



International Child Care



Grace!

FALL 2004

AT WORK IN HAITI & THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

International Child Care Combats Malnutrition on the Island of Hispaniola

Malnutrition, a condition caused by an inadequate or unbalanced diet, remains among the most critical problems worldwide, particularly for the underprivileged and poor in developing countries like Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Poverty is a root cause of malnutrition as poor families lack the economic, environmental, and social resources to purchase or produce enough food. Civil strife, which Haiti has recently endured, also causes upheaval in the food system and can lead to widespread famine.

Over 80% of the children who come to Grace Children's Hospital for treatment suffer from malnutrition. Thankfully, much of the suffering caused by malnutrition is preventable. International Child Care (ICC) offers several programs to help combat malnutrition and its harmful effects in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Educating families, especially women, to understand the special nutritional needs of young children, notably the value of **breastfeeding**, is just one way ICC addresses the problem of malnutrition. Nutrition during the first three years of life is crucial for lifelong health and well-being. Through **health education** and **nutrition classes**, International Child Care empowers women to not only improve the nutrition of their children, but also themselves.

"The combination of malnutrition and infectious disease can be particularly dangerous. Malnutrition can impair the immune system, leaving children more vulnerable to diseases such as diarrhea, measles and tuberculosis."

Growth monitoring is another method ICC uses to assess and treat malnutrition. The purpose of growth monitoring is to detect developmental problems in order to prevent a child from becoming malnourished. Growth monitoring is routinely offered and recorded through mobile clinics in ICC's urban and rural project areas. If it is discovered that a child is not growing normally, nutritional supplements or treatment is provided.

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International Child Care helps combat malnutrition by providing **immunization** against common childhood diseases. ICC also

Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again."

(John 6:35 NLT)



As part of Grace Children's Hospital, the Urban Community Health (UCH) program reaches out into thirteen slum areas, or Citès, that surround the hospital to provide health services to those in need. 18,475 children, ages 0 – 5, were monitored for malnutrition in these program areas in 2003.

distributes **vitamin A** as a lack of this important nutrient can prolong and increase the severity of persistent illnesses.

Other interventions that International Child Care utilizes in the prevention of malnutrition include improving sanitation, hygiene and the water supply through health education, the **building of latrines and spring capping**. ICC also provides **pre and postnatal care** to women as chronically undernourished women tend to bear low birth weight babies which perpetuates the cycle of malnutrition into the next generation. ●



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Amazing Grace



Michael, considerably small for his age, lives with his mother, Rebecca, and an older sibling in Fondo de la Botella, a poor community in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

Michael Antonio lives in Fondo de la Botella, a poor community in Santiago, Dominican Republic. His family's house perches on the side of a hill consisting of more garbage than earth. Two years ago his mother was almost killed by an avalanche of trash that buried her up to her neck. The city's response was to plant trees to help hold the earth in place. Although the family knows the dangers of living in such conditions, they have little choice. Their house is rent free which leaves more money available for other precious needs such as food.

When Michael was first examined through ICC's Community Health Development program he was severely malnourished. At eleven months old he weighed only twelve pounds and was covered with sores caused by malnourishment and the filthy conditions in which his family lives. Maxima, the ICC Health Promoter for his community, contacted International Child Care's doctor, Dr. Martinez, and requested an emergency consultation. Dr. Martinez prescribed and provided protein supplements and vitamins to help combat Michael's malnutrition and medication to help heal his sores.

Due to ICC's intervention, Michael's status has progressed from severe malnutrition to moderate. Though he is still in danger, he is slowly improving. In addition, Maxima is continuing to work with Michael's mother educating her on ways to better provide good hygiene in the midst of such poor living conditions and how to make more nutritional food choices with limited finances. ●



Charitable Legittime, one of four cooks employed by Grace Children's Hospital, is preparing corn, potatoes, carrots and onions, to accompany beef with meat sauce, for the children's afternoon meal. The Grace cooks have all received training on nutrition, hygiene, food preparation and the importance of good nutrition to health.



Cèlianie Avril has worked for Grace Children's Hospital as a cook since 1981. She arrives early to prepare the children's first meal which is served at 8:00 AM. The children on the inpatient ward receive meals five times per day. Nutritious food, in addition to quality medical care, helps them regain their strength and overall health.

Photos © Keith Mumma



Dilson St. Fleur is responsible for food distribution at Grace Children's Hospital. Here he is distributing milk, eggs and bread for the cooks to prepare for the children on the inpatient ward. When a malnourished child is admitted to the hospital it generally takes two to three weeks of nutritious meals for him/her to recover from malnutrition.

Typical Daily Menu at Grace Children's Hospital

8:00 AM

White rice with smoked herring and vegetables

10:00 AM

Boiled Eggs and milk with protein supplement

12:00 Noon

White rice and beans with meat and salad

2:00 PM

Bread with peanut butter and juice

6:00 PM

Milk with protein supplement

Infants receive around the clock feedings.

Newslines:

HIV/AIDS Patients Receive Food Aid through ICC

International Child Care, through Grace Children's Hospital, regularly provides assistance to Haitian people living with HIV/AIDS through an established outpatient counseling program. For these patients, many who live in abject poverty and have been rejected by family and friends, Grace Children's Hospital is a beacon of hope where they receive not only counseling and support, but also health care and nutritious food.

There are currently 90 patients enrolled in International Child Care's HIV/AIDS counseling program. The patients are scheduled to visit the hospital on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to receive counseling, medication and to be weighed and educated regarding their diets. The HIV patients also receive food aid, including rice, beans, flour and oil, which is supplied to International Child Care through a division of the World Health Organization.



Photo © Keith Mumma

The Board of Directors of International Child Care (Canada) Inc.

Invite you to attend
Our Annual General Meeting

On Monday, November 15, 2004 at 5pm

At The Niagara United Mennonite Church
1775 Niagara Stone Road,
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

Followed by
The Annual Niagara Dinner
At 6:30pm

ICC is now accepting online donations!

If you wish to make an
online donation or simply
access current program
information and updates,
please visit our website at
www.intlchildcare.org.



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 receipted for income tax purposes.

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