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# productive cooperatives HAITI

*"How much more must be sacrificed for you to see that I am here? Haiti is not the mission. You are the mission. It is here among my people that you will find your redemption. Here among the rubble. Here with those who know pain and tragedy and loss and yet still have hope."*

*~ Betsy Wall, FIDA/pCH Executive Director  
A Memory on the Anniversary of Haiti's Earthquake  
January 12, 2010*



The Foundation for International Development Assistance  
Fondation pour le soutien du développement international



## EDITORIAL...

There are times that I have no words. My heart simply weeps. Early this fall, I was invited to a breakfast meeting of a Rotary Club in British Columbia. The title of my presentation was, "Haiti: Why Care?" The intent was tell the members the impact of their caring, to thank them on behalf of the people of Haiti and to inspire them to "not let go". It is a message that I know by heart. Yet it was one that I found impossible to deliver without deep emotion.

Indeed, why care?

On January 12, 2010, I arrived in Haiti with an ambitious agenda. Within two hours of my arrival, the world around me fell apart, resulting in indescribable devastation and the loss of some 250,000 lives, five of those within feet of where I was standing. After ensuring the immediate needs of my colleagues and their families were met, and despite my reluctance to return home when I was most needed in Haiti, I agreed to be evacuated. While strapped in the belly of a C310 along with 40 other evacuees, my mind and heart throbbed with what I must do. I vowed that day that I shall be the voice of the people of Haiti for as long as I have life and breath.

It is now ten years later. Days following the quake, I stood at the foot of a lone crucified Christ rising untouched above the rubble of the fallen cathedral in Port au Prince. I was overcome by the feeling that perhaps Haiti is not the mission, that perhaps we are not the ones called to bring the message of Christ to Haitians. The image seemed to speak to me: *"I am here."* it said. *"How much more must be sacrificed for you to see that I am here? Haiti is not the mission. You are the mission. It is here among my people that you will find your redemption. Here among the rubble. Here with those who know pain and tragedy and loss and yet still have hope."*

It takes all of us to care, to affirm such hope and give it the life and breath it deserves.

~ Betsy Wall, Executive Director



## 35 YEARS IN THE MAKING: A TRIBUTE

On September 11, 1984, Jack and Anne Wall of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada sold most of their possessions and moved to Port au Prince, Haiti. They were sixty years old. Their mission was to work with the poorest of the poor in rural communities: enabling them to achieve a level of productivity and economic activity to provide for themselves and their families. Jack carried with him a charter carved with the vision and mission of the Foundation for International Development Assistance (FIDA). Anne preoccupied herself with how to support themselves and the mission.

Their home became the doorway to Haiti for many: tourists, visitors, doctors, nurses, teachers, pastors, adoptive parents, mission teams, youth teams, and church groups. There were many difficult years, but Anne persevered. She often prayed for God to send her “just a few guests” so that she could make ends meet. God did and Wall’s International Guest House flourished. Anne turned the proceeds of her hard earned work to support the emerging cooperatives. Through good years and lean years, thousands of Haitians were able to realize a sustainable future for their families.

It is now 2019 and as Haiti rages, we again pray for “just a few guests”. There are none. Food, water, gasoline have become scarce. People are afraid to visit. Many are choosing to leave. As always, we remain steadfast. We have never left. We are here.





## INNOVATIVE COOPERATIVE-BASED HEALTH SERVICE

We are now in our third month of our innovative cooperative-based health service pilot in Fon Batis. It has been quite a ride. One Tuesday morning as the team arrived to open the clinic, a desperate father came running up to say his pregnant wife was bleeding. We immediately dispatched to their humble but well organized home and brought her to the clinic. Her family followed, sitting by the clinic entrance and praying. Their prayers were needed. There were complications in removing the placenta that were beyond our ability to remove. The lead doctor, Dr. Joey, contacted a hospital about 3 hours away in Pierre Payen. We lifted her and her family in the “ambulance” and sent them down the treacherous Fon Batis road. The infant survived. The mother did not. Had she received prenatal care, this mother of six would have survived. The following morning, the grandmother returns with the infant girl and pleads for one of us to adopt the child. We know it is best that she be raised by her extended family and so we equip them as we can to be able to provide for the child.

That evening, the pcH team is introduced to a revolutionary telehealth product that is essentially a “hospital in a bag” by Arizona-based GlobalMed representatives, Gigi Sorenson and Scott Johnson. They are in awe of its capabilities. GlobalMed explains that they have chosen the FIDA/pcH team to beta test this new technology to revolutionize healthcare around the world. Gigi expressed how honoured GlobalMed is to partner with pcH and the cooperative-based health service concept in bringing a progressive, quality care delivery model to Haiti. She went on, *“Targeting remote communities with specifically designed, high technology and security oriented software and hardware solutions access to consistent, quality care will become a reality to rural communities starting with Fon Batis. The ability for the pcH medical team to provide virtual care to any community in Haiti and potentially be the medical hub in time of disaster in the*



*Caribbean will set it above and beyond almost any other area in the world. This program can be used as a prototype model for other Caribbean nations.”* She noted that the passion and commitment she observed of the team to provide accessible quality care will make this a reality and thanked them for allowing GlobalMed to journey with them.

The kits contain mobile medical digital devices such as vital signs, stethoscopes, dermatoscopes, otoscopes, ultrasound, and EKG. They are designed specifically to handle challenges such as we experience in Haiti: weather, inconsistent power, and spotty connectivity. The software is secure to allow for documentation of all visits and for ongoing electronic documentation that is held in cloud storage. The team marvelled as they experimented on each other, checking vital signs, probing ears and eyes.

The next day they went into action.

It was Wednesday, September 11th. Exactly 35 years ago to the day, Jack and Anne Wall arrived in Haiti with a vision to empower the poorest of the poor to be masters of their own destiny.

That vision is now in their hands.

At end of day, we paused to pay tribute to Jack and Anne, their vision, their legacy and vowed to honour it with the fulness of our being.





## THE MEDICAL TEAM

The FIDA/pcH Medical Team is headed by Dr. Joey Prosper. Upon being introduced to FIDA/pcH Executive Director, Betsy Wall, instantly knew that he was aligned mentally and philosophically with the vision. *“This is what I came back to Haiti for,”* said the doctor who was born in Haiti but educated in America, *“To be able to help those in need while establishing a lasting footprint, is worth being here.”* Dr. Joey is also a member of the pcH Board, *“I love the work of pcH,”* he says, *“I visited Zoranger and Fon Batis and was so impressed. This was something I wanted to be a part of. However, I wasn’t sure that we would be able to realize the health pilot until I came to Canada. Betsy and I described this vision to a FIDA donor who stunned us by saying he was ‘in’. Three months in, there have been many cases that have moved me but those that stand out are the patients that would have died if we were not here, if they would have been forced to travel down that difficult road and chance that there may be a hospital to treat them. These images I cannot get out of my mind. This model that we are creating here must be replicated throughout the country.”* Dr. Joey (as he is affectionately referred to) explains what he sees as the fundamentals of success in terms of this pilot: *“First, it is participatory,”* he says. *“The community is fully engaged. Second, we have a medical staff that is not materialistic. They have not lost their sense of humanity. They care. Thirdly, is the collaboration with an organization such as pcH that treats people with dignity.”*

The doctors and nurses that comprise the team are a testament to this. Nurse, Christel Blain expresses her joy in working in an environment where her skills and efforts are so fully appreciated. Her dream is that this little clinic may become a great hospital with many more services such as maternity, surgery and paediatric care. Doctor-in-training, Ramacey Jean-Louis is moved to be able to serve his *“brothers and sisters in need. I am most touched,”* he says, *“by the wounds that have been neglected because of lack of knowledge and services. These things can now be avoided. These patients trust us. We need to be here always to serve them.”*

...continued





### THE MEDICAL TEAM...continued

Nadège Dougé was in her third year of nursing when the 2010 earthquake decimated her country. The young intern was the only who stayed to care for the wounded at Haiti Medicare. This is her heart. She is proud of how the team works together and the quality of care they are able to provide. Dr. Laila Bienaimè echoes the appreciation and enthusiasm of patients to know they have a professional team and services available to them. *"They are so happy when we explain things to them and so dutiful in coming for follow up appointments. We are truly a collaborative team. And now that we have a lab, we can do so much more!"*

NOTE: We are ever so grateful for those significant donors that have enabled us to realize this pilot, the lab equipment, the pharmacy, and telehealth tools.





## HUMAN POTENTIAL IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE...

No matter where you are born, to not be able to reach your personal goals because of lack of access to education, healthcare or other resources is an unacceptable tragedy. Even a scant knowledge of Haiti reveals enormous challenges people face with limited capacity to combat the political and economic instability that plagues the country and rages today. Education is often an unscalable wall that traps individuals and communities in a pit of fear, poverty and hopelessness. Most schools in Haiti are privately owned with many parents unable to afford fees for tuition, books and uniforms, resulting in a country where over half of the adult population can be considered illiterate. Illiteracy destines individuals to a paralyzing state of low self-esteem and fear, severely limiting their ability to move toward a future with hope.

However, this is *not* the end of the story! FIDA/pcH and our partners work tirelessly toward a more just world by offering member-owned cooperatives access to a comprehensive literacy program. This coming December, 203 cooperative members will graduate after participating in our three-year program in Zoranger. These courageous men and women have reaped the benefits of self-worth, trust in each other and a newfound ability to navigate the world around them. In my recent visit to Haiti, I heard the miracle stories of literacy participants realizing new



opportunities in their lives. "Jean" testified that he confidently attended a church seminar because he is no longer afraid of shame for not being able to sign his name in a registry. "Sylvia" proudly stood and announced to the class that she can now help her daughter with her homework because she herself can read and write.

Education is a precious right that many of us may not fully grasp nor the darkened world of those who have never known the light it brings. "No more X!" is the refrain that is sung to me each time I visit a class. "No more X" means that they have a name and they can write it. "No more X" is a FIDA US theme committed to providing a path of opportunity to cooperative members seeking a fuller life. Human potential must not be wasted.

~ Patrick Bentrott, Executive Director, FIDA U.S.

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productive cooperatives Haiti  
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