



THE HEALER

Health Partners International of Canada

SUMMER 2008

Thanks to your support:

- medicine has reached refugees from the conflict in Sudan
- seniors in Cuba are receiving better care
- undernourished children and mothers in Haiti are taking vitamins
- a community in Guatemala has benefitted from medical and dental care

HPIC responds to urgent needs in Zimbabwe

Mary's life is not easy.

She lives in Zimbabwe where the political situation is precarious, the economy is collapsing and the AIDS pandemic is rampant.

At 32-years-old, Mary is living with AIDS and suffering from malnutrition.

Recently, her left leg became swollen and too painful to walk on. When she went to see Dr. Thistle at the Howard Hospital, the only medical facility in the area, she was prescribed medicine to improve her circulation, and given anti-inflammatories from HPIC to help with the pain.

Mary said that after one week on this medication, her pain subsided, allowing her to walk again and take care of her family. She is grateful for the donation that helps her get through each day.

Howard Hospital is a Salvation Army facility situated in rural Zimbabwe, 80 kilometres north of the capital of Harare. The hospital serves a population of more than 270,000 people. Canadian Dr. Paul Thistle is chief medical officer.

Speaking of the critical situation in Zimbabwe, Thistle says, "Howard is in the midst of all the countrywide cares and concerns. Drugs are unavailable or unaffordable. But we are determined to keep our doors open, our shelves stocked and our fees nominal, thanks to the help of our international community of friends."

HPIC has been supporting the work of Dr. Thistle at the Howard Hospital since 2003, providing desperately needed medicines and supplies through NGO partners and Canadian physicians who travel to Howard for short term medical missions.

In response to the urgency and the enormity of the current need in Zimbabwe, a major shipment of medical aid will soon be on its way to Howard Hospital, providing Dr. Paul Thistle with essential products that he is no longer able to procure from other sources.

"The donation of general medical and surgical supplies from HPIC will go a long way to bridge the gaps in the provision of basic health care services at Howard Hospital to all people in the community," says Thistle. "It will allow our hospital to be a beacon of hope in a very difficult environment."

Dr. Paul Thistle offers Mary medicine from HPIC



Zimbabwe: a country in crisis

- 45 per cent of the population suffers from malnourishment
- almost 600,000 people are homeless
- 83 per cent of people live on less than \$2 a day
- life expectancy is 36 years, down from 60 years in 1990
- inflation is estimated at 100,000 per cent
- 1.3 million people are living with HIV/AIDS
- drought this year has worsened an already critical situation
- country suffers shortages of food, medicine, water, power and fuel



Baby Achien and her mother will both feel better when the antibiotics from HPIC take effect

Medicine gives hope to Sudanese refugees

Baby Achien is sick. She is 6 months old and her mother has walked for hours to the only medical clinic for miles around, in the village of Gordhim, Sudan, hoping to find help.

Gordhim's supply of medicine is irregular, especially when it comes to painkillers and antibiotics for the many patients who come here every day for treatment.

Fortunately for Achien and her mother Aweng, a team of volunteers from London, Ontario arrived at the clinic yesterday, bringing with them four Physician Travel Packs from HPIC. Sylvia, a visiting doctor from Slovakia, is overjoyed to find amoxicillin in the boxes – a high-quality antibiotic appropriate for young children.

Achien receives not only the treatment she needs, but a little toy to bring her comfort. According to Janet Tufts, executive director of The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame who participated in the mission, the language barrier makes it difficult for healthcare providers to connect with their patients, and the hand-knit dolls used as packing material in the PTPs help to create a bond ... and sometimes a smile.

These little moments of joy are welcome for people who have suffered through civil war, displacement and poverty. Gordhim is south of Darfur and was caught in the middle of the 23-year war between the north and the south that officially ended in 2005.

The conflict, however, is ongoing and refugees continue to flee to camps and to communities like Gordhim, where healthcare services are inadequate to care for the growing population.

Tufts reports, "The physicians and nurses were thrilled with the quality of the medicine and supplies in the PTPs. One said, 'No matter how much we get, it is never enough.' According to another, 'The quality of the products is beyond anything we receive.'

"As for the patients, it gives them hope."

Your catalogue gifts of antibiotics have supplied treatment for 7,800 people, including Achien

Caring for the caregivers in Cuba

HPIC staff member Marcelle McPhaden, a physiotherapist, travelled to Colon, Cuba in April 2008 to participate in a training symposium organized by the Cuban Council of Churches (CCC) for people involved in caring for the elderly. McPhaden's presentation was called "Handle with Care" – a course designed to teach caregivers about lifting techniques and injury prevention for both patients and caregivers.

The symposium was held at a seniors' residence that is part of a network of services supported by the CCC's Care for Seniors program. HPIC has been supporting the program for four years through donations of medicines, medical supplies and medical equipment.

According to McPhaden, "The training was well received and provided HPIC a further opportunity to provide practical support to the medical work of the churches in Cuba, gather insight into one of its facilities, interview patients who have been the beneficiaries of HPIC's shipments of medicines, supplies and equipment and encourage many of the CCC's workers from across the country."



"Don't bump the head!" Marcelle McPhaden (centre) teaches caregivers for the elderly how to do lifts and transfers.

This doctor's got a lot to give

What does a remote poverty-stricken village in Haiti have in common with a comfortable city in New Brunswick? What links an outdoor, makeshift clinic where undernourished children line up to receive deworming medicine to a hospital emergency practice in Canada? What do Bod Me Limbe and Miramichi have in common?

Dr. Tiffany Keenan.

During her first trip to Haiti in February 2006, Keenan admits she "fell in love with the work, the country and its people." Now she is on a mission that not only takes her back to the little village of Bod Me Limbe at least twice yearly, but involves the participation of as many helpers as she can find.

Working with Canadian NGO Hearts Together for Haiti, Keenan and her teams operate a medical clinic in the newly built school house in Bod Me Limbe, a small community accessible only by boat, and without running water or electricity.

On her most recent trip in January, Keenan and seven other volunteers, including a doctor, a nurse and other support staff, went door-to-door in the community. They paid particular attention to the health status of women between 15 and 40 and handed out clinic tickets to people of all ages who needed medical care.

On the day designated for the pediatric clinic, they treated 85 children in 2 1/2 hours. The fact that children are suffering from malnourishment, parasites and infections only confirms to Keenan the importance of focusing on young women.

"If we help improve the health of women, then children will get a better start," she remarks.

Maternal and children's vitamins, provided by HPIC, will go a long way to building up the health of this undernourished and vulnerable population, according to Keenan.

"It is amazing to have this help," says Keenan, a regular carrier of the PTP. "It is so reassuring to be able to use Canadian-made medicines of the highest quality."

As she plans her next trip to Haiti, Keenan speaks enthusiastically of developing maternal healthcare services, community health education and a regular rotation of medical teams.

"These people need so much," she says. "And we have so much to give."



Dr. Tiffany Keenan offers vitamins to an undernourished child

More than 1,300 people will benefit from a year's supply of vitamins, provided by your donations through HPIC's gift catalogue.

Canadians bring smiles to Champerico

Champerico is a small village on the Pacific coast of Guatemala, whose inhabitants struggle to survive despite the lack of food, medicine and education. Nothing happens in Champerico to attract international attention, and life and poverty go on unnoticed ... almost.

Father Armand Gagné, a Quebec priest, has noticed. The foundation he started supports the work of a feeding centre and more recently, has built a hospital in the town, providing basic nutrition and medical care to the underprivileged population. Father Gagné takes teams of volunteers to Champerico and carries Physician Travel Packs for the health care needs of the people of the community.

Recently a dental team, under the auspices of Dentistes sans Frontières, also noticed. They chose Champerico as their field of service in November 2007 and returned in April 2008, bringing with them Dental Travel Packs from HPIC.

Dental team leader Claude Leduc said that working with Father Gagné and his group made this one of the best organized missions in their experience. In four days, the 12-member team was able to perform close to 1,000 interventions, as well as teaching large groups of children how to brush their teeth.

The right combination of PTPs, DTPs and caring Canadians has left the forgotten village of Champerico smiling.



Photo courtesy Roland Filiatrault, Rouyn-Noranda, Québec

Your generosity through catalogue giving has provided 26 Physician Travel Packs to underprivileged communities.

You can give Health and Hope

- The people of **Zimbabwe** are in the midst of a humanitarian crisis and are struggling for survival. Help us send medical aid to the **Howard Hospital** and give the gift of life.
- The **Travel Pack** program continues to provide Canadian doctors and humanitarians with the medicines and supplies they need to treat sick and suffering people in the developing world. You can help, by becoming a **PTP sponsor**.
- HPIC relies on people like you to make stories of healing possible. If you wish to continue making a difference as we approach these slower summer months, we would be grateful for your help. Simply indicate "**where most needed**" on the response card.

Every \$1 donated provides at least \$10 of medical aid to people suffering from the effects of poverty, famine, natural disasters and war.

Call **1-800-627-1787**, make a secure donation online at www.hpicanada.ca, or complete and return the enclosed response card by mail.

Thank you for caring!



Health Partners International
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Health Partners International of Canada (HPIC) is a Canadian charitable humanitarian organization that provides free medical aid without discrimination for the world's most needy by operating through partnership and the motivation of Christian love.

HPIC issues tax receipts for donations.
CRA number 119031524RR0001.

955 St. Jean Blvd., Suite 100
Pointe-Claire, QC H9R 5K3
Tel: (514) 695-0007
Fax: (514) 695-8528
Toll free: 1-800-627-1787
E-mail: info@hpicanada.ca

www.hpicanada.ca