

And now...for something completely different

In February 2012, HOM's founders (Carol and Mark Atkinson) traveled to Haiti for a trip that was full of "firsts"; meaning, efforts that had not been the focus of any of their previous excursions in 13 years of traveling to Haiti.

Yes, the highlight of the trip for us was our ability to spend many hours of "one on one" time with two of our long-term friends in Haiti, Pastor Herve Pierre and his wife Mirlande. From the special Haitian meals prepared by Mirland to providing medical care to her parents, from Mark speaking at Pastor Herve's church in the town of St. Marc to our having a special meal at a remarkable Haitian restaurant, this was a unique and special time.

However, many other "firsts" occurred, examples being:

- Having a travel team of two persons and not the usual 12 to 44.
- Partnering with a number of organizations (i.e., IsraAID, FHADIMAC (Fondation Haïtienne de Diabète et de Maladies Cardio-Vasculaires, or Haitian Foundation of Diabetes and Cardio-Vascular Diseases), AYUDA, and Life for a Child). These four organizations are purposed for providing humanitarian care, diabetes care & education, camps for children with diabetes, and insulin for children who have no means to obtain that life-saving medication, respectively.
- Meeting with the leadership of the Haitian Ministry of Public Health and Population (MSPP).
- Spending much time in Port au Prince with what might be referred to as "window shopping" (i.e., identifying what construction and medical/dental equipment was available and at what costs).
- Attending a lecture at a medical school (The Universite Notre Dame d'Haiti) as well as directly providing a lecture to a Nursing School (Mission Possible).
- Delivery the first of what will hopefully be many shipments of educational materials to that Nursing School; this time, a full size replica of a human skeleton (nicknamed "Mustang Sally" and donated by HOM board member Sue Greshaw)

Indeed, looking back, it is hard to comprehend how so much was accomplished in a mere eight days!

One of the greatest personal benefits of this trip was to see what started out as proposed "professional partnerships" before the excursion, turn into *friendships* once on the field. Indeed, our in country colleagues for these efforts:

Dr. Fran Kaufman – Los Angeles, CA  
Dr. Neal Kaufman – Los Angeles, CA  
Evelyn Fleury-Milfort – Los Angeles, CA  
Merith Basey – Washington, DC

Dr. Nancy Larco – Port au Prince, Haiti  
Dr. Philippe Larco – Port au Prince, Haiti

...each left a truly lasting impression with us. Attributes that we could use to describe them individually or in most cases, collectively would include terms such as “genius, compassionate, organized, communicative, role model”, and many, many more. BUT ALL POSITIVE!

Indeed one might expect that bringing together individuals representing so many different organizations, each with their own check lists of “to do” items might result in a proverbial train wreck.

Not so with this group.

Perhaps it was the common sense of purpose, the obvious degree of need, a sharing of experiences under not-always-ideal settings, relational personalities...maybe all of the above. Whatever the reasons, this was a special trip, by a special group, that will provide a special impact on the lives of Haitians for years to come.

Please see our Photo Gallery for images from this trip.