



Friends of the Haiti School Nurse Project Newsletter

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School nursing at the three schools in Leogane resumed with the re-opening of schools in January. Then came the corona virus impacting nearly all countries around the globe, including Haiti. Just as in Maryland, there are stay-at-home orders and school and business closures in Haiti. These started in March, so the school nurse program has been interrupted once again.

In our last newsletter, we shared the good news about the Haiti Nursing Foundation (HNF) raising funds for school nursing. Together with the funds raised by Middleham and St. Peter's (MSP), we can sustain school nursing at the three schools for an additional two years. In order to plan for the extension, a meeting was scheduled for April 16 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, coinciding with the joint meeting of the FSIL and HNF boards. Our team was set to fly to Ann Arbor when the corona restrictions interrupted the onsite meeting, but HNF arranged to have the meeting continue on an online basis. Our meeting included: Dean Hilda Alcindor – Dean of the FSIL School of Nursing (from Leogane, Haiti), Dr. Jessie Colin – FSIL Board Chairman (from Florida), Dr. Donna Martsolf – President –HNF Board of Directors (from Pittsburgh), Dr. Ada Sue Hinshaw – HNF Program Committee Chair, Thom Bales – HNF Executive Director, and our MSP team from Maryland.

The meeting objective was to plan for the continuation of the school nurse program at FSIL for the next two school years (2020-21 / 2021-22). The following was accomplished during our five hour meeting:

Current Project Status

The program, when schools are open, is currently serving all of the elementary level students in the three schools – Abellard, Ste. Croix, and St. Rose. As many as 2,000 students are being served. All of the elementary students are enrolled and assessed. The objective is to provide full physicals for students, which is a work in process. Sick or injured students are treated by the nurses or referred for more extensive treatment most often to Hopital St. Croix. The three nurses – Fabiola Rejouis, Yola Clervil, and Chardelyne Escarment (all are FSIL graduates) – are each assigned to a school. Fabiola is the lead nurse for the project and directs the work of the other two nurses. They visit their school at the start of the day and return in the afternoon. Student nurses accompany the school nurses and assist at their direction. Hearing and eye examinations are being provided. There is the possibility that an ophthalmologist may be made available for the program. There is a pediatrician available to assist with referrals to the hospital.

Areas to strengthen

Health Education The nurses have been teaching health education for hand washing, dental hygiene, and basic hygiene. The nurses intend to make their education adjusted for grade level. Nurses also share information with faculty and parents and have attended faculty meetings. Health education is an area which the nurses seek to strengthen. As a first step, we will share the Hesperian materials as noted below. They are prepared for the underserved parts of the globe and are in either French or Kreyol.

- Sanitation and Cleanliness for a Healthy Environment
- A Corona Virus Factsheet
- Caring for Children
- Helping Children Who Are Deaf
- Helping Children Who Are Blind
- First Aid
- Where There Is No Dentist
- Water for Life
- Water & Sanitation
- Vaccines Prevent Illness
- Malaria, Dengue and Other Illnesses from Mosquitoes

It was recommended that we consult with lead nurse Fabiola Rejouis about what the educational needs are and how we can best respond. The intention is that she and the nurses would use the materials in their educational planning and their daily work.

About vaccines and vaccinations. This is a major aspect of the program. Only a fraction of the children across Haiti and in Leogane have been vaccinated. As a first step, information is being collected on the students as to what vaccinations they have already received, so that the appropriate amount of vaccines can be obtained. Funds are included in the budget for vaccines. It is also hoped that vaccines can be obtained from the Department of Health. Having all students in the program vaccinated will be a focus in the next school year.

Next steps to be taken as a result of the meeting:

- Prepare a new project agreement and budget through August 2022.
- Support the strengthening of health education including the provision of the Hesperian materials
- Plan for the recognition of the nursing students for their work with the program at their next graduation
- Assist in obtaining two more medical scales
- Obtain improved headset for hearing test (Freedom Hearing here in Calvert has provided and it has been sent)
- Resolve connection between National Association of School Nurses and our school nurses in Leogane

And longer term:

- Plan for expanding to additional schools in Leogane, sustaining current schools, and modeling the program so that it can be adopted in other communities
- Plan for evaluation