



# SERVING TOGETHER

Official Newsletter of Mission:318



## Serving Together: With Gratitude

**Gratitude—“readiness to show appreciation for and return kindness”.**

At Mission:318, we stand by our marching orders to let our actions serve the Kingdom of God. One of those actions is to express our gratitude. As we reflect on the last couple of years, we are thankful for so much, mostly for our connections with all of you. Our world is a better place as a result of the relationships we have formed through Mission:318.

The connections and relationships were on full display at our recently gala, Building Hope. I was overwhelmed by the show of support from so many new faces mixed in with those that have served from day one. From donations to time to prayer, we continue to thrive in our mission by those who step into the story and give.

We are also extremely grateful for our partners that we work with around the world. From Brace for Impact 46 and Pittsburgh Kids Foundation (Haiti) to Global Missions Resource and MAP (Ghana), we continue to change lives and give people hope.

Mission:318 is also being brought into new stories and communities. As we have crossed paths with organizations like the Pujols Family Foundation (Dominican Republic) and Hand of Hope (Global), we are venturing into additional areas to provide healthcare to forgotten communities.

Most importantly, we continue to strive to show our gratitude to God for challenging us and providing a way. And often times, God provides that way through you—so Thank You!

Blessings and gratitude,

Jon

Jonathan Limpert, MD, FACS | President of the Board

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# MISSION:318 BUILDING HOPE FUNDRAISER



On Friday, September 29th, Mission:318 held its second annual gala, Building Hope, where friends, volunteers, family, and donors gathered to reflect on the impact Mission:318 is making on the lives of so many vulnerable communities. The event was beautifully curated by Bill and Terri Wynn (Too Creative) keeping in line with our theme of Building Hope throughout the world.

With a record 232 guests and several new sponsors the evening once again highlighted the importance of the work we are doing as we serve God. Paige Hulsey, from KMOV welcomed us to the evening and shortly thereafter Andy Benes delivered our opening prayer – reminding us of our faith and gratitude for our friendships, connections, and the meal we were about to share.

“...Let us not love  
with words or  
speech but with  
actions and in  
truth.”  
1 John 3:18

As dinner approached, our friend, Christian recording artist, and inspirational speaker, Myshel Wilkins, sang and told her story with Mission:318, as we enjoyed the food provided by Knead Bakehouse + Provisions. This year we highlighted our work in Sefwi Bekwai, Ghana where we are working with Paramount Chief Oyeadiye Basape Kojo Armah III, to build a new mother-baby clinic. Nana thanked us for our dedication to improving the lives of his community as he highlighted the inequities in healthcare around the world. Next we heard from Kyle McClellan, President of Brace For Impact 46, and our partner in Haiti. Kyle graciously thanked Mission:318 for our partnership in providing medical care in Balan, Haiti as so many organizations have been unable to continue providing healthcare in the region. To close out the program portion of the evening we heard from Joshua Yaro, a St Louis City footballer and native Ghanaian, about his story in Ghana and how important the work Mission:318 is to the people of Ghana in both Yendi and Sefwi Bekwai.

We rounded out the evening with the Live Auction and Hands up For Hope where auctioneer Brian McKinney helped us continue to raise funds for our programs at home and abroad. Once again, we could not be more grateful for the support of friends, volunteers, family, and donors. God is on the move!





# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: CHRIS NATION, PASTOR - THE CROSSING

*Chris Nation, a pastor at The Crossing Church for 11 years - who focuses on bereavement and care. shares his story of serving with Mission:318.*

## **How and why did you get involved with Mission:318?**

Since I have a background in hospital chaplaincy, I was always very interested in the work **Mission:318** did. So when Randall Littleton asked me if I would like to go to Ghana in 2019, I instantly said "Yes." Everything about the Mission:318- from the mission to their dedication to serve, but mostly it's about the people involved - in Ghana and here in the United States - *has changed my life.*

## **How many years have you been volunteering with Mission:318? Where have you traveled with Mission:318?**

My first trip was to Yendi, Ghana in February-March of 2019, and I have been involved ever since. I went back to Yendi on a second trip in 2022.

## **What do you find most rewarding about working with Mission:318?**

There is something very rare about this group. ***They live out the mission to love not just with words, but action and truth.*** There is sincerity, follow-through, and commitment that is inspiring. I have heard Dr. Jon Limpert say more than once that we are all in need of mission in our lives, and ***if you're looking to make an impact in this world, this is the kind of group you want to be a part of.***





# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: CHRIS NATION, PASTOR -THE CROSSING



**How would you explain the working in Yendi, Ghana to someone who has never been?**

***The people are extraordinary and kind.*** On my last trip I had the joy of working with one of the nurses, Sayuti, to ensure patients were prepared for surgery and ready to go so that the team could work efficiently, and care for as many people as possible during our time there. He was incredibly friendly and kind, and I loved watching the way he treated the patients. As the days went on, our rhythm and camaraderie continued to develop, and it was like working with an old friend.

**Is there a person/story that has made a special impact on you?**

***The tireless commitment of Dr. Jim Cassat is something that will take your breath away.*** He works hard and diligently, yet with grace and kindness in everything he does. I watched him in between surgeries get ahold of a little thing of bubbles, which he used to entertain a little one prior to surgery, to set them at ease and bring them joy. And watching the bedside manner of every surgeon involved in Mission:318 is a master class in how ***great medical and spiritual care can be given at the same time.***



# GLOBAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: HYPERTENSION

*The World Health Organization estimates that over 1.28 billion adults aged 30–79 years have hypertension, two-thirds of those live in low- and middle-income countries.*

## **What is hypertension?**

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is a condition in which the blood vessels have persistently raised pressure. Blood is carried from the heart to all parts of the body in the vessels. Each time the heart beats, it pumps blood into the vessels. Blood pressure is created by the force of blood pushing against the walls of blood vessels (arteries) as it is pumped by the heart. The higher the pressure, the harder the heart has to pump.

Hypertension is a serious medical condition and can increase the risk of heart, brain, kidney and other diseases. It is a major cause of premature death worldwide, with upwards of 1 in 4 men and 1 in 5 women – over a billion people – having the condition. The burden of hypertension is felt disproportionately in low- and middle-income countries, where two thirds of cases are found, largely due to increased risk factors in those populations in recent decades.

## **What happens when hypertension is left untreated ?**

Among other complications, hypertension can cause serious damage to the heart. Excessive pressure can harden arteries, decreasing the flow of blood and oxygen to the heart. This elevated pressure and reduced blood flow can cause:

- chest pain, also called angina;
- heart attack, which occurs when the blood supply to the heart is blocked and heart muscle cells die from lack of oxygen. The longer the blood flow is blocked, the greater the damage to the heart;
- heart failure, which occurs when the heart cannot pump enough blood and oxygen to other vital body organs;
- blocking or bursting of arteries that supply blood and oxygen to the brain, causing a stroke; and
- irregular heart beat which can lead to a sudden death.

## **References:**

- World Health Organization. <https://www.cdc.gov/cholera/general/index.html#one>
- Guideline for the pharmacological treatment of hypertension in adults. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.



# GLOBAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: HYPERTENSION IN HAITI



Haiti is the sixth most populous country in North America, with a population of 11.7 million (2021). Haiti's population is increasing at 1.2% per year and has an average age of 24.1 years, with 54% of its population under 25 years of age. The average life expectancy in Haiti is 64 years of age (Population Pyramid, 2022).

In Haiti, hypertension is the leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease, with an age adjusted prevalence of 28.5% in male adults between 35-64 (Lookens et al, 2020) and cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in Haiti. Hypertension in Haiti has a remarkably high prevalence and incidence of stroke or cerebrovascular incidence at 176 per 100,000, more than double than those in the Dominican Republic (Lavados, 2007). Hypertension is the number one risk factor for cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of preventable death in Haiti, above HIV, cholera, tuberculosis, and malaria combined. Some global health experts consider heart disease in Haiti an epidemic.

Hypertension in Haiti looks different than hypertension in the United States. One noted difference is that patients with high blood pressure were found to have higher levels of lead in their blood. The source of that lead could be from lead in the water, soil, cookware, or gasoline (Mbuthia et al, 2022). Poverty also contributes to blood pressure in Haiti – with most citizens earning less than \$1 a day, eating nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables are often substituted for foods high in sugar, salt, and saturated fats – contributing to obesity and hypertension (Mbuthia et al, 2022). Additionally, the Haitian diet is high in salt and it is estimated that Haitians consume more than 9 times the recommended amount of daily salt recommended by the WHO (Mbuthia et al, 2022). These factors, along with limited access to clinical care, all contribute to high levels of uncontrolled hypertension in Haiti.

## References:

- Population Pyramid, 2022. <https://www.populationpyramid.net/haiti/2023/>
- Lookens, J., Tymejczyk, O., Rouzier, V. et al. The Haiti cardiovascular disease cohort: study protocol for a population-based longitudinal cohort. BMC Public Health 20, 1633 (2020).
- Lavados PM, Hennis AJ, Fernandez JG, et al. Stroke epidemiology, prevention and management Strategies at a regional level: Latin America and the Caribbean. Lancet Neurol. 2007;6:362–372.
- Mbuthia GW, Magutah K, Pellowski J. Approaches and outcomes of community health worker's interventions for hypertension management and control in low-income and middle-income countries: systematic review. BMJ Open 2022;12:e053455



# EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES: BATEYE ALEMAN, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

In late September a small Mission:318 team traveled to the Dominican Republic alongside medical providers from the Pujols Foundation to explore opportunities to work together. Serving two primary bateyes, Aleman and Las Pajas, the Pujols Foundation has supported these forgotten communities for the past ten years. Located in the region of San Pedro de Macoris, Aleman is 48 miles East of the capital city of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Aleman is one of the largest and developing villages in San Pedro Macoris, with a local population of between 2,000 and 3,000 people. This impoverished village is comprised of Dominicans, Dominicans of Haitian descent, and Haitian immigrants, leaving many without documentation and unable to find work and support their families.

The community has strong leadership through their mayor, pastoral care, and support from the ConGracia program of the Pujols Foundation. Historically a sugar cane village, there are 3 churches, an elementary school, a baseball field, a basketball court, a few local shops, and a first aid/ medical clinic. The community has a saltwater plant and is beginning to dig pipes for water in the community. The community has access to minimal basic medical care except in the case of emergency or labor and delivery but has strong leadership and communal bonds. This population of approximately 15,000 suffer high rates of hypertension, diabetes, HIV, and malaria - all contributing to poor health outcomes. Access to healthcare is limited often due to discrimination based on poverty, disease, disability, and being of Haitian descent.

Mission:318 with its relationship with the Pujols Foundation, the leadership of the ConGracia program and medical professionals in the Aleman community recommend increasing medical capabilities by improving access to medicines and diagnostic technologies, expanding pediatric and dental services, enhancing prenatal and antenatal care, developing a community-based noncommunicable disease management program, and providing education and training for clinical providers in the community. By working with leadership of ConGracia, Aleman Medical providers, and local healthcare workers, Mission:318 intends to deliver sustainable healthcare by delivering technology and supplies to expand accessibility, providing educational materials, improving health outcomes, and ultimately transforming lives in the community.







MISSION:318

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

**Surgical and Planning Mission - Cap Haitien, Haiti  
November 2023**

**Surgical Mission - Yendi, Ghana  
January 19-27, 2024**

**Surgical Mission - Yendi, Ghana  
January 26-Feb 3, 2024**

**Medical Mission - Aleman, Dominican Republic  
Winter 2024**

**Medical Mission - Hypertension - Cap Haitien, Haiti  
Winter 2024**

Inquire online at [mission318.com](https://mission318.com)