the
Child Nutrition Program**

A Celebration of Lamp for Haiti

Pursuing Lamp's website, I am inspired by how far Lamp has come. From a two-week visit to a backpack full of medicine, to a small rental space, to construction of a formidable healthcare clinic, Lamp for Haiti's roots have grown, and they continue to grow.

Jim recently shared with me a story. When the earthquake ravaged Haiti, Jim felt he needed to travel there to lend his support. Despite a litany of obstacles, he finally made his way to the Lamp Health Center. Upon seeing what I imagine to be an incredibly disheveled Dr. Morgan, Jesula, one of the women working at the clinic, bursts into tears. Jim also begins crying, and the two of them stand at the entrance of the health center, hugging one another, crying. Jim knows why he is crying--relief he has made it this far. He is, despite the circumstances of his visit, happy to be home at Lamp. He looks at Jesula and says, "Why are you crying?" She looks in his eyes and says, "You did not forget us." The tears flow once again.

I'm not certain I have retold the story with 100% accuracy, but it is my version of the story Jim told me. Though I've yet to visit Cité Soleil, nor have I met Jesula, when I envision that moment, it brings tears to my eyes. I think to myself, "Why am I crying?". My tears are for Jesula, that Jim made it safely to Lamp, that Lamp exists for the people in Cité Soleil, and that I am now part of the Lamp family. 🙌

Sponsors needed for Cité Soleil students!

\$415 allows a child to attend school for a year. Contact Henry at henryreimer@lampforhaiti.org



DJOULIE D. NEEDS
A SPONSOR!

SAVE THE DATE!

**CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF HEALTH,
PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY!**

Join us for this year's annual gala
to be held in-person

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2021

— At The Woman's Club of Montclair —

DETAILED INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

IN THE NEWS

- **The President of Haiti**, Jovenal Moïse, was assassinated on July 7. For four years, Haiti has not held legislative elections. As a result, Haiti's democratic institutions are very weak. We hope for a free and fair election.
- **COVID 19 was slow to affect Haiti but**, since the beginning of June, the number of cases and deaths has exploded. The official count is currently (July 20) 19,547 with 508 deaths, but the actual figures could easily be 10 or 20 times higher, given lack of testing and accurate record-keeping.
- **In May, Lamp was approved as a vaccination site by the Ministry of Health.** We stand ready to assist in all public health initiatives.
- **The Lamp Health Center is open!** The center was closed for over a month due to the deterioration of public safety in Port-au-Prince, including inter-gang fighting in the area of the clinic. We explored many options to continue service in other, safer, locations but the unrest was too widespread. Our staff have been very eager to get back to work and it is a great testament to their bravery that we are able to do so. The future is uncertain but we are, most certainly, a first responder in this situation!
- **Interested in helping to raise money for Lamp?** Consider holding your own fundraiser! Give us a call 973.619.3302. *"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."* - ARTHUR ASHE
- **A final word on the Spring Appeal:** The final tally for the Spring Appeal was an amazing \$77,500! The donations and the messages received were a tremendous and much needed boost to all of us at the Lamp. **Huge thanks to everyone!!**



MEET KELLI D. HERD

The Lamp welcomes a wonderful new Director of Development! Kelli is originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but has lived for over 18 years in NYC. She most recently was owner and director of WorldPlay, a nonprofit offering after-school programming and summer camps that focused on helping students explore the myriad of cultures of the world. Before founding WorldPlay, Kelli worked as grant writer and Director of Institutional Giving for NYC-based Literacy Partners. She also served as Director of Development for Brooklyn-based Bridge Street Development Corporation where she focused on establishing community relationships with local businesses, banks, and homeowners. In earlier years, Kelli worked as a writer for Black Enterprise Magazine and the newsletter division of Institutional Investor. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English Writing and Master of Public Administration in Nonprofit Management, both from the University of Pittsburgh. Kelli also lived for two years in Benin, West Africa working closely with the Minister of Education and USAID officials building primary school libraries throughout rural villages in Benin. Kelli is excited to work for Lamp and has enjoyed getting to know the staff and volunteers. "Everyone has been incredibly warm and welcoming. I am thrilled to be part of Lamp and the work the organization has and continues to do in Haiti."

Kelli recently received her 200-hour certification as a Yoga instructor. She currently lives in Harrison, NJ, with her son Jeremy and two dogs Yoyo and Morris.

LIFE CHANGES

BY JIM MORGAN, *Founder and Chair*

As some of you may have heard, I have recently left my internal medicine practice after 15 years and have joined the staff at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck NJ. It was not an easy decision. A major factor for accepting the position is my knowledge of Holy Name's commitment to Haiti; among other roles I currently serve at the hospital, I am the US Medical Director for that project, officially called "Haiti Health Promise of Holy Name".

In 2012, two years following the earthquake, Holy Name made an institutional commitment to help support Hospital Sacre Coeur, located in Milot, near Cap Haitien. Cap Haitien is in the north of Haiti, about a six-hour drive from the capital and Lamp for Haiti Health Center. The hospital has about 160 beds, caring for pediatric, OB-Gyn, adult internal medicine, and surgical patients.

My role at Lamp for Haiti stays the same, i.e., collaborating with Lamp's executive director, development director, Board, and Lamp's physician staff to continually try to improve a system that delivers high quality care to some of the world's poorest, despite what are often dangerous, and always challenging circumstances.

In my new position, I am happy to have an opportunity to deepen my involvement, and my *relationship* with Haiti. I expect that I will have a broader capacity to help both programs, through broader networks and "cross-pollination" of best practices.

It is particularly gratifying, as we come upon our 15 year anniversary of Lamp for Haiti's work, to talk with people in other parts of the country who have heard of our collective commitment to the residents of Cité Soleil.

A positive word-of-mouth reputation does not come easy, but it is a testament to an idea. It's an idea that rejects the status quo, "whatever" in favor of "what if?". *What if* we build a health center in the poorest and most notorious shantytown in the country? Fifteen years later, Cité Soleil residents are happy with the answer.

I am pleased to be able to share lessons learned at Lamp for Haiti with Holy Name's project in Milot. I look forward to continuing this journey with you as we intentionally seek out and walk with some of the world's most disenfranchised. It remains a great privilege.



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A D I V E R S I O N :

A Peek Into Haitian History

Current news from Haiti is difficult to digest; a good time to step back and consider Haiti in historical perspective. In focus here is the world class tourist destination of the Citadel Laferrière, the largest fortress in the Americas. Haiti is the only country in the world to be born of a successful slave revolt, so that military history and artifacts are central to the nation's story. The history of Haiti's independence is, in fact, bloody and complicated, with all three major colonists of the era – Spain, England and France, deeply involved in the conflict. Haiti was central to the competition between these nations since it was the wealthiest – by far - of all French colonies, contributing almost as much wealth (primarily through sugarcane plantations) as the Thirteen Colonies of Great Britain (subsequently called the USA) combined. It is estimated that one million out of a French population of 25 million derived their wealth directly from Haiti or St. Domingue as it was called then, and another 3 to 4 million were sustained indirectly. The Haitian Revolution was the result of the uprising of hundreds of thousands of slaves, led by various accomplished leaders and prominently including the ex-slave Toussaint Louverture, who gained control of the colony and then successfully held off a massive military expedition sent by Napoleon to re-establish French control. Independence was declared in 1804. Shortly thereafter, internal conflicts split the new country in two, with Alexandre Pétion ruling the south, and Henri Christophe the north. Fear of another French invasion persisted, and Christophe built the impressively huge Citadel, which held water reservoirs and food storage rooms sufficient to sustain 5,000 persons for a year.

It was never used and remains a stunning reminder of Haiti's struggle, but also of Haiti's perseverance. Haiti was born in, and has endured, throughout its history, conflict and strife. One day soon, however, the country will rise above it. We look forward to that day!



**A beautiful rendering of the Citadel
by Haitian artist Andre Chanlatte**