



grace!

SPRING 2007

AT WORK IN HAITI & THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you..."

Ephesians 1:18 NIV

World Blindness: The Facts

75% of blindness is treatable and/or preventable

90% of the blind live in the poorest parts of the developing world

Every year, an additional **1-2 million** persons go blind

Without proper interventions, the number of blind will increase to **75 million** by 2020

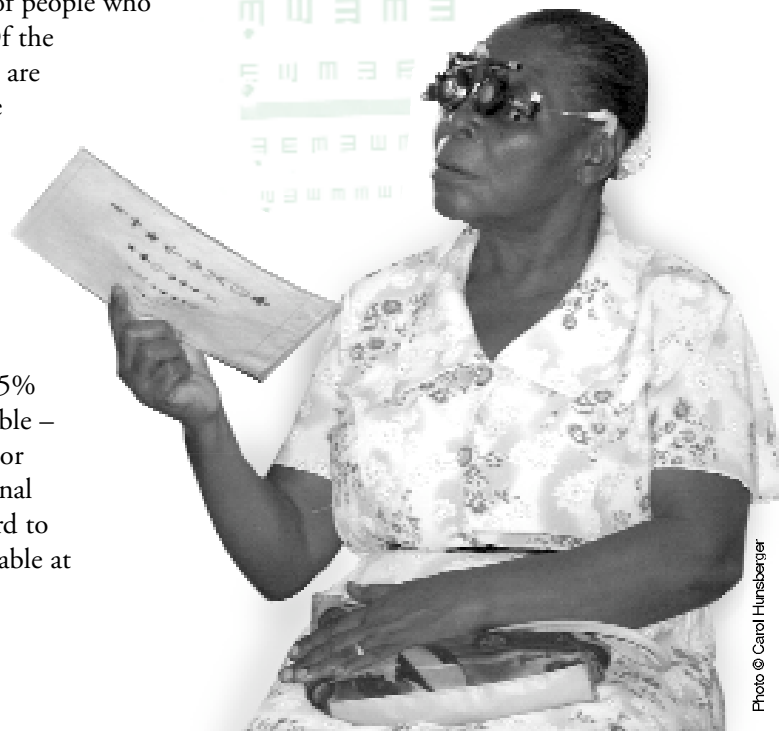
World Health Organization and International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness

Premier Eye Clinic in Haiti Opens in May at Grace Children's Hospital

On May 3, 2007, International Child Care will celebrate the opening of a new eye clinic at Grace Children's Hospital. This improved clinic will be the leading eye care facility in the entire country of Haiti. Located across the street from the main hospital campus, in a spacious building behind the reproductive health and pediatric outpatient services, the eye clinic will offer two state-of-the-art surgery rooms in addition to spacious exam rooms, waiting rooms and staff offices. Moreover, there are plans to convert the current eye clinic into a eyeglass shop where frames and lenses can be made and sold right on the hospital premises.

With the opening of the new, expanded eye clinic at Grace Children's Hospital, International Child Care will be able to perform cataract surgeries and improve the quality of life for thousands of people who are at risk for becoming blind. Of the estimated 37 million people who are blind worldwide, 90% live in the poorest parts of the developing world. Blindness has an enormous personal, social and economic cost, limiting the education and life choices of otherwise healthy people, and placing a significant burden on families and communities. Yet 75% of the world's blindness is avoidable – that is, its causes are preventable or treatable. That's why International Child Care has been working hard to expand the eye care services available at Grace Children's Hospital. ►

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Christian Blind Mission International

Christian Blind Mission International (CBMI) is the oldest and largest ministry with the primary purpose of improving the quality of life for the blind and disabled living in the world's most disadvantaged societies. They provide preventative, medical, rehabilitative and educational services to millions of people each year. They currently partner with over 700 organizations worldwide, including International Child Care and Grace Children's Hospital.

In developing countries like Haiti and the Dominican Republic, one major cause of blindness is cataracts. According to the latest global assessment, cataracts are responsible for 48% of world blindness, which represents about 17.6 million people. A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye, which impedes the passage of light. Most cases of cataracts are related to the aging process, but occasionally children can be born with the condition, or a cataract may develop after eye injuries, inflammation, or other eye diseases. Although cataracts can be surgically removed, in many countries surgical services are inadequate, and cataracts remain the leading cause of blindness.

For nearly twenty years, International Child Care has been providing vision care through the outpatient eye clinic at Grace Children's Hospital. What began as a tiny exam area in a refurbished broom closet has expanded into an eye care center in which more than 11,000 people were examined and treated for various eye conditions in 2006. In the past, patients with cataracts or other eye ailments that required surgery were referred elsewhere, as Grace Children's Hospital did not have a facility to provide such services. But, thanks to the partnership and funding of Christian Blind Mission International, that will no longer be the case. ●

Located across the street from the main hospital campus the new eye clinic will offer two state-of-the-art surgery rooms in addition to spacious exam rooms, waiting rooms and staff offices.



Improving the Quality of Life in Haiti

One eye exam at a time

Denis Sedein, a first time visitor to Grace Children's Hospital, sits good-naturedly with the other patients in the open-air waiting room at the eye clinic. His eyes have been itchy and watery so he decided to make the short trip from his home on Delmas 30 to the hospital. Denis chose to come to the eye clinic at Grace Children's Hospital because of its long-standing reputation for offering good, cost-effective services to patients.

Like all new patients, Denis has to first meet with a technician to create a medical file. Once that is done he is directed to the hospital cashier to pay the 75 goudes (\$2.13 US) for his exam. He then returns to the clinic and waits until his name is called. The first step of Denis's exam is to have his vision tested against an eye chart. The clinic at Grace Children's Hospital uses charts with symbols instead of letters since many people in Haiti are illiterate. Instead of reading off letters, the patients point in the direction the symbol is facing to indicate what lines they can actually see. During this portion of the exam the doctor discovers that Denis is nearsighted. The eye doctor asks Denis to look through various sets of lenses to determine what prescription strength he will need for his eyeglasses. It costs 60 Haitian dollars (\$8.63 US) to purchase a pair of glasses at Grace Children's Hospital.



A procedure called the tonometry test is used to measure the inner pressure of the eye for glaucoma.



Photos © Carol Hunsberger

Without proper interventions, the number of blind will increase to 75 million by 2020.

Next, because Denis is over the age of 40, he gets tested for glaucoma. Glaucoma is an eye disorder marked by unusually high pressure within the eyeball. A procedure called the tonometry test is used to measure the inner pressure of the eye. Denis's eyes are numbed with drops and then the technician uses a special tool, called a tonometer, to measure his eye's pressure. Denis's eye pressure is within normal ranges, but he is diagnosed with an eye infection and given a prescription for drops that he can fill at the hospital pharmacy.

Before Denis leaves the eye clinic, he schedules another appointment with the doctor. Denis will return in two weeks time for a check-up and to pick up his new glasses. ●

Newslines –

United States Begins \$20 Million Haiti Stabilization Initiative

US State Department

USINFO Staff Writer Stephen Kaufman

Thanks to an improved security situation in Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince, the United States is commencing its \$20 million stabilization initiative, which will fund an employment program in Cité Soleil, one of the city's poorest and most dangerous sections.

The United States also will provide an additional \$200 million in assistance to Haiti for the 2007 fiscal year. That funding is intended to improve the country's political stability, security and health care and promote private-sector growth. The sum will bring the total amount of U.S.

assistance between 2004 and 2007 to more than \$800 million. The United States continues to be the largest single donor country to Haiti.

Hispaniola Struck by Heavy Floods

By Will Grant

BBC Americas editor

At least eight people died in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic after unexpectedly heavy rain, that started on Sunday, March 25th, lashed the Caribbean island the two countries share. Officials estimate that more than 4,000 people have been evacuated from their homes in both countries. Mudslides destroyed dozens of houses and left more than 400 families homeless in Haiti alone.

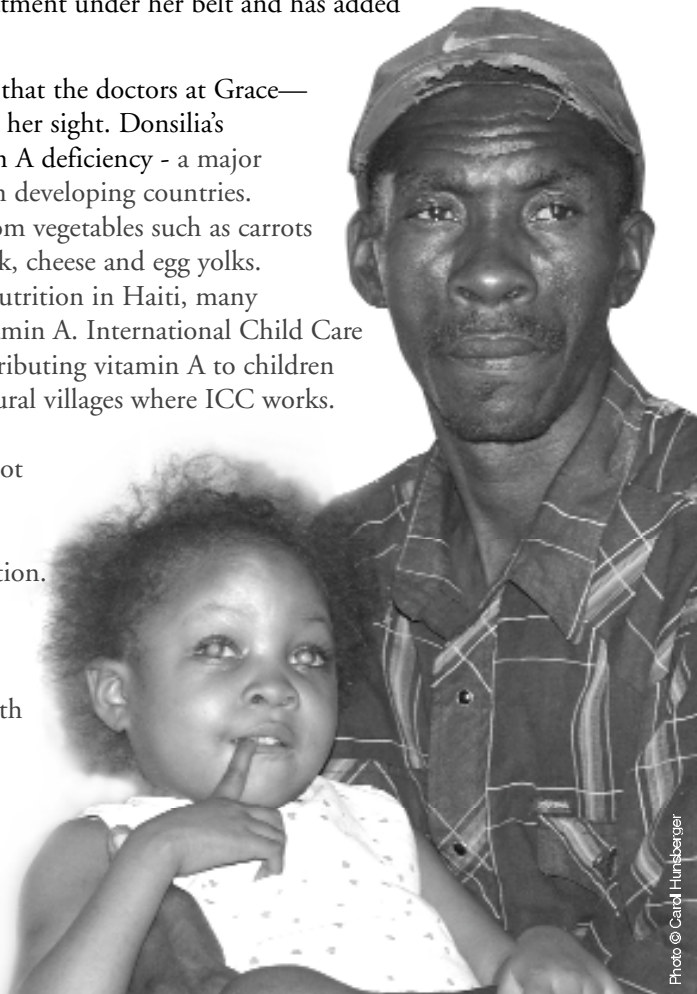
AMAZING GRACE

Donsilia Joseph, a six-year-old girl from a Haitian village called Bel Fontaine, weighed only twenty-two pounds when she was admitted to Grace Children's Hospital in early January. Donsilia was suffering from an advanced case of tuberculosis and severe malnutrition. Donsilia was also blind. Her father, Donseyis, was hoping that the doctors at Grace could treat not only her illnesses, but also her sight. After 82 days of medical treatment and nutritious meals, Donsilia is definitely on the road to recovery. She has two months of tuberculosis treatment under her belt and has added six pounds to her tiny frame.

Unfortunately, there is nothing that the doctors at Grace—or anywhere—can do to restore her sight. Donsilia's blindness was caused by vitamin A deficiency - a major cause of blindness in children in developing countries. The body obtains vitamin A from vegetables such as carrots and broccoli, or proteins in milk, cheese and egg yolks. Due to staggering rates of malnutrition in Haiti, many children suffer from lack of vitamin A. International Child Care combats this problem by distributing vitamin A to children living in the urban slums and rural villages where ICC works.

Although Donsilia's vision cannot be restored, with continued treatment she will recover fully from tuberculosis and malnutrition. Meanwhile, her father comes to visit her every day and looks forward to taking Donsilia home so she can be reunited with her mother and older siblings.

Donsilia Joseph and her father at Grace Children's Hospital



Grace! is published quarterly for friends of International Child Care. ICC is a Christian health agency working in Haiti and the Dominican Republic to change conditions which make people sick, hungry, unemployed and afraid.

ICC depends on individuals, churches, and donor agencies for the financial means to serve. A response card and envelope are enclosed for your contributions. Your gift will be accepted for income tax purposes.


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