

## 2021 MOIRA WALKER MEMORIAL AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICE – Dr. Pierre Plourde



Dr. Pierre Plourde is a Medical Officer of Health with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Professor in the Departments of Community Health Sciences and Medical Microbiology with the College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. He is also the medical director of Travel Health and Tropical Medicine Services in addition to the Healthy Sexuality and Harm Reduction team of the Population and Public Health Program of the WRHA; and he is Medical Director of the WRHA Integrated Tuberculosis Services program. Dr. Plourde's professional interests also include

International Health, with a current focus in community development and primary health care in Haiti. He leads an annual Education, Medical Aid and Service (EMAS) Canada healthcare mission to Haiti.

Building relationships is the key to achieving Dr. Plourde's healthcare goals in Haiti. His lifelong service in Haiti started in 1982 when he was still a medical student. Another young man, St. Hilaire Faniel, taught him how to speak Creole which is the local language. This developed into a life-long friendship, ending only when St. Hilaire was tragically killed during a burglary at his home. St. Hilaire had taught people that the body needed to be healed, nourished and educated before dealing with the spiritual component. Dr. Plourde wanted to help with the healing part and formed other relationships with the healthcare professionals and volunteers from Haiti and EMAS Canada. His relationships with various medical professionals that he has worked with also help him to do this work both in Canada and Haiti. The Haitian people treat him like family and one of their own, calling him half Haitian and half Canadian because of the amount of time he spends there working with them.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Plourde is actively involved in the EMAS Haiti project Hand in Hand with Haiti that is a partnership between EMAS Canada and the El Shaddai Church Community in Port-au-Prince. This project focuses on four areas: 1) providing a meal to students and staff every day; 2) an annual teaching team; 3) an earthquake and hurricane resistant construction project in partnership with Engineering Ministries International to build a large gathering center with two schools, kitchen, guesthouse, water, sanitation and a healthcare clinic; and 4) public engagement events in Canada to raise awareness and funds. These initiatives help to provide hope and dreams for the Haitian people of El-Shaddai.<sup>1</sup>

Due to COVID-19, Dr. Plourde has not been able to travel to Haiti recently but has spent considerable time fundraising to assist with the nutrition and education programs in that country.

Dr. Plourde's story and his service in Haiti are exemplary and fully represent the objectives of Moira Walker and the award named in her honour. Dr. Plourde will be recognized following his presentation of an education session at the IPAC Canada Virtual Conference (Vulnerable Populations, Monday, May 4).

Dr. Plourde would like to recognize the members of his team who support his work in Haiti.

*First, there's my spouse Krista who has been my volunteer administrative director and logistician for over 20 years; she has also been my rescue valve, having had to evacuate me from Haiti twice, once during political unrest in March 2019 and then last year in March 2020 just as COVID-19 was accelerating while I was in Haiti with a team (see attached photo). And you stated, I was sadly unable to go in March 2021.*

*I also wouldn't be able to do anything in Haiti if it wasn't for my best friend, Engineer Denis (see attached photo), who coordinates and supervises all of the construction projects since the earthquake, all of the financial transactions, and he is the CEO/CFO of the school and nutrition program (attached photo) which operates all year round even when I am not on the ground in Haiti. He is a God-send - without him we could do nothing in Haiti. He was also instrumental in facilitating me getting an academic appointment at a Haitian university where I can teach medical and nursing students (attached photo).*



*Finally, I would just like to express my deep gratitude to the ipac Board of Directors who noticed and cared about a humble initiative on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, reaching out to build capacity in a very poor community.*

<sup>1</sup>Nicole Perron, HEAL-1077 HSLM LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS, 2010

(See photos on following page.)

