
MERCY & SHARING

A 501(C)(3) PUBLIC CHARITY

15th Edition

www.haitichildren.org

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Fifi Heart Surgery follow-up...

by E.J. Christensen

Because of all of you, *Rotary Gift of Life*, and the Montefiore Hospital of New York, this little boy (known as Fifi, Tifi and Jeaninior, interchangeably) is alive and well today and is



Fifi resting comfortably in his hospital bed in New York

now back in Haiti with his family. He almost didn't make it, however. As you recall from our November 2006 M&S Newsletter, Fifi was found sitting against a wall in front of the Government Hospital in Port-au-Prince last summer by Susie Krabacher. Fifi had been given just six months to live, due to heart valves severely damaged by rheumatic fever. Without immediate heart surgery to

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Williamson Project Update

by Ruth Minetree

The Mercy & Sharing ***Williamson Project*** lies about an hour north of Port-au-Prince and consists of several acres of already purchased land and nearly completed design plans for a Therapy Center/Handicapped Orphanage, a Nutrition Center/Chapel (where the children and widows in the surrounding vicinity can participate in various nutrition and education programs), a Healthy Children's Orphanage, Elementary and Secondary Schools, a Trade School and a Hospice to care for our terminally ill children. Other support buildings will include an office, a maintenance building, staff/volunteer accommodations and a storage depot.

The design phase is well underway with the generous and untiring support of *Galambos Architects*, an Aspen-based design firm owned

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by long-time contributors to Mercy & Sharing - John and Robin Galambos.



Galambos staff, left to right: Jesse Borkovec, Rich Pavcek, John Galambos, Eric Aanonsen, Jodie Fielding

Galambos Architects is generously donating their time and incredible talents to the project free of charge. Jodie Fielding of *Galambos* has enthusiastically begun work on the Handicapped/Therapy Center, the design of which will allow for the housing of 100 handicapped children, 20 care-takers and a 24-hour nursing staff. The centerpiece of the building is the Therapy Center that the children can easily access for daily physiotherapy. The design also incorporates a central courtyard where the children can exercise, play and simply enjoy being outdoors.

The Williamson Project represents a new chapter in Mercy & Sharing's efforts to provide the highest quality of life and the best possible future for the many handicapped, orphaned and/or terminally ill children now under our care in Port-au-Prince. Our goal is to address the comprehensive, long-term needs of our children, especially in our desire to prepare them for adulthood and the responsibilities that will come with their eventual independence.

The estimated total construction cost for the Williamson Project is currently about \$1.5 million (U.S.D.). Mercy & Sharing is actively seeking capital contributions to help offset that cost. Our goal is to raise at least 50% of the needed funds before we break ground. If anyone wishes to help, or to obtain more information about the Williamson Project, please contact the M&S office at 970-925-1492, or check our website at www.haitichildren.org for more information.

"For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him saying, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

Luke 14:28, 29

Health Center update

by Dr. Manuel Castro

Since the beginning of 2006, M&S has been operating a Community Health Center at Delmas 75, in Port-au-Prince. This is just the first step to organize and develop a health facility in such a poor and neglected neighborhood.

Since March 2006, we have started a Prevention Program for Cervical Cancer, performing PAP tests and taking action with those patients with positive test results. We have performed more than 400 Pap Tests, from which 22.4% are positive, which is quite high. We hope to increase the number of Pap Tests performed up to 1,200 over the next 6 months. Our Health Center is also prepared to receive emergency cases including emergency deliveries and C-sections.

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(...Fifi, continued from page 1)

replace his failing valves (a surgery which is generally not available in Haiti) there was little hope for his survival.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of many people, Fifi was brought to New York along with his father Yves in January of 2007 for surgery. All went well at first, but then Fifi suddenly went into cardiac arrest a few days after the valves were replaced. He also suffered a stroke, and then yet another cardiac arrest at a later point.

Initially, things were looking very bad for Fifi, and we were all very concerned that he might not make it, or that he might suffer from permanent paralysis or other major problems. Plans were made to eventually transfer Fifi to a rehabilitation center nearby for extensive physical therapy for recovery.

Fifi had other plans, however. Somehow, through the grace of God, Fifi made a rapid and miraculous recovery, confounding his doctors and caregivers. Within a few days he had recovered enough to be able to travel back to Haiti and to reunite with his family.



Fifi and his father Yves upon arrival in Port-au-Prince

Words cannot express how we feel when we

see miracles like this happen, but thanks to many, many people including Susie Krabacher, Dr. Manuel Castro, Debra Busetti, Lou Delasario, Gilda Chirafisi, Dr. Samuel Weinstein, Megan Charlop, Richard Powers, Yves Fifi, the Bronx Rotary Club, American Airlines, and you - our very generous donors - we can help more children like Fifi to have a normal and productive life.



Fifi back in Haiti, on his way home after surgery...

On behalf of Fifi, we thank you all...

(...Health Center, continued from page 2)

We have an Out Patient Clinic in which we provide consultations in Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, ObGyn and Surgery in which we have seen around 900 to 1,000 patients monthly, 45% of whom are children.

The surgical procedures have just started. We have already performed four hysterectomies and several minor surgeries. Our clinical laboratory has performed over 1,000 tests so far. Our Health Center also gives support to the M&S Orphanages and performs routine check-ups of all the children from the M&S School in Cite Soleil.

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Jessi - progress update

by Gary Downey

Jessi Guerrier is the beautiful and bright 7 year old girl whom you might remember from our November 2005 Newsletter.



Jessi was found by M&S after being abandoned at the Government Hospital when she was about one. She's currently a third-grader at our John Branchizio School in Cazeau, Port-au-Prince. Since birth, Jessi has suffered from a congenital amputation of the right leg just below the knee, and a contra lateral rigid club of the left foot, which have made normal walking impossible for her up to now.



Through *Cure International*, Jessi recently traveled to Cap Haitian where Dr. Scott Nelson, an American orthopedist who is the Medical Director for *Cure International* in Santo Domingo, D.R, examined her. Dr. Nelson determined that Jessi needed a minimum of two medical procedures. The first was a procedure to gradually straighten her clubfoot through a series of soft casts called "Ponsetti", during which her cast is changed every two weeks in Port-au-Prince.

The second procedure will be the removal of the fleshy ball at the end of her right leg to allow for the fitting of a prosthesis. The ultimate outcome after the surgery and the fitting of the prosthesis is that for the first time in her life, Jessi will be able to walk like a normal child.

Currently, we are in the process of negotiating with a hospital in the Dominican Republic for Jessi's surgery and hospital stay. Once the calendar is set for Jessi's trip, one of our Haitian caregivers will travel to the Dominican Republic to spend the week with Jessi and to provide her with as much comfort and love as possible.



Jessi receives the first of a series of soft Ponsetti casts to straighten her left leg

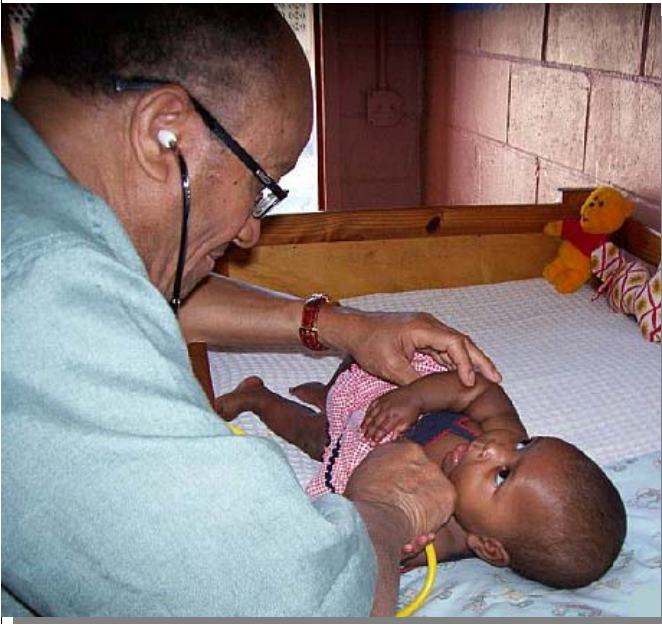
Hopefully, by our next newsletter, we will report on a positive conclusion to Jessi's long and painful medical ordeal. One bright note for Jessica is that she is in the process of being adopted by a wonderful Canadian family!

As always, we do appreciate your prayers and continued financial support in our efforts to greatly improve the quality of Jessi's life.

Patricia

by Ruth Minetree

Dr. Barrau, a cardiologist with a highly successful practice near New York City, recently visited our orphanages in Haiti to evaluate some of our children. It was determined that one of our infants, Patricia, is suffering from a serious congenital heart defect. On his return to the United States, Dr. Barrau



Dr. Barrau examines Patricia

contacted a colleague, Dr. Sean Levchuck, the Director of Pediatric Interventional Cardiology at St. Francis Hospital in Roslyn, New York. Dr. Levchuck has graciously agreed to perform heart surgery for Patricia free of charge. Dr. Levchuck has been an active member of Rotary International's Gift of Life program since joining the staff of St. Francis in 1997, and has operated on approximately 85 children for Gift of Life.

Dr. Levchuck says: "I live by that theory that 'One hundred years from now it won't matter what kind of car you drove or what kind of house you lived in. The only thing that

matters is how important you were in the life of a child'. St. Francis Hospital really feels the same way," continues Levchuck, who is quick to acknowledge the team effort required to provide this service. "I am only a surgeon. There are also the nurses, the anesthesiologist, the cardiologist and the hospital that are donating their time and skills. We are all part of the big team. And at the end of the runway, we are all pulling the chain in the right direction."

Mercy and Sharing expresses our deepest gratitude to these two generous and gifted physicians, Dr. Barrau and Dr. Levchuck, who freely give their time and their talents to save the lives of many children, especially our baby Patricia.

(...Health Center, continued from page 3)

Our community activity is expanding in the areas of vaccinations, home visits, health education sessions, family planning and follow up of suspicious or positive STD and Pap Test results. Also we are now doing Epidemiological Surveillance, which is reported to The Haitian Ministry of Public Health. During the last few months, the most prevalent diseases among children were malaria, urinary tract infections, malnutrition and typhoid fever. The staff is 38 people, all Haitians, of which 8 are Medical Doctors and 12 are nurses and technicians.



OUR HEALTH CENTER IS A FACT TODAY!!

Mercy and Sharing Facts

The following summarizes some of the current projects as of March of 2007:

Mercy House Orphanage I

Terminally Ill and Handicapped Orphans: 55 orphans; Address: Tabarre 16 Rue Pierre, Cazeau, Haiti.

Mercy House Orphanage II

35 Orphans
Address: Tabarre 16 Rue Pierre, Cazeau, Haiti.

John Branchizio School:

392 Students
Address: Tabarre 16 Rue Pierre, Cazeau, Haiti. Provision of schooling/books. One meal per day; clean water.

Cite Soleil School:

126 Students
Address: Bellecourt District Cite Soleil Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Provision of schooling/books. One meal per day; clean water.

Gode School:

192 Students
Address: National #2 Merger Gressier, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Provision of schooling/books. One meal per day; clean water.

Mercy Health Center: Now open: a state-of-the-art medical facility in Delmas 75, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. (more information in this issue).

Meal Programs:

Terrier Rouge and Hinche in the Dominican Republic border areas. Provision of daily meals for over 1,100 children and 10 widows.

Mercy and Sharing Abandoned Infant Unit:

Currently 24 children.
Address: Hospital General H.U.E. H., Rue Mgr. Guilloux, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
Care of newly orphaned or abandoned infants at the main government hospital.

Trade School/Handicapped Center

New building project underway - "Williamson" will provide vocational training for young adults and therapy facilities for handicapped and terminally ill children.

Needs List -- We have many needs for over 3,000 children, orphans and special needs children...

As an organization committed to giving 100% to the children, you can help us by providing for in-kind donation of these items in bulk (for shipping purposes), and also with financial support. You can be crucial to the children's survival by sponsoring certain items monetarily. ***Funds are urgently needed for:***

- **Medical equipment:** All kinds of general medical and micro-ophthalmologic surgical supplies.
- **Misc. equipment:** Physical therapy equipment for handicapped children.
- **Funds for Supplies:** laundry detergent; shampoo; soap; mosquito repellent; baby powder, etc.
- **Special medicines:** antibiotics, anticonvulsives, anti-diabetics, anti-neoplastics, anti-hypothyroid.
- **Guardian Angel Program Sponsors** (see www.haitichildren.org for details).

Mercy & Sharing does not believe in charity. In all of our projects there is a common thread: opportunity. We teach our children, and in return they learn and teach others. We feed them, and when they are old enough we teach them to feed themselves and to feed others. We educate them in their youth, they learn a trade in their adolescence, and in return they provide for themselves and their families. There is no empowerment in charity, so we choose to empower through education instead. We employ a staff of over 300 native Haitians (average salary is USD \$100 per month), who mentor, nurture, love and respect the children. In return our children learn to love and respect others.

Board of Directors: Susan Scott Krabacher; Joe Krabacher; Frank Scott, Jr., Ken Delaski, Jeffrey Leck, Michael Lypka, E.J. Christensen, Jean-Dany Pierre-Francois, Dave & Carol Anderson and Richard Taylor.

Advisory Board: U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D. Mich); Dr. Serge Parisian (Orthopedic Surgeon), Mark Gillette (Defense Attaché – U.S. Embassy, Beijing - China); Michael Chiu – Trustee - Cornell University and Mr. Mark Salter (Programs Advisor).

Honorary Director: the late John Branchizio, U.S. Navy SEAL, (1966-2003).