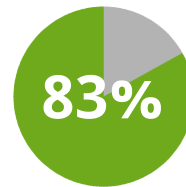


JOURNALS POSTED ON FEBRUARY 11, 2016

The Midwives of Mombin



NANCY & STEPHEN
JAMES



SUPPORT PLEDGED



HAITI

We just returned home from Mombin Crochu, a remote town in the barren mountains of

northeast Haiti. Accessible only by 4-wheel drive, motorcycle, horse, and donkey or on foot, we had climbed the steep road 5 days earlier in our pick-up truck loaded down with supplies, suitcases, a motorcycle, and three of our Haitian co-workers. The conversation in our truck was animated and spirited with lots of opinions on the recent Haitian elections. The vistas were breath taking, the drop-offs scary.



Dr. Bibiana MacLeod, Director of Medical Ambassadors for the America's and Caribbean and a long time friend and co-worker, invited us to be part of a CHE (Community Health Evangelism) team gathered to train area lay-midwives. She did a tremendous job organizing the whole week as well as teaching each day.



Graduates and CHE Staff Trainers

Other CHE team members included Dr. Cherenfant, Medical Director, Ms. Bernard and Mme. Rene, public health nurses from the small hospital in Monbin, Mme. Grimard (Danise), CHE Coordinator for Women and Children's Health, and Ms. Margaret Rock, a nurse from Bayeux Clinic.

Even though the midwives of Monbin Crochu have never been formally trained, they have been delivering babies for many years. Some are unable to read and all are without basic medical supplies. Yet, they persevere in a poor and remote region with no reliable

emergency transportation except small motorcycles or the local priest's 4-wheel drive. They do it all without pay although some are given garden produce or chicken eggs as a gesture of thanks. Much to our surprise, most of the midwives in the area are men! It is culturally appropriate in Haiti for men to deliver babies, and often midwives, men or women, are the leaders in their communities. The need is great.



The 5-day training was filled with activities that included the importance of cleanliness and hygiene, reproductive anatomy and physiology, conception, development of the fetus, normal pregnancy and delivery, complications of pregnancy and childbirth, and care of the mother and newborn in the first weeks of life. Lively discussions, skits, singing, and making "Cycle Bracelets" that help in the understanding of the menstrual cycle and natural family planning always followed the lessons. It was a lot to cover in 5 days, but the 29 midwives gathered gave their full attention and were completely engaged.

At the end of the week, an oral exam was given to each of the participants by Dr. Bibiana and Dr. Steve. Each midwife was presented with a diploma and a plastic shoebox of medical supplies. Use of these basic supplies can save lives! Many of you have been involved in sending birthing-kits and layettes to Haiti. Thank you! These are some of people who have received them, and they were so grateful.



During the training the midwives were housed and fed three meals a day prepared by local women who cooked everything on charcoal stoves. A church in Park City, Utah, which also sent three of their women to help, funded the gathering. Accompanying Dr. Bibiana was a young 10th grader from her church in Nova Scotia.. All were a delight to work with and a big help! We know it was an eye opening experience for them. Two of the young women hope to be midwives themselves someday.

We are so thankful for this experience at Mombin, and after the long drive back to Haut Limbe, our home was a welcome sight!

Steve continues to visit clinics, mentor doctors and caregivers, and I have been working part time at the Maison de Benediction, a respite care center for severely handicapped children at the Haitian Baptist Convention Hospital in Quartier Morin.



CHE Training Team and Volunteers

Experiences such as the one in Mombin Crochu would not be possible without the prayers, encouragement, and financial support of many. For this we are truly grateful!

Steve and Nancy
Haut-Limbe, Haiti