

Ochsner in Haiti Today!

Ochsner continues to honor its mission to Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate on a global scale through its continued support of the recovery efforts in Haiti



January 12, 2015 marked the fifth year anniversary of the "Goudougoudou" - the name that Haitians gave to the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake. It was one of the worst natural disasters the world had ever seen. Ochsner, on that tragic day, held true to its mission to serve, heal, lead, educate and innovate. "The Power of One Ochsner" mobilized its resources to assist in the relief effort in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy. The "Goudougoudou" left more than a quarter of million people dead, 300k injured and over a million people displaced and homeless. The Ochsner Haitian Relief Fund (OHRF) was established to provide much needed financial support, medicines, supplies and Ochsner medical personnel to assist in the immediate recovery effort. Ochsner continues to support and partner with the people and GOH (Government of Haiti) in their long road to recovery. A Letter of Agreement was signed by the Haitian Ministry of Health acknowledging Ochsner's contributions and continued partnership to improve the lives of the Haitian people. Five years later, like a bridge over troubled waters, Ochsner is still there making a difference.

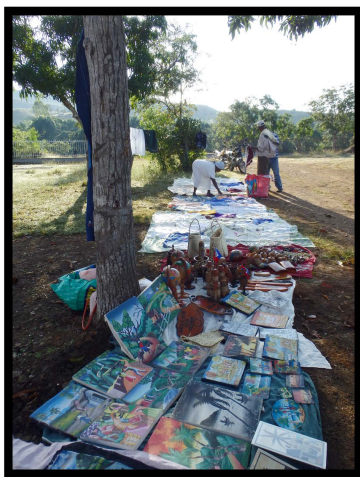
When a young Haitian amputee diagnosed with an enlarging intracranial mass needed life saving intervention, the Haitian government turned to Ochsner for assistance. With the collaboration of the Haitian Ministry of Health, FONDYLSAHH (a Haitian based non-profit foundation to assist in the betterment of the Haitian people) OHRF and Ana Hands with Ochsner's International Department, Emmanuelle Wildy was transported to Ochsner. A multidisciplinary team led by Neurosurgeon Dr. Ware and the Chair of Endocrinology Dr. Panunti were able to diagnose and provide him with life saving pharmacological therapy and return him home safely to Haiti.



"If the Haitian has to choose between his dignity and his welfare, he will almost invariably choose his dignity. However poor, however downtrodden, the humble Haitian citizen may appear to have been beaten. Nonetheless, he has a deep sense of having beaten Europe's best because the Haitian is a member of the first nation in the world to free itself of foreign slavery. And to help him clinically or otherwise we must never forget for an instant his dignity - or all our efforts are not only useless but insulting." Yvens Laborde, MD



"My first thought of Haiti was its business - how everyone, all the cars, motorcycles, and pedestrians all walked in synchronously amongst each other. I felt like I was an ant in an ant hill." Amanda Theppote, UQ Student



We continue to collaborate with the Minister of Health Dr. Florence Guillaume on projects that promote and empower Haitian doctors and nurses to develop their clinical abilities through training and educational opportunities via telemedicine.

Supported by Dr's. Pinsky, Seoane and Ochsner UQ staff, one of the signature success stories of the Ochsner/Haitian Ministry of Health partnership has been the Medicine in Society Rotation with the University of Queensland Ochsner Clinical School. This year, we saw

another successful execution of this very unique elective that allowed senior Ochsner Clinical School medical students to participate in an eight week rotation (one week in Haiti) that provided them the opportunity to experience the practice of medicine in an underdeveloped tropical country with limited resources under the supervision and guidance of board certified Ochsner specialists. This valuable rotation prepared them for their future residency internships by treating a wide spectrum of clinical conditions. Dr. Obinna Nnedu (ID), Drs. Shontell Thomas and Leise Knoepp (OBGYN) and Drs. Jonel Daphnis and Emily Nichols (ED) provided expert care to an underserved community while also providing excellent teaching and guidance to the students. We were able to evaluate and treat over 450 unique patients. The patients were seen in our newly renovated clinic that was constructed with support from FONDYLSAHH and the OHRF. Without the generosity of Ochsner's President and CEO Warner Thomas and The Excellence Fund, this amazing rotation would not have been possible.



"Yesterday was our first day of clinic – such an amazing experience. We had the Minister of Health and his companion give a speech in the morning. Later Dr. Laborde said that the minister was very pleased with his clinic and efforts to keep a sense of dignity to the Haitian people. I think Dr. Laborde said – to preserve the dignity – was especially poignant because it preserved the humanity of serving and healing. I think people tend to lose sight of that – just because we're going to a 3rd world country, we are still working with people who deserve 1st world care...and I'm so glad and grateful that Dr. Laborde was able to provide this community the standard of care that all people should have access to despite what they can pay. Although standards are limited by resources, this clinic (and what it provides for the community) is able to give a standard of care they deserve."

Amanda Theppote, UQ Student



The challenge going forward is to create sustainability for the clinic so that it can be staffed by local Haitian physicians year around. Dr. Classin Saint Vil (the Medical Director for FONDYLSAHH) and Dr. Phidou Jean are our two Haitian based physicians who support the clinic and were instrumental

to the success of the rotation. Mackenzie Jean Francois, our local Executive Director of Operations, also played a major role in making the logistical preparations for a successful and safe rotation.

Our collaborative efforts in Haiti have at their core a focus on health, education, self-reliance and respect for the culture of the Haitian people. Through the efforts of FONDYLSAHH and OHRF, we have been able to provide the community that we serve in Haiti with nutrition, school supplies and access to basic care so that they may lead happy and productive lives and one day become physicians, engineers, nurses and agronomists themselves.

This past year we launched a new mission to highlight Haitian Art and to increase awareness of how art can inspire, heal and enrich the lives of both the creator of the art and those who are exposed to it. The funds raised from this project all go to the OHRF to continue our humanitarian work in Haiti. We were able to achieve this with the support of philanthropy. Thank you to everyone who supported the Haitian Art Program.

Finally, another tragedy resulting from the earthquake was the increase in the number of orphans. One of our missions has been to provide as much support to these children either directly or by partnering with Haitian orphanages and families that take the orphans into their families. The orphanage Creche Ouvres Notre Dame De La Victoire is an example of this partnership.

"I would like to express my personal thanks to Shannon Caruso and all of those at Ochsner and beyond who have supported our efforts. The Power of One simply means to me that we are all our brothers and sisters keepers. We are all One and closer to God when we devote our lives to serving others. This is what makes Ochsner and all of us who serve patients here and all over the world uniquely special." Yvens Laborde, MD



The value of this program can be appreciated from excerpts from the UQ Student journals ...

From Amanda Theppote, UQ Student:

“Yamsley, a friend I made, didn’t speak a word of English and my rudimentary Haitian did not help with the communication. Without that, he helped me make cones, taught me the correct pronunciation of “take 1 in the morning and night” and helped explained instructions to the patients when I gestured “2 tsp with a meal”. He stayed during my entire time as my co-pharmacist that day. It was amazing to learn so much from him even though we didn’t understand each other with our languages.”

“I saw a patient with Dr. Nnedu that reminded me how fortunate we are – and that our ability to see a doctor is something that we should never take for granted.”

“A little girl, about 7 years old was brought in by her mother. She was lifeless, limp in her mother’s arms. Her mother said that she’s been having diarrhea, not eating/drinking. Her legs were swollen and her eyes were so sad. Her face and her mother’s face will be something that I will never forget. We didn’t have the correct resources to help her. Dr. Laborde transferred her to a larger hospital in a town an hour away at Pignon and paid for her medical expenses. Dr. Laborde’s heart is so pure and vast; he never asks for anything in return. His selflessness is something I’ll always admire and hope to emulate as a future physician.”

“We had a man carried into the clinic by three other men – he was on the brink of death. ... Throughout the whole process, I kept smiling at him because I couldn’t even imagine the fear he felt. I knew that whenever I felt scared/uncomfortable a smile from someone made all the difference. We were able to transfer him outside in a gurney and resuscitate him with PO fluids (the line I put in came out during the transfer and were not able to put another in). Later in the day, I saw him with a new set of clothes - he came up to me, held both my hands and smiled. I knew then that this is why I was going to be a doctor. I was happy that he felt better, I knew from his eyes and smile that he appreciated everything that we were able to do for him. That’s when I knew the power of a smile - that a smile could be communicated through all languages and cultures. What I took away from that experience was that in whatever situation you’re in, remember to smile because you never know how that smile is going to affect someone.”

“My experience in Haiti was indescribable – the compassion and humanity I witnessed are things that I know I will incorporate into my profession as a doctor.”





From Kathryn Vreeland, UQ Student:

"Haiti is gorgeous – truly the land of mountains beyond mountains."

"In the evening, we went for a stroll in to the town of Mayaya maybe a 10-15 minute walk down the road. It was like a parade! The goats joined us and led the way, with children joining, playing music from our iphones- which they knew how to use better than I do. People introduced themselves as we walked by- everyone knew Dr. Laborde and stopped their motor bikes to welcome and catch up."

"As Dr. Laborde repeats, the people are clearly happy, prideful and enjoy what they have."

"It's hard to have two delicious meals every day- morning and night. When our patients presenting complaints are "mal a la tete" and "mal a stomach" due to hunger pains and malnutrition. I understand setting an example and providing jobs (cooks, chef, nurses, handyman, carpenters, etc.). It certainly makes me appreciate what we have, but at the same time I want to take my plate of goat to the clinic for a patient. That said.... What is the use of one meal in the scheme of a lifetime of hungry?" We do what we can. Dr. Laborde also pointed out that we have to care for ourselves to be able to care for others."



"We spent time at the end of the day with lots of the children and a stethoscope – letting them hear their own heartbeat and breath sounds. The way their eyes lit up when they heard the sound of their own heart was magical. Future doctors in the making! One child in grade 5 showed me his science class workbook – it was fantastic. All the systems of the body, organisms, immune system."

".... I have started a "bag drawer" so as not to throw out any usable bags that items came in. Everything is re-usable. Always back of mind the utilization and distribution of resources."



"In the pharmacy - ...It was creative to think outside the box of how to make the directions as absolutely simple as possible – putting tape at the night dose on a syringe, drawing pictures of sun and moon, explaining only to take Tylenol when patient actually had pain, etc. I could tell in their eyes when we clicked and when we didn't."

"Medically, it was a great experience to learn 2nd and 3rd line RX, to use what we had, to make it work."

From Philip Barber, UQ Student:

"I had the opportunity to see patients with some unusual diseases. These included likely TB, typhoid and some granulomatous mass on the back of a man's head. We still don't know what that was. I am glad for the opportunity to see diseases and the country of Haiti in a way that I would not otherwise be able to experience."



“I worked alone at the pharmacy which forced me to give medication instructions in Creole to the patients. It was challenging but great for my personal development. I am usually shy to speak a foreign language but this forced me to try my best. When I struggled to give instructions someone would happen to come by and assist me at the perfect moment.”

“It was a good night and it feels good to help people that really need it. On this trip we have more responsibility and freedom in treating patients. It is a great step forward in my medicine career as I am soon to start my internship.”

“In the women's clinic....”The experience was good and I learned a lot because Dr. Thomas wanted me to do everything for the patient while she just translated. It's the first time I did the history, physical and management while the attending observed.”

“We woke up early and went on a short hike up a small mountain to watch the sunrise. It was nice and we took many photos. Then we went to the well that Dr. Laborde (with the assistance of others) had made for the community. It was easy to pump the water and is convenient for the community. I think the well is a great thing to give the people a clean source of water.”

From Ashton Brooks, UQ Student:



stunning with tons of history. We got to the compound after midnight and it's beyond anything I imagined. The things that Dr. Laborde has achieved here in such a short time is truly remarkable.”

“We ended up running out of urine cups, not sure how that happened as it seemed we packed a million of them. So, we had patients pee directly onto the stick. And gave them a paper plate to put it on. One patient peed onto the plate and then put the stick on the plate. Another patient, I assume, just dunked the stick into the toilet after they peed because the colors on the stick aren't even possible, haha. Talk about comical things that happen with a language barrier.”



From Ayla Green, UQ Student:

“In clinic today we had some interesting cases. A horrible discoid lupus her whole scalp was raw sink because she lost all her hair and her skin peeled off. We had already treated her for a nail infection that went on for so long she probably has osteomyelitis. Then we saw a man with a large scrotal hydrocele and drained it with a needle which was cool.”

“One night some of us decided to take a walk which ended up being much longer that we expected, deciding to go all the way to Monbin Crochu (1.5 hours from our commune in Mayaya). This was such a unique and incredible experience.... We got to know each other very well and were constantly laughing when Dr. Laborde was around.”



To Help Haitian Relief Efforts

<http://www.ochsner.org/lp/haitianrelief/>