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SLU Professor Leads Missions to Haiti

ST. LOUIS - Tim R. Randolph first visited Haiti on a mission trip in January 2000 to assist in building a school. Now, four years later, his medical mission trips have grown to include students and others interested in service.

Randolph, an assistant professor of clinical laboratory science at Saint Louis University's Doisy School of Allied Health Professions, provides medical assistance to Bethesda Medical Center, located in the small community of Vaudreuil, Haiti, just outside the city of Cap-Haitien. Bethesda treats between 100 and 200 patients a day for ailments ranging from severe infections to genetic diseases. It also provides daily worship services for both patients and staff.

Randolph has visited Bethesda annually for the past four years. During his first two mission trips, he established laboratory testing procedures, trained the laboratory staff, provided laboratory testing materials and assembled an expert panel to address medical questions.

The fourth and most recent trip during the summer of 2003 was the most successful. It was the first year his trip was completely funded by donations. "We were able to deliver 27 boxes of laboratory materials, weighing a total of more than 300 pounds," Randolph said. In addition, "The sponsoring missionary organization has just completed construction of a new lab at Bethesda Medical Clinic. The new facility is five times larger than the original lab." For the 2003 mission trip, Randolph received help from SLU students in the department of clinical laboratory science. As a result of their senior capstone project, two of the students joined the mission team in Haiti only three weeks after graduation. The students helped identify the best lab test available to diagnose five diseases commonly encountered at Bethesda, wrote procedures for the Haitian lab staff and helped train the lab and nursing staff on the new tests.

Randolph and his team also developed connections with different doctors in Haiti to help Bethesda succeed without missionary help. A SLU VOICES grant, created to promote a sense of vocation in the campus community, funded a reflection series facilitated by Randolph to promote faith-based service. The reflection series will continue through April 2004 on the second Wednesday of each month at noon in the Doisy School of Allied Health Professions.

Randolph has always been attracted to helping people. He feels that the construction project in Haiti opened the door for him to form a bond with the people of Haiti.

"I felt called to support, upgrade and expand the laboratory," Randolph said. "I wanted to change the way the nurses used all of the services."

Various groups and individuals support the ministry throughout the year providing the infrastructure needed to execute the annual medical mission trips and the medical supplies that are shipped monthly. This includes friends of the ministry who make a small annual contribution, laboratory professionals who are asked to

evaluate their inventory with an eye to this ministry, laboratory supply companies willing to donate fresh materials, and professionals who address health care questions and offer advice.

Randolph extends an invitation to everyone in the SLU community to consider a partnership in this mission.

"Together, as a team, we can make an enormous impact on the health of people stricken by poverty and disease," he said.

The next mission trip to Haiti is tentatively scheduled for June 2004.

"While there, missionaries will continue to evaluate the laboratory services at Bethesda Medical Center, offer free screening for common diseases and proclaim the Gospel message," Randolph said.

If you are interested in sharing this ministry, or for more information, please contact Tim R. Randolph at (314) 977-8688 or randoltr@slu.edu.