

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Name: Nicole Perron

HEAL-1077 HSLM LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS
Project Assignment



Leader: Pierre J. Plourde, M.D., FRCPC

**Awarded the Dr. Jack Armstrong Humanitarian Award
from Doctors Manitoba for his work in Haiti.**

Dr. 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 EMAS Canada healthcare mission to Haiti. The work that he does at the University of Manitoba, WRHA and EMAS Canada are all connected.

Dr. Plourde recognizes that building relationships is the key to achieving his healthcare goals in Haiti. The relationship building all started in 1982 when he was still a medical student and he met a young man named St. Hilaire Faniel while in Haiti that taught him how to speak Creole which is the local language and this developed into a life-long friendship. His friend established a church community which started feeding two to three hundred hungry children that now attend schools and are not left on the streets. He 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.

Dr. Plourde's values are trust, honesty, communication, relationship building, learning, growing, and teaching. He is someone that takes action, inspires, and motivates people with his passion and vision to achieve healing, teaching and serving those in need from Canada and Haiti. In 2004 he became the EMAS Canada Haiti team leader and annually brings down a team of healthcare professional students from Canada with shared aligned values that are dedicated, passionate and hard working to provide healthcare services to people in a foreign environment with minimal resources. His leadership consists of three styles which are: situational to adapt to various elements; transformational to inspire and share a vision for healthcare professionals to help people with less opportunities; and servant in how he provides supplies and medication to help teach healthcare professionals from Canada and Haiti to provide healthcare services to the Haitian people.

Dr. Plourde models the way and inspires others with his selflessness, empathy, compassion, honesty and knowledge. He is someone that remains calm in challenging and frightening situations as he recognizes that it helps him make better decisions and keeps those around him calm. He definitely walks the talk with his hands-on approach, involvement, skills and knowledge that has gained him credibility as a leader. His team works long hours each day in a clinic environment alongside the primary school co-located. They also go through the whole school to examine and provide care to children and anyone from the community that requires healthcare services.



Dr. Plourde's vision is focused on capacity building and community development from a Public Health perspective and communicates that to the EMAS Canada team so that they are clear on the vision. He informs his team that they are there to work with the Haitian healthcare professionals and do not just come in as foreign doctors that come to do the work and leave. He engages his team in the process and encourages ideas and recommendations in how they can best achieve this. Also, he reminds them how important it is to engage the Haitian team to feel a sense of ownership in the work they are doing and being part of the process too. They are building capacity working with the Haitian physician and dentist. The Haitian physician operates a nursing school with nursing students that are trained in the clinic environment. Dr. Plourde engages everyone in the process to provide a service of healing and

helping people that are sick while teaching local healthcare providers how to do it efficiently and improving capacity to achieve everyone's goal.

In December 2008, Dr. Plourde's life-long friend St. Hilaire in Haiti died when he was shot by thieves during an attempted robbery in his home. This was very difficult and upsetting for him and the community in Haiti but St. Hilaire had worked very hard in leadership development and left tremendous core leadership in the community of El Shaddai church to carry his vision forward. St. Hilaire's right-hand man Denis has now taken over chairing the board and leading the community. Dr. Plourde feels it is important to recognize and continue with the work that St. Hilaire started in building a striving community for the people and providing basic necessities of life.

Dr. Plourde and the EMAS Canada groups that he leads challenge the process of helping the reduction of communicable diseases which aligns with the millennial development goal number four, reducing child mortality. He achieves this by using his experiences from Canada and translates them into a less resourced setting. This requires them to work at a much more basic level. They focus on reducing child mortality while providing worm medicine to all of the children. The approach is to remove worm infestations to reduce anemia which is the most common worldwide result of anemia and this improves the health of children. There is collaboration with his team and the Haitian team on



how they will achieve their work each year, as there are new people and the environment may have changed. They have been successful in this initiative to improve the health of the children. There is also a different level of risk associated with the work they do in Haiti compared to healthcare providers here in Canada. He describes himself as a risk taker but not to the point that it can result in a negative impact on the people he works with or himself. There is a possibility of his team being infected, but since he specializes in this field he feels that the risk is very minimal as he has control over this aspect. His biggest concern is the risks that he has no control of; such as, other drivers or protests when they are travelling to and from work. However, Denis, his main connection in Haiti, is very well connected and has developed coalitions with the local police and others within the community to keep him informed of any hostile situations. On Dr. Plourde's recent visit in February 2018, he mentions that their driver who was taking them back to their accommodations after their long day of work was informed of a protest with guns involved. They had to pull over and wait. He says that they would have

stayed there all night if need be to ensure that his team was not placed in any harm. Fortunately, their driver received news over two hours later that it was safe to continue travelling into town.

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.



In January 2010, Haiti was devastated by an earthquake, Dr. Plourde immediately began to bring awareness and assist in fundraising events to help the people. He waited five very long days to finally receive a call in the middle of the night from Denis informing him that there were only five casualties within the El-Shaddai community. These individuals were there preparing the church for a large mass service. Had the earthquake struck an hour later, it could have been detrimental to many more people. He informed Dr. Plourde to hold off coming in February as they did not want to worry about how they were going to accommodate and feed them. What they really needed is money to help to feed their people. Dr. Plourde was able to transfer funds from EMAS Canada through Western Union. Dr. Plourde said that there is a great level of trust between him and Denis that he knew the money would be utilized for this purpose. This developed coalition helped to get food to the people in the community that needed it most which reached them well before the united nations could. Also, Dr. Plourde was able to bring awareness to WRHA employees in how they could help with an article in the Wave magazine (March/April 2010) titled "Help for Haiti" to help the devastated country.

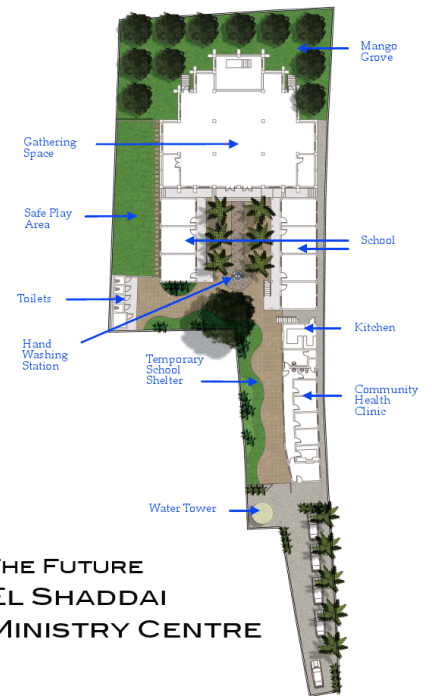
In May of 2010, he had received the go-ahead to come out to Haiti and went with a team of volunteer healthcare professionals that included doctors, nurses, dentists and other volunteers from Winnipeg, Ottawa and Calgary to provide medical and related assistance to the community. The healthcare team that he was a part of treated 568 patients in four days and they left behind not only lots of skills, supplies and pharmaceutical but tremendous hope in the community. Dr. Plourde enables others to act by mentoring local physicians, providing the necessary supplies and loaded pharmacies that will help the Haitian healthcare providers to carry on the work that the Canadian team has started. This has had a much longer-term effect than the one to two weeks they spent working with them.

He is also involved in the efforts to build a new church, school and community health center through EMAS Canada. This was to replace existing facilities but had stalled due to lack of funds. However, he seized the opportunity to pursue this project as it had become a necessity as a result of the earthquake. With the support from EMAS Canada, Dr. Plourde developed coalitions and worked with a team of three architects and five engineers working intensely with the El Shaddai elders in how to develop a



large piece of land into a future community centre consisting of a large gathering space (for church and for a hurricane shelter), a new primary school and feeding centre for children, and a primary care/public health clinic. This project will help the community in accessing safe potable water, community children

accessing basic primary education, basic nutrition and nutritional support for children, and basic primary care support for expecting moms, mothers and families. Dr. Plourde was the translator and mediator to manage any difference of opinions or conflicts between the architects and the elders. He was clear that the Elders had the ultimate say in how the structure should look as it would be symbolic for the community. The Elders chose the drawing of the structures that looked like arms reaching out with the gathering/church at the centre. This had significant importance to the people of the community.



In the Summer of 2010, Dr. Plourde wrote a follow-up article in the Wave magazine, to provide an update of the earthquake from his visit in May. He thanked the supporters and donors for their contributions and how it has benefited the people during this difficult time.

In 2016, they now have impressive new buildings that are a great symbol of hope for the community but the construction site continues to be a demonstration-training site for proper construction methods using appropriate resources available from local technology and materials. Despite all odds, the El Shaddai community continues to move forward with faith and hope that relief, healing and dignity will be realized as EMAS Canada continues help the people from Haiti.

There have been changes and progression with the work that EMAS Canada provides on their annual trip that has transformed from assisting to more of a teaching role over the years. Dr. Plourde has worked with the University to create a curriculum with a clear set of objectives on how to set-up and operate a mobile primary care clinic. I was fortunate during my interview with Dr. Plourde to see a 360 photo where the people would enter the building, be prepared for triaging, then triaged, seating area for them to wait, then the clinic rooms that were sectioned off with drapes followed by the pharmacy for their prescribed medication. The Haitian university students that are chosen are those that have the highest marks that he refers to as “the cream of the crop” and end up quite further ahead with this experience than their colleagues. They also have an exam to write based on the curriculum and experience. They are then provided with an official certificate signed by Dr. Plourde and letter of recommendation from him as well. It is really empowering and encouraging for these students to continue in their studies. It is quite remarkable how his team’s role and work has transformed over the years in Haiti.

These initiatives encourage the heart of the Haitian people by showing them there is hope for the future with the system transformation of their community. This system transformation also achieves Dr. Plourde’s goal of reducing child mortality. In addressing goal number four of reducing child mortality he believes will be addressed by reaching goals from one to six which includes reduction of hunger and elimination of extreme poverty, education, promote equality, maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Dr. Plourde continues to work on fundraising events to assist in the completion of the building structure. The next phase is the construction of the water tower so that the feeding centre can then be built.



Currently the people cook outside but they now have the church and the two schools on each side. It is very inspiring for the people and anyone that goes on these missions to help. This has been three decades of Dr. Plourde’s life and he continues to work very hard to assist the people of this community

and see this project through. He is thankful and grateful for the help from his wife, son and daughter that have helped him throughout the years and recognizes that he could not have done it all by himself. He refers to this as “the family business” and everyone has an important role to make these initiatives successful.

Dr. Plourde is an exemplary leader that inspires me to continue to grow and learn to enhance my skills to be a better leader. He has shown me that it is important to be patient and to recognize that it takes time to tackle big projects and that you cannot do it alone. It is also important to build relationships in order to achieve great things. Also, that no matter how daunting a challenge might be, start with one piece at a time and never give up especially when faced with difficult situations. I should always remain calm and focus to be able to make rational decisions. To have a clear vision of where I need to go and communicate clearly to others so they are able to follow and engage others in the process. To challenge obstacles and seize opportunities to achieve results. To provide the necessary tools or information that will enable others to act and develop coalitions that will assist in everyone achieving their goals. To encourage the heart with recognizing individuals and teams for their efforts and hard work throughout the process. Also, to help others see the progression for them to envision a better future for themselves, the team and the organization that aligns with everyone’s goals. And, most importantly, to mentor and create leaders during the process for the creation of leadership cycle to continue to grow that will enable great things to be achieved!