

Saint Louis University News Brief 2002

He was called. That was Tim Randolph's reason for improving the Bethesda Medical Clinic in Vaudreuil, Haiti. Randolph, a professor of Clinical Laboratory Science at SLU, has spent nearly two weeks annually since 1999 at the Bethesda Medical Clinic improving their laboratory services. It was clear to Randolph that God was calling him to support, upgrade, and expand the laboratory. In 2002, Randolph traveled to Haiti with his wife Diane, a professor of Occupational Therapy at Saint Louis University, and his mother, to help complete the mission.

Although the clinic was considered one of the nicest in the area, it was well below the minimal acceptable standards for the United States. The clinic treats hundreds of people each day for a variety of diseases ranging from infections to incurable genetic disorders. These patients desperately need the services of the Bethesda Medical Clinic. The clinic is open five days a week, with patients beginning to wait in line around 4:30 a.m.; the clinic does not close until everyone is seen, which is normally around 5:00 p.m. They charge a modest fee to limit the clientele to only those with urgent needs and to improve patient compliance. This modest fee is about equivalent to one American dollar. This clinic treats not only the physical ailments of each patient but also promotes a sense of spirituality and faith in God.

While the small size of the team and a language barrier made the work at the clinic difficult, the group was still successful. The native language of Haiti is Creole, a form of French, requiring a translator to communicate with nurses and patients. The team was able to upgrade several of the old testing and rehabilitation practices that were still in use at the clinic. Randolph also introduced four new testing methods and taught the nurses how to interpret the results of the new tests and the testing methods already in place and to utilize lab testing more efficiently. In addition, Diane introduced several splinting techniques to the nursing staff. Between mission trips, Randolph provides ongoing support to the Bethesda Medical Clinic. He recently sent down three shipments of supplies. Randolph hopes to continue to develop the laboratory services of the Bethesda Medical Clinic as well as upgrade others in the area.

In one of the poorest nations in the world, not so far from our own home, missionaries like Randolph and his team give up work and spend time away from their families and the comforts of American society to fill a greater need by sharing their knowledge with those who desperately need it.