

Jamaica Update *January 2017*

The Medical Relief Foundation's Caribbean Project Coordinator, Mr. David DeLucia, is an Emergency Cardiac Care (ECC) Instructor who has been a Paramedic for over 41 years. In 2003 Mr. DeLucia attended a wedding at a resort in Negril, Jamaica. While there, David noticed a Jamaica Fire Brigade (JFB) ambulance at the Negril station and he spoke with the EMTs regarding Jamaica's EMS system and its many needs. Upon learning that the JFB's ambulances did not have Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), David promised the EMTs that he would attempt to assist with the evolution of EMS to a higher level of care. As of 2016, Mr. DeLucia has made **11** additional visits to Jamaica, gathering information, observing healthcare operations, delivering medical equipment, and training Jamaica's EMTs. With the assistance of other MRF volunteers, the EMTs of the Jamaica Fire Brigade have received three sequential courses in Emergency Care, CPR and AED use at their stations in Montego Bay, Negril, Linstead, Lucea, Savanna-la-Mar, Ironshore and Falmouth.

Through the Medical Relief Foundation's efforts, enabled by the generosity of many benefactors, the Jamaica Fire Brigade has received donations of training supplies, AEDs, monitor-defibrillators, CPR mannequins, course books, training CDs, computers, AED simulators and other materials *to assist with the enabling of* their own Continuing Medical Education. Other EMS supplies such as cervical collars, CPR masks, backboards, scene lights, suction equipment and vital signs machines have been obtained from United States and Canadian EMS partners and donated to various Jamaican EMS agencies. Visits have been made to many of Jamaica's Accident and Emergency Departments to determine what type of equipment is needed, and was provided as it became available.

Most of the EMTs in Jamaica (and a dozen other Caribbean countries) are superbly trained at the University of the West Indies and the University of Technology. This gives Jamaica a valuable source of the most vital components of an effective EMS system - a source of proficient, dedicated EMTs. In 2011 many of the EMTs and Emergency Physicians in Jamaica organized the Emergency Medical Services Association of Jamaica (EMSA-J) as a professional organization dedicated to improving EMS in Jamaica. The EMSA-J held its first all-day educational forum at The University of the West Indies on March 17, 2012. The MRF's Jamaica Project Coordinator, David DeLucia, was invited to be the keynote speaker at that forum. This gave Mr. DeLucia the opportunity to present many of the Medical Relief Foundation's suggestions and visions to an influential and relevant audience.

In October of 2012 David arrived in Jamaica one day before Hurricane Sandy directly struck the eastern portion of Jamaica, with devastating effects on *infrastructure and* agriculture. Electrical power was interrupted in 70% of the country, and four MRF volunteers taught by generator power and delivered vital equipment, lights, radios and batteries at a very challenging time.

Mr. DeLucia has recently partnered with the Global Surgery program through their affiliate at the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine to assist with their efforts to improve surgical proficiency and capacity in Jamaica. Several vehicles of medical equipment are being delivered to the Jamaican Consulate in Toronto which, with the generous assistance of the Canadian Forces, will be delivered to Jamaica.

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS:

One of the finest educators that Mr. DeLucia has had the privilege of working with in Jamaica was Dr. Delwin Ferguson Ph.D., MPH, EMT-P, an Emergency Medical Services instructor at the University of Technology and the University of the West Indies. The Turks and Caicos Islands were fortunate enough to have Dr. Ferguson assist them with an exponential increase in their number of EMTs and the introduction of Advanced EMTs in 2014 through 2016. To assist his friend with that significant expansion, Mr. DeLucia transported two truckloads of Medical Equipment to New York City to be shipped to the Turks and Caicos Islands. Mr. DeLucia then travelled to the Turks and Caicos Islands for 12 days to observe their EMS system and to instruct the EMTs in the use of the equipment. On this trip, Mr. DeLucia also gifted equipment to National Hospital in Providenciales and to the Turks and Caicos Islands Fire and Rescue.

AWARDS:

In recognition of David DeLucia's efforts to improve healthcare in the Caribbean region, in July of 2013 Mr. DeLucia was given a Leadership Award by the Central New York Regional Emergency Medical Services Council and an Executive Commendation from the New York State Department of Health Director of Emergency Medical Services.

In recognition for his volunteer assistance to Jamaica, on May 14 of 2015 Mr. DeLucia received a Congressional Tribute from the United States House of Representatives, presented by Congressman John Katko.