



International Involvement

By: Timothy Dicke

My Time in Haiti

A note from OrthoIndy
President Dr. Timothy Dicke

At OrthoIndy, many of our physicians and staff have participated with medical missions around the world. This allows us to bring our technology and expertise to the world, while focusing on providing basic human needs. Some opportunities come from areas of the world that have been inadequately provided for and some opportunities follow natural disasters.

Haiti is a country which represents both. Despite its location in the beautiful Caribbean, Haiti has a history of chronic poverty and disease. After the earthquake in January 2010 amplified the level of human disaster in the country, much attention was focused on Haiti and its people's needs.

As a result of the disaster, Cholera was introduced into the country. Cholera is transmitted primarily by drinking water or eating food that has been contaminated by the waste of an infected person. The symptoms include diarrhea and vomiting which results in a person becoming very dehydrated.

Because of this, Cholera has sickened over half million people and has led to the deaths of over 7,000 people in Haiti. In the third world, lack of a safe water source is responsible for an estimated 80 percent of deaths. Water borne diseases are very difficult to treat but can be prevented.

The best medicine that can be provided in many parts of the world is simply a safe glass of water. I became involved with a "safe water" initiative through an



organization called Fountains of Hope* and had the opportunity to visit Haiti twice last year to participate with the installation of water purification systems in areas of need.

While there, I was able to do limited surgery, but the basic lack of resources and equipment available limit what can be performed. A number of OrthoIndy physicians and staff contributed monetarily to the effort to help establish a safe water system to a mission which operates for orphanages and feeds over 3,500 children per day.

The food that was prepared at the mission was the very same type of food that employees of OrthoIndy and the Indiana Orthopaedic Hospital (IOH) packed this past fall during the Kids Against Hunger of Central Indiana Million Meal Marathon at Lucas Oil Stadium*. This connection has led me to organize an initiative to identify another suitable location in Haiti to establish a safe water system where there is another feeding mission.



This summer, I will return to Haiti accompanied by Larry Whinnery, IOH chaplain, to identify worthy locations. At OrthoIndy, there is a long history of charitable activities and I continue to encourage all of us to get involved with projects which benefit others. In the end, we generally get as much benefit as those we serve.

*Fountains of Hope (FoH) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. FoH is committed to the installation, integration and teaching of safe water solutions for the poorest and most marginalized via water purification, well drilling, health and hygiene education and disaster relief. To learn more visit FountainsOfHope.org.

*Kids Against Hunger of Central Indiana is an humanitarian food aid organization providing highly nutritious, life-saving meals to feed the hungry at home and the starving abroad while teaching children and communities the power of volunteerism. Kids Against Hunger of Central Indiana is the largest satellite in the Kids Against Hunger national network, having fed 23 million hungry families in the greater Indianapolis area and the world since 2007. Twenty-five percent of the meals remain local to feed hungry Hoosiers and the remaining 75 percent are distributed by partners to those facing malnutrition and starvation due to war, famine, poverty or natural disaster. To learn more visit KidsAgainstHunger.net.



Timothy Dicke, MD

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