

Report on the January Trip to Haiti

Written by: Martha Willi

We had an uneventful mission ---no major car troubles and therefore no major delays. Travelers were Dr. Martha Willi, Liz Rickert, Nick Nezda, Connie Schimmel, Jo Fox, Abbie Chapman, and Dr. Jumuna Patel. We were able to hold a successful medical clinic for a full week. While the medical group was working in the clinic, Nick and his crew were attending to the new water filters. People seemed enthusiastic about them, and Father Elano presented us with a list of people who had signed up for the next shipment of purifiers. Nick held meetings with the water technicians from Bodarie and Mapou and a meeting with the water committee. The water committee documented a policy on payment, money handling, filter installation and future training sessions. We did not realize for several days that our drinking water came from the new sand filters!

The new pastor is Father Charles Elano. The people are apparently enthusiastic about him. He shared some of his plans with us. The feast of St. Benedict the Moore is in July and the parish will have a big festival with out of town visitors and religious ceremonies. He hopes to put down a ceramic tile floor for the main aisle in the church and to beautify the alter area with wrought iron in preparation for the occasion.



Bio on Father Charles Elano

Written by: Emily Kerwin using Fr. Elano's input

Father Charles Elano is 39 years old and is from Cotes-de-Fer, Haiti. He has been a priest for 6 years, and before coming to Bodarie he was a Vicar. He loves the church and works very hard for respect. He wants to work with HMCI because he has a new vision for his country and parish. He says the Catholic Church is one, and in the future he wants meet the people of St. Thomas and St. Mark parishes in order to thank the faithful for everything given to Haiti.

January 2012 Trip Reflection

Written by: Jo Fox

I have been asked to write my thoughts of the last trip to Bodarie, Haiti in January, 2012. I am a seasoned traveler to Bodarie, but 5 or 6 yrs has lapsed since my last visit. I am older, my eyes are opened wider.

Each trip is different, and each trip is wonderful, as was this one. It was a quick and busy clinic of 4 days with 2 doctors and 4 healthcare workers. The basics remain the same; people are very poor, and very beautiful, giving a big smile with a "BonJou" in reply to my "BonJou". The people are appreciative of any help; the priest was most gracious to us all. HMCI supports a nurse in Bodarie.

The question that keeps haunting me... is this the best way to help the people, a clinic once or twice a year to pass out some medications (for high blood pressure, acid reflux, pain from living a hard life, antibiotics) which will last 2 weeks. A slip is given to those that need to return to be seen by the nurse when the medicines run out, usually blood pressure medicine. Do they return? Record keeping is

poor at best. The people come from miles around for the American medicine, even though they have a clinic in their village with the same medicines.

How do we work with the challenge of the culture, teaching the people the importance of treating an invisible disease such as hypertension, or taking meds daily for acid reflux which will help them sleep, or taking Tylenol for pain, or most, ways to avoid these problems? In the United States we have the same problems, except the difference is even if we are noncompliant with treatment, medical technology can do wonders. Haiti does not have this luxury.

The above thoughts do not detract from the reason why I go to Haiti. I find peace in Haiti. I love staying at Matthew 25 Boarding House in Port-au-Prince, as it is the hub of many groups coming and going throughout the country doing all kinds of mission work. I love the language which I do not know much of, but it is like a song to my ears. I love the people and their beautiful smiles, and the children's laughter. I love helping, learning, and being taught things that are so simple and so profound from people who have so little in "stuff", but have much in their hearts.



Our Health Agents in Bodarie

Written by: Liz Rickert

For many years now local residents of Bodarie and the surrounding area have assisted us during our mission clinics. They escort patients, provide public health education, dispense glasses, take blood pressures and assist Dr. Martha with her exams. This last trip I asked our long time interpreter and friend, Michele Jean, to interview the health agents and ask them what they would like our American readers to know about them. The following excerpts are pretty much as Michele took down their words:

Blanc Elius

Since I was young I love to do the Farmer. I am Catholic forever and ever; my mother she is Catholic also and all my family is Catholic. I am also a leaf medicine (herbalist?) and a leaf doctor. [I] love to praise the Lord Jesus and pray with all the Catholic people. I feel very proud that I am Catholic, [long] live the Mission Connection and [long] live the Catholic Papa from Italy and [long] live Jesus. Amen.

Joassaint Maxeau

I am [a] dentist and carpenter [and] farmer but I enjoy being with this Mission when they are here. When they are here we're all [the] population happy when the Mission is here. We eat, drink, we pray; that's what we call a family. That's what we call a Mission of brothers and sisters. [Long] live Madame Willi and Liz and also the Catholic Mission. [Long] live Papa; we love you, all the Catholics and the Catholic children.

Noel Dominique

I am a Farmer. When it rains it's good for us. When there is no rain it's a very big problem for us. [We] love our Catholic Mission the same that we love our self and we love to say In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Joseph Pierre

I am a Farmer and I like to help the people of God by giving, pray[ing] the bible, help[ing] people when they are sick. My family and I are all Catholic. We go to church. We love our Mission Connection of Haiti. Thanks!

Erick St. Fleur

I am a Farmer [and] I am a Water Technician. I've five children to take care of by the grace of God when the farm[ing] got very difficult for me. But God has sent his spirits to help Bodarie population. We [give] thanks to the Lord. We [give] thanks to our Catholic Mission. I will [say] a prayer to God for us – send this Mission two times a year. With that we will be much helped. Thanks Mission Connection of Haiti. (note – Nick Nedza plans to lead a mission trip to Bodarie this June/July. Prayers do get answered!)

Jasmin Chery

I am 65 and live in Mapou. I've two girls and six boys, two in Dominican Republic, six live in Mapou. Thanks to our sweet heart Mission Connection of Haiti for what [they] are doing for our population and for Haiti. We thank again Martha Willi and Madame Liz who [are] doing so good for us. We [give] thanks again to our Catholic Mission for [it takes] very good care of us. God will always bless you. Thanks! Love you!



Special 'Thanks'

Written by: Martha Willi

Whenever we travel to Bodarie, the success of the mission is made possible through the efforts of many people. Our last trips have been successful and we owe many thanks to the following people:

- To all who pray for the safety of travelers and the success of our mission.
- To everyone who has contributed money which enables us to carry out our mission.
- Jerry Rickert, who makes our airline reservations every year.
- To the folks who picked up and transported supplies from the Hospital Sisters in Springfield.
- To those who helped pack and carry our 50 pound duffle bags in a marathon session.
- Pat and Jim Nedza, who have driven us and our baggage up to O'Hare airport in the wee hours of the morning, enabling us to get to Haiti in one day of travel. These good people also pick us up and drive us home late at night.
- Kay Hefti who has opened hundreds of boxes of eye drops and vitamins and packed them into smaller containers for transport to Haiti.
- To all the people who contribute eyeglasses for in Haiti.
- Wanda Ohaver, who made dozens of attractive eyeglass cases for our donated glasses.
- Don Schwingel, who modified a medical instrument, converting a 5 lb suitcase to a box the size of a brick weighing less than one pound.