



# grace!

SUMMER 2005

AT WORK IN HAITI & THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**"If you believe in me, come and drink! For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water will flow out from within."**

**John 7:38 (NLT)**

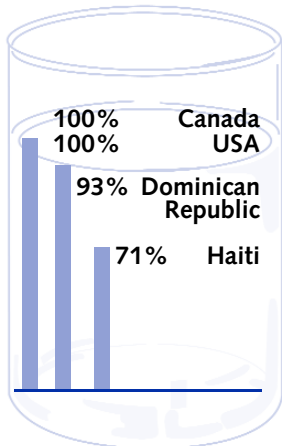
## Water and Sanitation: Essential Components of Good Health

Water and sanitation have a critical impact on both health and disease throughout the world. Global estimates show that approximately two million people die every year from diarrheal diseases. In developing countries, up to 90% of diarrheal illness can be attributed to unsafe water and poor sanitation.



**In Haiti, only 59% of the rural population use an improved drinking water source. Therefore, International Child Care digs wells to provide clean drinking water for entire communities.**

### Total Population Using Improved Drinking Water Source



UNICEF 2002

Access to an improved water source refers to the percentage of the population with reasonable access to an adequate amount of water from an improved source, such as a household connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected well or spring, and rainwater collection. Reasonable access is defined as the availability of at least 20 liters a day from a source within one kilometer of the dwelling.

In Haiti, poor water quality continues to pose a major threat to human health. According to UNICEF, 29% of Haiti's total population does not use an improved drinking water source, which translates to more than 2.3 million Haitians who do not have access to potable water. Although 91% of the urban population has access to water through a public water system, very few have tap water available in their homes. Many people have to travel, sometimes long distances, to collect and haul water. Even when a public water system is available, the water still has to be purified prior to drinking.

In addition, many families use dirty containers to gather water which further contaminates it. Because of this, ICC health workers know that educating about the importance of clean water is vital. Water can be easily purified by adding chlorine (one drop per liter). Regrettably, even when Haitians have access to potable water, it is not free, and people often must pay anywhere from 5 to 15 gourdes per bucket. For the 80% of Haitians who live on less than 40 gourdes (about one dollar) per day, the cost of clean drinking water can be a significant challenge.

Inadequate sanitation facilities also contribute to the spread of disease in Haiti. In the slum communities surrounding Grace Children's Hospital the latrine situation is desperate. Only 52% of the urban population is using satisfactory sanitation facilities. In many cases, multiple families are forced to use the same latrine which is very unsanitary. Imagine if there were only one bathroom per every two houses on your street and you had to share one toilet with your neighbors. This is the reality that Haitian families face every day. ICC health workers help fight the spread of disease by teaching the importance of regularly washing hands and to cover food to protect it from disease-bearing flies, especially for those families that live in close proximity to a latrine. ●

## Total Population Using Adequate Sanitation Facilities

100% - USA

100% - Canada

57% - Dominican Republic

34% - Haiti

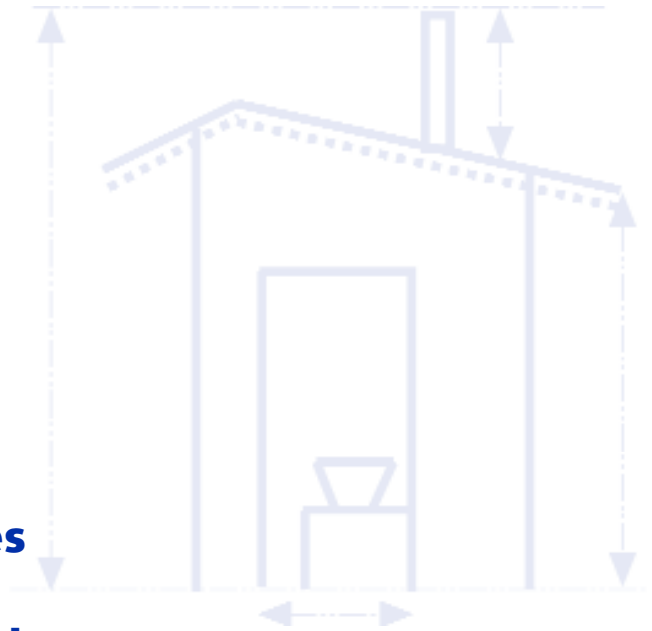
UNICEF 2002

## Building Latrines Helps Fight the Spread of Disease

In Grand Gille, a rural village in the mountains of Haiti, the rate of child illness and death used to be so high that expecting parents would automatically build a coffin, knowing that their son or daughter would most likely die in infancy or early childhood. Thankfully, this is no longer the case as infant and child mortality rates have been drastically reduced due to International Child Care's latrine project in northern Haiti. The building of latrines, which significantly improves sanitation, helps fight the spread of diseases such as typhoid and the leading killer of children in Haiti, diarrhea.

International Child Care is currently partnering with the village of Grand Gille to build latrines for one hundred families in that community. To date, fifty latrines have already been completed. A Health Committee, fairly elected by the local population, serves as a bridge between ICC and the community. It is up to the Health Committee to decide which families will get a latrine. The specific circumstances and size of the families are carefully considered during this decision process. Larger families with greater need take precedence.

It costs approximately \$300 to build a latrine in northern Haiti. The local community is responsible for providing materials such as sand, gravel, and blocks, while ICC provides the blueprints and supplies such as cement, tin for the roof, PVC pipe, and a toilet seat. The local community also provides most of the manual labor. International Child Care pays local laborers to construct the latrines under the supervision of an ICC employee. Thanks to International Child Care's latrine project, the children of Grand Gille have a greater chance of living a long and healthy life. ●



**Jacques Jean, an ICC employee, not only supervises the latrine project, but also works side by side with local laborers.**

## Good Hygiene Improves the Overall Health of Families

As an International Child Care community health worker, part of Patronila's work is teaching families in her barrio of Cien Fuegos (*One Hundred Fires*), a poor community in Santiago, Dominican Republic, about the importance of good hygiene. Patronila visits the homes of children under five years old every month to monitor their growth and health. These visits give her entry into the home and the opportunity to teach good health practices.

"Some people think flies are part of the family. They think they have to welcome them into their house and share their food with them," says Patronila with a smile and gleam in her eyes. Fighting flies in Cien Fuegos is no easy task. Flies are attracted to the barrio by the municipal dump which borders Cien Fuegos. Many residents scavenge in the dump for items to use or sell. The flies carry disease that lead to illnesses such as parasites. For this reason, Patronila insists that the families she visits wash their dishes immediately after using them, use a dish towel to cover the dishes that are drying, and wash dishes again before using them – especially baby bottles.

Even in the poorest homes where keeping nourishing food on the table is a challenge, good hygiene improves the overall health of the family. For instance, Patronila tells a story of three little boys in her barrio who were constantly sick. When she visited their home and saw how they lived she quickly understood the source of their ongoing health issues. Unwashed dishes abounded and the floor was covered with scraps of food. The children were allowed to run around without clothes or shoes and to use the floor as a toilet.

Patronila spoke plainly to the mother of these three children, encouraging her to wash the dishes, toilet train the children, and have them wear clothes and shoes. Slowly Patronila saw the situation improve. The children are now clean and dressed. Dishes get washed, and the floor is no longer covered with fly-attracting food and human waste.

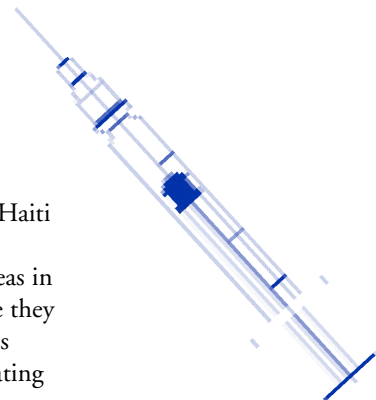
She has never heard anyone say, "Oh, I learned this good health practice from Patronila." Yet Patronila is satisfied with a job well done, because she knows the effect of her teaching has changed the lives of children in her barrio. ●



Weighing children with this hanging scale is one of the ways Patronila monitors the health of her community.

## ICC Helps Prevent Tetanus through Immunization

Tetanus, commonly referred to as lockjaw, is a serious sanitation-related health concern in Haiti. Neonatal tetanus is the most common form of tetanus in developing countries and yet only 52% of pregnant women are immunized in Haiti (UNICEF 2003). Therefore, it is a priority of International Child Care to immunize pregnant women and women of childbearing age in our program areas in order to prevent tetanus. Many Haitian men are also at risk for tetanus because they work on sugar cane plantations and can easily cut themselves with the machetes used to slash the cane. International Child Care helps prevent tetanus by educating and vaccinating against this preventable disease.



## Amazing Grace: Richard Abraham

In North America it is not uncommon for various childhood illnesses to pass through our school systems. It seems that on a regular basis a note comes home in our children's backpacks warning of a new outbreak of pinkeye, influenza or even strep throat. Imagine your fears as a parent if you knew that your child could contract something worse, something as life-threatening as typhoid fever.

That is exactly what happened to Richard Abraham, a ten-year-old boy from Port-au-Prince. He contracted typhoid fever while attending second grade at his local school. Typhoid fever, an illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella Typhi*, is contracted by eating food or drinking beverages that have been contaminated with sewage.

When Richard was admitted to Grace Children's Hospital on April 28, 2005, he was suffering from a high fever, severe diarrhea, headache and loss of appetite. Through the use of antibiotics, nutritious food and the experienced care of the staff at Grace Children's Hospital, Richard is getting stronger and healthier each day. It will take several more weeks for Richard to fully recover from typhoid fever, but his mother and two siblings live nearby and are committed to visiting him daily until he is well enough to return home. ●



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*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.

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Grace Children's Hospital: 418520-7  
Integrated Community Health (Haiti): 418847-3  
Community Health Development Program (D.R.): 410215-6  
Child to Child Health Promotion: 418242-1

## Newslines –

### Political Violence Continues to Plague Haiti

Since February 2004, when a rebellion ousted President Aristide, Haiti has been in the grip of political conflict. At least 740 people have been killed in politically motivated violence and gang related activity since last fall. Although a UN peacekeeping force has sought to stabilize Haiti, there has been a steady increase in random violent crimes, including kidnapping, carjacking and assault. In June, Paul-Henri Mourral, a French diplomat and the owner of the Hotel Roi



Christophe, was shot and killed. News of his death was especially upsetting as many ICC staff, board members and mission travelers had met him while staying at his hotel in Cap Haitien. ICC also extends our sympathies to Dr. Florence Placide, a board member of ICC Haiti, whose husband was killed by gangsters in early June. Please keep Paul-Henri and Dr. Placide's families, the ICC staff and the country of Haiti in your prayers! ●