Dear Good Shepherd Congregation, Friends, and Donors:

Thank you for your generous support for our 6th Medical Mission to Haiti. We felt your prayers every day. God richly blessed this trip and provided everything we needed to deliver His love, mercy, and physical healing to almost 1,000 Haitian patients. In the following pages, members of our 2017 Mission Haiti Team describe some of the experiences they shared during the week of January 6-14, 2017. We used Cap-Haitien as the base for four days of mobile medical clinics. Each day, we drove to a different location in our school bus and served at First Lutheran Evangelical Church, Eben-Ezer, Cedan, and Dutty. We were blessed to be able to care for our patients with stations offering prayer, dried beans and rice, Days for Girls Kits, sunglasses and hygiene kits.

Every year, God seems to expand our vision. Every year, He shows us new ways to serve. This year, it included providing a first-ever 5th day of clinic for 57 employees of our host hotel. For the first time, we were blessed with donation of a device that allowed our providers to test for, and treat anemia. Some of our team members also had the opportunity to visit and deliver medical supplies to MamaBaby Haiti, a non-profit health and birth center that offers free prenatal, birth, and postpartum care by Haitian and U.S. midwives. We can’t wait to see what God has in store for our 2018 Mission Haiti team!

Medical Mission Summary:

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My second trip to Haiti was different from the first. Since I’ve been back, God has really called me to live this life on one long mission: to serve as one single mission, rather than a series of multiple missions. One patient in Dutty, which is also referred to as our “jungle clinic,” I will never forget. He was this 80 year old man, all smiles and full of love. After treating him for his uncontrolled diabetes and high blood pressure, as he got up he turned and said: “Thank you for coming here to help us. God bless you and the rest of your trip.”

That moment was an instant reminder of why God has opened doors to build relationships and serve the people in Haiti, it was so easy to get caught up in the hustle of each clinic day, that this specific patient reminded me to take a step back and realize our TRUE purpose, to keep the main thing the main thing and that is to serve, to glorify God and be a reflection of our faith through our actions. It’s easy to get caught up in the fast pace, day to day life and not make time for the things that keep us grounded, such as our faith. Sometimes when God calls us to do something, it can be scary, it can be uncomfortable, and it can even cause us to turn the other way out of fear of the unknown. The more difficult part of accepting what God has called us to do, is not knowing the outcome. Haiti, this year, has really showed me to TRUST what God has planned, if I knew the outcome, then it wouldn’t require faith, would it? I want to challenge, inspire and encourage others to serve, through small acts of kindness and leave this world better than we found it.

In the weeks leading up to the trip, I was both excited and nervous at the thought of going to Haiti. The excitement was warranted as I was blessed in so many ways. The nerves were not. The team that went on this trip was amazing. It was an incredible blessing to work alongside a group that, to a person, was willing to do whatever, whenever, wherever. It’s amazing how close you can grow to a group of individuals in a week’s time. Being with this team of believers was a glimpse of Heaven. There was incredible joy throughout the trip. Joy came from watching a number of Haitians display joy in conditions of poverty that were the worst I have ever seen. I can only attribute their joy to God. Joy came from sharing God’s love through serving the patients even in little ways. Joy came from serving in the Prayer Station and praying with and for patients. One particular memory stands out. When we were finished praying for an older gentlemen he gave us a huge smile almost laughing and said he felt God’s joy. Joy came from playing with the school children at Mirdaige’s school and teaching them how to throw a football. Finally, joy came from taking this trip with my son (Kevin) and watching him serve in various ways including teaching Mirdaige’s students how to brush their teeth. There was also sadness that came from seeing so much poverty and the conditions that go with it. The challenge now is to see what God would have us/me do next to serve the Haitians. Thank you, Good Shepherd Lutheran for commissioning this trip.

Mark Chao

Sabrina Garrovillas
The 2017 trip to Haiti was my third mission to this amazing country. I had not signed up to go as "timing" was not the best in my life but little did I know about God's timing. Once the decision was made, I was pretty comfortable knowing I'd be been twice before and confident I knew what to expect! What I wasn't expecting was that felt like another home to me as I saw familiar faces and places.

One particular day, though, something happened that really changed me and I know I will always remember it. One of the great additions to our program was adding a Prayer Station for the Haitians to come and let us pray for them. I have always been anxious about praying aloud in group situations, but when asked to work that station I confidently knew God would help. One man in particular made my trip. I asked what I could pray for him about and he told me with the biggest smile on his face that he "was a Christian, his life was good!" This man didn't have much more than the clothes on his back but he radiated God's love in such an indescribable way. He wanted to pray for me instead!

Our team is so blessed to have this wonderful mission trip to help our fellow brothers and sisters. Our leaders are amazing at pulling all the loose ends together as this is a huge undertaking of time and talent. They do it with such grace and compassion. Our providers are so skilled at what they do, in sometimes very difficult environments. Their love for God and mankind is quite evident. And the rest of the team each comes with their own special gifts and talents that I know God was looking down on all of us saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants." The Haitians are truly lovely, proud, God-filled people, and it is pure joy to serve them.

Janice Maxson

This was my second year to Haiti and it was amazing! I was stretched much farther than I would have thought I was capable of being stretched. The days were long and filled with hard work, but it was a joy to be part of this giant and powerful project, so much bigger than myself.

It was such a blessing to see how God used each person to make such an effective team. There's no human way possible that we would have been able to accomplish so much in one week without God's power and guidance. Everyone jumped in to help with whatever needed to be done and we all got strength from each other.

This year I felt I was able to make a better connection with many of the Haitian people. I tried to make sure I made good eye contact and to touch them with compassionate hands. I feel I was able to show compassion and care, even with my very limited Creole.

One day, I also got to demonstrate and hand out Days for Girls (feminine hygiene) kits. It was so meaningful for me to see the faces of the women when they realized how these kits would so dramatically change their lives for the better.

I am inspired to tell others about Haiti and how they can become involved in helping, whether it is through the Esther Fund, Days for Girls, the Save a Seat Program or the Three Strand Cord Ministry.

Nancy Korb
This was my second trip to Haiti. It was nice to see many nice improvements since the last time I was there. The airport was a little nicer, with an improved runway, the city looked cleaner, and many of the roads were better. I also saw less malnutrition in the patients than I did 4 years earlier.

It was exciting to see that the mission trip has matured from a medical mission clinic to now it represents a mobile health clinic. As a medical provider I see the value of being able to cure an infection and help a few acutely ill patients. However, the mission trip now has the power to offer more lasting influences. As medical providers, we were able to offer multivitamins to the patients. This was the first year we screened patients for anemia and had the opportunity to treat their anemia with iron. This was important because correcting anemia has a very positive effect on the neurological development of children. We also had packets of protein powder to give out to patients that we felt needed extra nutrition. I offered many of the nutrition packets to the nursing mothers. This allowed improved nutrition to both the baby and the nursing mom. The adult providers had reading glasses to offer the older patients. I was very impressed with the “Days for girls” program that provided ladies with a reusable menstrual garment that can be reused for 24 months. Prior to this, many women would have to use cloths and towels to manage their menses. I think all these long term benefits will leave a lasting benefit, long after we are all back home with our families.

Just like my last trip, it was wonderful to get to work with our team from the US and our Haitian partners. It was a pleasure to see how all of us from different areas of life and age could work together to share the love of God and serve those in need. I think the trip offers a backdrop onto which people will come for medical and health services and while there, they will have the opportunity to be served spiritually. I also noticed that not only did we serve the Haitians, but the opportunity to serve also touched the lives of those providing the service.

Dan Mackey
Pediatrician

This is my fifth trip to Haiti. I must say when I got there I fell so humble and grateful to be part of our mission, helping all those beautiful people. They may be very poor, but they are so grateful and very appreciative for all we do for them. But mostly they are very good Christians and trust in God.

For me serving in triage is very rewarding, also at the pharmacy because I speak the language and I can communicate directly to them, mostly with the women because they can tell me about their personal issues. But my heart belongs to all of them, but I must admit the children are so precious. Thank you to everyone for letting me be part of this beautiful team.

Francie Moseman
I have been thinking a lot about MamaBaby Haiti for a year. It is a non-profit birth center and health clinic in Cap-Haitien. It offers FREE prenatal, birth, postpartum care, and gynecological screening by Haitian and U.S. midwives.

There are no addresses or postal service in Haiti. The address was unknown for MamaBaby Haiti. The phone number I found on the MamaBaby Haiti website was incorrect. Then, with hope and prayers, I knew an answer would come.

Our team arrived safely in Cap-Haitien after a 90 minute flight from Miami. A few of us were seated and some were anxiously standing to depart from the plane. Sheri was chit-chatting with a lady from Liberty University who was leading five nursing students for an international obstetrics rotation in Cap-Haitien. They were going to spend a week at MamaBaby Haiti. WHAT? Get that lady's name and cell number!

After four different clinic sites and days of rain, we made arrangements to visit MamaBaby Haiti. The directions from our Villa Cana Hotel were: turn left onto the main road, go past One Mission on the left, and take the first right. The destination is on the right. It took three minutes. Our prayers answered.

MamaBaby Haiti is a two-story concrete building behind a steel gate and enclosed fence. Brenda (the nurse from VA) greeted us and pointed out the birthing room with two beds, a postpartum room with mothers present, a bathroom with a shower, and a lab. She said a 20 year old lady was in active labor and invited our team of eight people in the birthing room. Fabienne our mission liaison nurse, walked over to the quietly laboring mother and said a silent prayer. A compassionate Haitian midwife and nursing students were in attendance too. Shortly thereafter, a healthy baby girl was born. We just witnessed "A Miracle of Life".

Haiti has the highest maternal, fetal, and neonatal death rates in western hemisphere. The average wage in Haiti is $2.44 per day. One in 263 women who have a live birth die in childbirth or postpartum period. One out of 14 children die before the age of five. 98% of these deaths are preventable. MamaBaby Haiti is saving lives every day.

We left delivery and medical supplies, medications, and seeds to start a roof-top garden. Hopefully, this will also help the health and well-being of women and babies here. And, inspire people to partner with MamaBaby Haiti in the years ahead. But most importantly, SAVE lives!

Yvonne Johannessen

What touched me the most was the joy and thanks for the simplest of things. The sort of things that people here in the U.S. take for granted such as shoes, eye glasses, simple medications, basic food, and even clean water. It was such an honor and privilege to be a part of a team that gave so much to a beautiful people and country. It is truly a humbling experience. I feel so blessed.

Ian Lemin
This was my sixth trip to Haiti. I know you have heard from other members of the team that it was the best trip yet. I want to say that too. One of the questions I am frequently asked is: "I am not medical, what would I do there if I go"? The Haiti mission leaves no one looking for work, there is always something to do.

Each trip has been an adventure. It was amazing to see this team work and adapt to changing situations as if they had been doing this all year. Over the six years we have been going to Haiti, our team has evolved from providing basic medical services to now providing a variety of health care services. We have shown our Haitian friends that we care about them. We have made lasting friendships. This was the year that I was able to use the language in my interactions with people. I felt a much deeper connection with everyone I talked to. I want to again thank the GSLC congregation for allowing me to be a part of this life changing mission.

Dave Dupre

What an amazing week in Haiti. Being one of the “new kids” I quickly learned to wait on our very wise and talented Team Leaders for their daily instructions and then jump in. I found myself saying crazy things like “no-problem” or “I got it” when asked to perform certain clinic duties, but not really knowing how or if I could do these things. What joy comes from leaving your comfort zone and trusting that God has you covered, no matter the task in front of you.

As a non-medical team member, my desire was to show love, kindness and respect to the Haitian people in simple ways, as in a smile or gentle touch. During the four days of clinics, I had many opportunities to do that. I spent the first clinic day assigned to the prayer station, sometimes holding stranger’s hands, and praying with them through my wonderful translator. Not something I do normally, but by the end of the day, it felt normal and they were no longer strangers to me.

During the next clinic days, I had the chance to work in triage, the lab, the pharmacy and also play “Quarterback” the last day. One of my favorite things to do each day, was to look for that most “tired and grumpy” patient and win them over with kindness. Sometimes this was an elderly person, a young mother, or a teething baby. Their smiles are my favorite moments of the trip that make me also smile and hope I may return again to Haiti someday.

Thank you to the Good Shepherd members and staff, for supporting this Global Outreach Mission.

Donna Duckworth
Convicted. God is showing me what it feels like to be convicted about a cause. To reach out to people and ask for help. To step out of my comfort zone. To truly have faith in His plan.

God kept my heart and my eyes wide open on our trip to Haiti. He tugged hard on my heart strings when I listened to Fabienne speak about all the amazing work she is doing in Haiti; about the 24 children she is fostering so that they can have food to eat, clothes to wear, and feel the love of Christ; about her employee, who just lost his sister, who may lose his mom to appendicitis if she didn’t help; about the many patients God has brought to her doorstep to care for and follow-up with their status. Her story is so great and God continues to use her because she is so gifted in what she does. I feel the need to share her story; and convicted to find a way to help support her as she continues carrying out God’s great works.

God often asks us to step outside our comfort zone and stand up to a challenge. (God challenged me on the trip by asking me to pray for our team, out loud in front of everyone.) I pray for His guidance as I face these challenges and I pray for a listening heart. The Holy Spirit speaks loud and clear when God uses a bullhorn

Liz Latch

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God continues to bless our team in providing care to others while blessing us too. Such a beautiful team knit together for purposes beyond our planning and expectations!

The first day of clinic, things were somewhat chaotic! We had spent the morning reassembling rain protection that had blown apart the night before. (there are no “I told you so’s in Haiti!) We had to move many stations because the rain and wind and mud made our original plans impractical: It was beautiful to see our very plan-oriented team just reassess and regroup! Not a single complaint.

About half way through the day, Ian, our dear friend and provider from Ohio, came to me with a patient and a request for prayer. This was not what I had planned. I was not staffing the prayer station and I was BUSY fixing things. However, God caught me and I listened to Ian describe the pain and grief this mother was feeling over the recent death of her 19 year-old son. I have two teenage sons and I felt such sadness. As I started to prepare for prayer, I was asking God how to best minister to this woman. I heard my dear friend, Margaret Moran (who has been a team member since our first trip) over my shoulder say, “I would like to pray with her.” My heart stopped. Margaret lost a son in his early 20’s the month before I met her on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Where had she come from at this minute? The last time I had seen her she was trying to fix the generator! Who better to pray with this woman than someone who had been in her shoes?

Margaret’s prayer was very personal and sad, yet so full of hope. She bared her heart and her experience with a sister who suffers as she does. Ian and I KNEW that God KNEW where Margaret needed to be that very minute and that through prayer she could minister in a way that none of the rest of us could.

Is the ministry in Haiti challenging? Yes. Is it out of our comfort zones? Yes. Is it exhausting? Yes. YET, is it a wonderful reminder of God in our presence wherever we are? Yes. Can He do things that we think are impossible? Oh, Yes!
I was first introduced to the Haiti trip my freshman year. It took me three years to finally realize it was God’s calling for me. I kept pondering the implications of this trip: thinking about missing a week of school, missing 11 swim practices, potentially getting sick, and being far out of my comfort zone. After a three year internal debate, I finally realized these excuses were blindfolds tied by the devil to prevent me from seeing God’s calling for me. Had I kept these blindfolds on, I would have missed out on the most incredible experience of my life.

While I had many highlights, when I look back on the trip, three Kairos Moments stand out in my mind. The first would be the medical side of the trip, especially the surgical part. I have always been interested in anatomy and medicine and this trip definitely furthered that interest. At first, I was simply handing Summer and Sean surgical tools, but by the end of the trip I was able to suture (sort of)! The second would be playing with all of the kids. Whether at Mirdaige’s School or during breaks at the clinic, seeing the kids smile and laugh brought me so much joy. I also realized during a soccer shoot out with the kids at Mirdaige’s school, how terrible of a goalie I am. Thank God I stuck with swimming. Lastly, was how amazing the team was. I was hesitant being the only teenager/kid on the trip, but I ended up enjoying talking with each team member. As it turns out, the bumpy bus rides were the best time to meet members, hear their stories, and listen to the wisdom they had for me. It was incredible to see God bring so many different people, from different places, and have them work harmoniously together.

The entire trip was a learning experience for me. In the past, I have gone on many house building trips to Mexico but Haiti was a much different mission trip. Never before had I seen such an exhaustive cycle of poverty: a humbling eye-opener. It really crushed me to leave home on a plane with TVs and wifi, but it was there that I began to blatantly understand and see the blessings in my life. Haiti will be in my heart forever.

Kevin Chao

“A spiritual Son” was shining on our mission in Haiti even as the rain obscured the sun much of the time. We were blessed once again with cohesiveness and contentment as a group despite some difficult situations. We completed our mission with a sense of satisfaction. The Haitian people are great and we were blessed with Nick, Fabienne, Richard and Midrange as examples of leadership in the community. Our translators and security groups were intelligent and hardworking, providing strong support for the effort. We are thankful that we have been able to serve God in this way.

John Hoefs – M.D.
Gratitude and joy are the two words that keep coming to mind as I think about our sixth medical mission to Haiti. Gratitude that God provided everything we needed to carry out this mission. Gratitude that so many of us (teammates, Haitian partners, patients), felt His presence in powerful ways. Gratitude for our congregation, who supported our team through prayers, financial benevolence, and so many other ways. Gratitude that Pastor Ryan gave us all the tools we needed to carry out this mission in his absence. Gratitude for so many people who stepped up to lead the many “pieces” of this mission. Gratitude that I got to be part of an amazing, generous, faithful team. Gratitude that our team bus worked in some pretty challenging conditions. Gratitude that so many people were healed in Jesus’ name and we got to pray with every single person we saw.

One of the most joyful experiences for me was the ad hoc, spur-of-the-moment medical clinic we held for employees of the hotel that has housed us for the last 4 years. At the end of our third day of mobile clinics, one of the young clerks who worked at the hotel’s front desk asked me if one of our doctors could treat him. What appeared to be a simple request actually involved considerations of whether we could offer the same service to other hotel employees, whether the hotel would allow us to treat employees on site, and whether our packed schedule would permit it. Our team was willing, the hotel said yes, and it even provided a special room for us. With the help of God, Fabienne, and Richard, we pulled off our first-ever 5th day of medical clinic for 57 hotel employees. The extra clinic meant that we had to cancel our “free time” team excursion for our last full day in Haiti, but that’s the kind of team God put together: faithful, bold, generous, and “blessed to be a blessing.”

Almost daily during the 2017 mission trip I was asked how it compared to the first mission trip in 2011. For me, it started the first evening at chapel time with someone talking about an inspirational reading and the acronym TEAM. That thought became my meditation point for the week and as usual God used a simple thought to drive home a point he used with his disciples throughout the New Testament. I realized how often in daily life, I think that I have to accomplish things on my own and yet how much stronger accomplishments for Him can be when working with those around you. I have seen how far this team has come from the first trip, where we weren’t sure exactly what we were doing but we were called to make the trip and of course God still used us for His greater good! But this trip was more special for me to see how well the veterans have found each other’s strengths to efficiently organize these trips and yet allow new participants to use their talents and show God’s love to Haiti in their own way. I also want to say that we were all providers, whether hygiene education, prayer stations, pharmacy or medicine, we all showed how we comprised the body of Christ in a very real way (a beautiful point during another evening devotion). I am so thankful that God pushed me to go this year and for His teaching me how I can be a better disciple at home, at work and in my community.

Clarissa Owenby
This is my third trip to Haiti and I stand amazed at what God has accomplished through His people. On the first night in Haiti, I pulled out my Guideposts magazine to read before going to sleep. In this edition there was an acronym for TEAM- Together Everyone Accomplishes Miracles. Boy, this team sure lived up to this acronym! On the first day of clinic, the pharmacy was really busy, but around break time for the providers I looked and they ALL came into the pharmacy to help speed up the process. I couldn’t believe it- within 20 minutes, the pile of prescriptions dwindled to zero. Truly......Together Everyone Accomplished Miracles.

This team is so special. Everyone used their gifts to help others and we functioned in unity to provide relief and suffering to others. The prayer station was especially special for me as I was able to pray for others. This is the heartbeat of outreach and ministry because with God ALL things are possible, and we will never know what God will do unless we ask and pray. I loved being a part of what God is doing in Haiti.

The absolute highlight of my trip was seeing a very special little girl named Doodley (not sure of the spelling) who I had met back in 2015. I was praying that I would see her. On the last day at clinic in Cedan, as I was leaving the pharmacy and walking out to the prayer station, who did I see at the entrance to the pharmacy? Doodley! I know God sent her that at that very moment. I looked at her, said her name and she looked at me, smiled and ran up to me and we hugged. She quickly grabbed my hand and I walked with her to the prayer station. Along the way, many children ran up and started holding on to me. When I arrived at the prayer station, I was able to pray over ALL the children. What an absolute blessing to see Doodley and to pray for her and her friends. God had truly honored my request. Doodley and I don’t speak the same language, but we truly have a supernatural bond that only God could orchestrate.

Thank you Jesus for such a miraculous trip!

Pam Mangus

I really appreciated being able to talk with some of the translators this year about their lives and families. They all have a deep sense of commitment to their families and to make a better life for them as well as themselves. Part of this is done through working as a translator for the week to help our team. One translator was postponing his career and moving out on his own to stay with his family and help pay for his younger siblings to get through school. Several were working several jobs to provide for their wife and children as well as going to school to try to improve their situation. I was impressed at how important even the one week pay was for each of them and the uses they would put the money to try to improve their lives. While their circumstances in life are different from many of ours, their core values of family and hard work are similar.

Denny Saylor
Like ripples in a pond......
I couldn’t help but think of this image during the medical mission to Haiti this year. God truly works wonders! I’ve been blessed to have personally experienced being a part of this trip for the past six years. During this time, I have seen the team evolve from a medical mission team to a HEALTH mission team. In addition to treating upwards of a thousand patients each trip for a variety of medical conditions, the ministry now addresses many other concerns of our Haitian brothers and sisters in Christ.

Over the years, the team has added key members and services. We have a Haitian dentist who provides excellent dental care, fully equipped with a portable dental chair donated by Dr. Rick Harder. In addition, women’s health has been well supported. We have been blessed to have both an American and a Haitian obstetrician/gynecologist on the team. The “Days for Girls” program has allowed Haitian women to return to the work force and back to school. The team is entertaining partnering with ‘Mama Baby Haiti”, a facility run by Haitian midwives. Educating the Haitian people regarding various health topics, emergency services and preventive care has become a service valued by the Haitian patients, leaders and health providers. Through this ministry and donations from the church members, we have been able to support Mirdaiges’ Good Shepherd School in the village of Limbe’, giving children an opportunity to succeed and hopefully one day become leaders in their community. Finally, the spiritual well being of the patients has become a major part of the mission. Prayer for patients has always been an important priority for the ministry. I remember on our first trip, one of the nurses praying for a patient who had a severe psychiatric malady. I could recall the significant impact that made on her. Over the past few years, the team now has added a dedicated prayer station which fulfills the goals of the mission trip, physical and spiritual healing!

The ministry certainly has evolved since its inception. There has been much excitement and discussion about the role of nutrition education and support in the future. From a vision that Nancy Perry had many years ago to its current status is truly a testament of Gods power. God has blessed the leadership of this team with resources, willing team members, inspiration, insight and a loving spirit to carry on this great mission. I look forward to witness the amazing things God has in store for this ministry and to continue to share the good news.

Like ripples in a pond...

“With God, all things are possible”, Matthew 19:26

Dan Ng - Surgeon

This year I had the privilege of volunteering at the prayer station. As the Haitian patients finished their medical visit they had an opportunity to receive prayer. The translator would ask the patient if they would like prayer and what they would like prayer for. One elderly woman asked for prayer for her visa to the United States so that she could return. As I prayed and the prayer was translated, she began squeezing and shaking my hand and yelling Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. I was struck with the intensity and passion of her prayer and how we are told in James that we are to pray with fervor. This woman did that. She showed the hope and faith she had in prayer. I was honored to participate.

Mary Sue Saylor
I was alone at the “Prayer” station, feeling incapable of delivering God’s word, blessings, or comfort for those sick, poor, abandoned people. It was much easier to teach “my” hygiene class, deliver our menstrual kits and pray a known-prayer from all the women of Days for Girls GSLC to the women of Haiti! I asked God to help me do my best that rainy morning at Eben-Ezar. One of my heroes and beloved friend, Dr. Jim Korb, came running from his busy station asking for a special prayer. He was devastated. As a pediatrician, he couldn’t help a baby with medicines or procedures to combat his disease. He couldn’t convince mom that it wasn’t her fault, either. The baby, showing mom’s best effort under circumstances - clean, well dressed, well fed, and obviously loved, as well as his other 2 beautiful siblings - was for Jim’s knowledge, a ZIKA baby. He said “call me no matter what, when she arrives here, I want to join you in prayer for her”. I immediately recognized what I have seen in pictures about ZIKA, when they came. Then, we prayed. We both embraced her and her kids with all the love God put in our hearts, and we just prayed, honestly, warmly, emotionally. She seemed comforted and grateful. What an amazing lesson of God’s control overall for me, who always tends to think I’m in charge!

I participated in other stations and learned deeper about missionaries and Haitians, thanks to the amazing women who took my place in Days for Girls station. Thank you Kim, Janice, Nancy, and Terry. You helped me deliver the work of hundreds of women to 566 girls/women during clinics and other 34 to Mirdage’s school and Dr. Bordes’ clinic. Personally, nothing more rewarding than the welcome hug of Crystal (Mirdage’s daughter) or Willem (expert translator in menstruation issues) saying “I still have your kit and had helped me all year long to stay at school” or “As my wife, my mom, and my sister are using the kits from last year, I could save money for my little daughter’s education!” In Haiti, we’re all just God’s tools. The Holy Spirit takes all the compassion we may have, and gives it generously in the name of Jesus to our Haitian sisters and brothers.

Alicia Zubiri

I was so honored to be a part of this year’s medical mission to Haiti. As a first timer I can honestly say it was life changing for me. I had traveled extensively before, including many third world countries but nothing prepared me for this experience. Not only did I make friends for a lifetime and gain a new family with the other members of the team, I experienced a reboot of my faith and learned to prioritize what is important in life. It was hard to leave my three children behind for a week, but it was more than worth it. I cannot even name one person I met, who didn’t touch me and inspire me in some way. Our leadership team is absolutely amazing as well as our Haitian team on the ground: Fabienne, Richard, Nicholas, Dr. Bordes, Pastor Bernard and many others. On this trip I felt a direct connection with God. I found a renewed purpose in life and know this was not the end of a mission, but just the beginning.

Kim Wilmot
I should preface this poem by mentioning that in my weeks leading up to Haiti, I felt as though life was beating me down. I love my work, I have an intense passion for it, but I kept losing patients. Patients that would come through my doors talking to me. Patients I formed a relationship with. In a string of bad luck, like I have never had, every shift one of my patients passed away. I began to lose my passion, and question my abilities. However, as every good emergency provider knows, we do what we can, but when God is ready he will call his children home, regardless of our efforts. Haiti, in all its beauty, reminded me of that.

This is How Haiti Saved Me
I put my hands on her people;
I listened to their pain.
I thought I was healing them.
All along she was healing me.

I arrived feeling lost and alone,
I had forgotten my own strength.
So she worked to remind me of the strength of those around me,
And in doing so, instilled in me an inner peace.

Through her people she revived my spirit;
In a downpour she cleansed my soul.
I came the shell of a woman,
But I left feeling whole.

Her people’s love for her is undeniable,
Such that it gave me inspiration.
This inspiration followed me home.
It continues to follow me still.

Yes, I came to help, to heal, to save,
And in the process:
Haiti saved me.

Amy Owenby

This is my second time going back to Haiti and I have to say that the experience has been equally as incredible as the first time around. The connection and the bonds that are made with the group is unexplainable and can only be experienced to understand. The beauty that goes into all the hard work and coming together as a group for one purpose, and that is to serve others is one proud moment. For me the biggest reward of this whole experience has been to serve others that maybe couldn’t afford the care that we provide for them elsewhere but that after they meet with one of us they walk away feeling healed. Watching our team pray with others in the hope of finding healing for their hearts has had the biggest impact in my heart because I know that that is how Jesus healed others. My hope in this whole experience is that I can inspire others to do God’s work and that even if they can’t go on a mission trip that they can help others here at home.

Angela Jimenez
It was a blessing to my soul to be a part of this year's GSLC "Hope for Haiti" medical mission team. Having been on three previous mission trips, I was eager to see all the ways the Lord was going to make Himself visible this year. Starting our day with devotions and prayer equipped our AWESOME team with the necessary armor to overcome the daily challenges we encountered. The Lord blessed our team abundantly which enabled us to share the gospel and the needed medical attention with over 1000 patients. Additionally, our doctors performed over twenty surgeries.

This year I had the opportunity to witness one of our Creator's most incredible miracles..., watching a Haitian baby being born. It was a beautiful eye-watering God moment. This nine-month pregnant Haitian women journeyed alone from her village for over an hour down a long winding path in order to ride the hot, crowded bus into the town to Mamma Baby. Waiting for her at Mamma Baby were midwives that would help deliver her baby naturally. The hot, bumpy bus ride usually takes over an hour to complete, so you can imagine her discomfort. The Haitian women are incredibly strong and resilient. She would stay two days after the baby's delivery, then she and the baby would catch the bus back and walk an hour or more up the hill to her village. In a week, she would do it all over again for the baby wellness check up. Haitian women are strong!!

It was humbling to watch how God blessed and prospered our team members for their faithful obedience to help the beautiful people of Haiti. God continues to give wisdom and ideas to Fabienne on ways to provide food and jobs for the Haitian people. Also, she manages micro-loans enabling Haitians to start their own business. It is so exciting to see how God has blessed Nicholas from being a radio station owner to graduating law school and also being elected the youngest Haitian Mayor. God has great and mighty plans for His servant, Nicholas. Dr. Aquis, our Haitian dentist, who joined the team over three years ago, is married and has a baby. He is looking to get into politics so that he can provide more help to the people in his district. Lastly, Dr. Bordes, our humble OBGYN Haitian Doctor, who joined the team three years ago. He performed his first surgery in his new OR room, a beautiful answer to prayer. His story and testimony are inspiring.

The Lord continues to put on my heart to pray for our Haitian team members and Godly Haitian leaders. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this fantastic team.

Sherri Orr

I am always amazed on these mission trips how God orchestrates the perfect team. People from all over the country, with vastly different backgrounds and strengths, come together and quickly become a well-oiled machine. Some are meeting the group for the first time. Others are seeing the beauty of Haiti for the first time. But by the end of the first day, we are all connected in friendship, love for the people of Haiti, and love for our Savior. It is truly one of my favorite weeks of the year, and I am so blessed to have been a part of it.

Sara Lemin - OBGYN
God knows your purpose. Do You?

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a purpose” Jeremiah 29:11

I believe God has the best plan for me. God allows me to work together with this wonderful group while serving the Haitians. God gives me a purpose in life to use my limited knowledge within my capacity to serve those in need. However, I was a lost sheep and I refused to pray the past year. By observing the people in Haiti and seeing how happy they are while singing loudly to worship the Lord even though they are the people who have the least, I feel ashamed on myself for keep letting this busy world take over my time for Him. I now find my spiritual life by going to church again and continue to pray. One might say people in Haiti must really appreciate my coming to provide medical care, however, for me I am the one that benefits the most from this trip: to take the Lord into my heart. I am truly blessed.

Lien Trinh

Our last day of clinic in Cedan, one of the poorest areas, I worked with Fabienne as she read names from a list of (pre-registered) patients. I handed numbers to the many Haitians who had been waiting for hours. Some of the folks started walking at 4 am (5 hours earlier) to arrive at clinic, wearing their hats and Sunday best to honor the Americans. From babies to geriatric patients, coughs, backaches and blindness. Hope in the eyes of the Haitians. In a long narrow building with no lights except from the cinder block windows. The room was full when we arrived: 200 plus people waiting to be seen with so much hope to see a provider with hopes to have some relief from their pains and ailments. I was reminded of the stories of Jesus and the crowds pressed in around him as they waited for him (Mark 5:24-34). This haunting vision of hope is a memory that will stay in the depths of my heart until Haiti becomes more than a 3rd world country.

I have been privileged to go on these 5 missions to one of the poorest most poverty stricken places in today’s modern world. It is not the choice of these beautiful resilient people to live without even the simplest of modern conveniences but from circumstances far beyond their control. You can see in their eyes it is the hope and trust in God that keeps them moving forward. It is a very hard life in Haiti - and thank God we were able to provide some hope in the Savior’s name for a brief moment in this earthly life.

I would have to add also seeing Esther’s son William was further confirmation that God is in control. He may end a sentence in our lives but he also starts a new chapter.

Jackie Hyland
I love listening to people pray because I believe it’s during prayers when you are in the presence of God. It doesn’t matter what language a prayer is spoken in, you know instinctively when someone puts their heart into a prayer. During our medical mission in Haiti I was blessed to be surrounded by prayers. There were prayers at the beginning of the day. Prayers expressed when the day is done. There have been some with high intensity, and others that are subtle and quiet as a whisper. Heartbreaking prayers that make you fight swells of tears, and prayers of hope with an undercurrent of reassured peace.

Now I’ve heard it from good sources that you cannot mess up a prayer. This is a relief to me, because if prayers were symphonies to God, mine would be what happens when the conductor trips over the trombone and unceremoniously falls off stage.... yeah, the awkward kind.

I’ve always admired people who can pray succinctly. There’s a real art to a well done prayer. It’s like duck-fat fries, wonderful to experience, not everyone can make it happen.

Don’t believe me? Well let me provide two concrete examples (of countless instances) where I’ve obviously missed the mark. If I had to categorize these prayers, they would be eligible for participatory recognition (and not much else).

Example 1: The many exhausting late-night-after-ER-shift-work prayers. Now these prayers are unique in the sense that they usually start at 2am in the morning, are incoherent, and have questionable outcomes. These prayers usually start with "Dear God..." and I pause to think about all the myriad of things I need to say. However I always fall asleep, just to wake up later with cereal in my hair and a spoon indentation on my forehead. I’ve always personally wondered how those prayers went.

Example 2: In the spring of 1986 I started praying for my cat Moops (she was having a bad day...no reason). It’s been years now and I still haven’t finished this prayer. However it is important to keep in mind that Moops has since passed away; and God, in his infinite patience, is still listening to this particular prayer, probably wondering why I still believe Moops should learn to appreciate flea medicine.

Now luckily I’m talking to God, and although I’m incredibly incoherent, rambling, and awkward, God is very accommodating.

In Haiti, there was obviously no time for me to pray everything I needed to say because there was so much to pray about. Still God was there. In the busy bustle between clinics, patients, and medical procedures, God was there whenever I needed him. I asked for Him when I worry for my patients, when I stare into the sea of Haitians and wonder how our team can help meet their needs, when I’m trying to control bleeding during a procedure. And God will always be there. When I’m lost, when I need help, when my faith is strong, when my faith is weak. When I need Him the most.

My point—and I really don’t have a point—but if I did it would be that I’m saved by the small prayers. In the mist of the chaos surrounding me sometimes it’s enough just to call out to God. I know that no matter how incoherent, God will inherently know what I need to express before I even know it myself.

Addendum: Since then I’ve learned that the life expectancy of an indoor cat is between 13-17yrs, Moops (who is no longer with us) was a very good cat, duck fat fries are forgivable, and cereal still tastes good the next day as long as it wasn’t in milk.

Summer Nguyen, MD
This was my second year with the team in Haiti. I feel so blessed to be part of such a talented, hardworking, and fun group of people. It constantly amazes me that we can run our clinic on four different days at four different sites. We saw about 250 patients each day, and it was raining hard on the first two days. Each day we need to bring in all of our equipment and supplies and set everything up, get patients triaged, deal with their medical problems, provide prayer for those who need it, give out glasses and canes and walkers and feminine hygiene kits as well as food and toys for the kids, and make sure they get the right medication from the pharmacy before they leave…it’s truly amazing. And then, incredibly, we take it all down and start over the next day. Everyone jumps in and helps out, no one complains about the hard work, and somehow it all works!

We definitely have an impact on those patients and families that we see. Many of the patients we see in Haiti have mild, common illnesses that don’t require much medical care, or have ongoing chronic illnesses that we can only impact in a limited way. Each year, however, we see a small number of individuals who have more serious medical issues and are able to help them as well. The Esther Fund allows us to send malnourished infants to a feeding program, send children with hydrocephalus to a surgeon for an operation, and triage individuals with serious infections to the hospital for further evaluation and treatment. This year we finally had a lab test for anemia, and were able to give out enough iron to make a difference that will benefit children for at least the next 3-6 months. One of the things we do that has had the most impact is the Days for Girls program, which gives out reusable feminine hygiene kits that have changed the lives of many young women in Haiti.

As I look forward to next year, I really feel God is asking us how to figure out how we can do even more. It would be amazing if we could partner with other groups going into the same area in order to provide better continuity of care, or figure out a way to further alleviate problems like anemia. That’s the task God has put before us and, with His help, we’ll get there over the next few years.

Jim Korb
Pediatrician
I am very lucky to have been able to go to Haiti twice in my life. The first I went as an EMT to assist with surgery which opened my eyes to the possibilities of practicing medicine in an environment that is in dire need of primary care. I am lucky enough to have gone this year as a provider in my first year as a Emergency Medicine PA. Currently I am in a post-graduate fellowship at our local Trauma Center where I am furthering my understanding and abilities of practicing emergency medicine. I was lucky enough to have a case where I was able to use my EM skills to diagnose and treat a patient that was critically ill in a rural environment and make calculated decisions to care for this individual. The guidance of my fellow practitioners helped me further my confidence as a provider and placed me in situations that pushed me physically, mentally and emotionally in an environment of caring and humanity. I am greatly appreciative of all the people that went on this trip because they all helped me to not only further understand and appreciate my medical abilities but also my abilities as a human. I thank all of you for the support and friendship that we developed and will continue to foster going into the foreseeable future!

Sean Miller

More Information?

Would you like to see more pictures or read our blog?
- Please visit our Facebook page @ Haiti mission trip 2017
- Blog @ http://gschaiti2017.blogspot.com

Would you like to get involved?

If you would like to get involved, please visit our Mission Haiti Web Page: http://www.gslcirvine.org/serve/mission-haiti/

Donate money:
- Mission Haiti General Fund
- Save a Seat program to allow children to attend school in Haiti
- Esther/ Good Samaritan Fund
- Three Strand Cord at https://3strandcord.org

Donate your time:
- Get involved in the GSLC Days for Girls Ministry that sews feminine hygiene kits all year long. No sewing experience is needed. Please contact Alicia Zubiri at riveroalicia@yahoo.com.ar
- Consider joining the 2018 Mission Haiti team.

Upcoming Events:
- February 26, 2017: Haiti Video and Reunion
- Lent, 2017: Save a Seat Drive
- Friday July 14, 2017: Hyland Island Golf Tournament