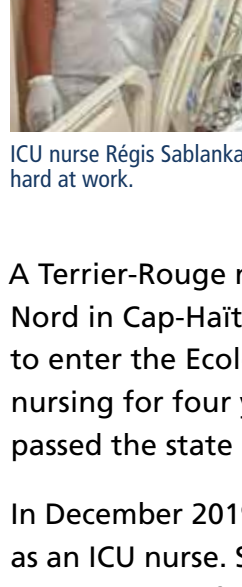


# La Promisse

## Régis Sablanka: ICU Nurse By Abdel Alexis, Director of Human Resources

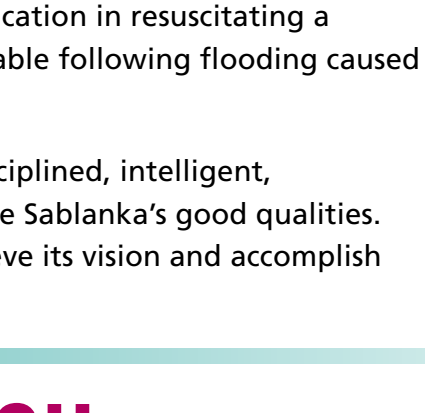


ICU nurse Régis Sablanka hard at work.

Hôpital Sacré Cœur has carved out a place for itself at the top of the pyramid of the Haitian healthcare system and is the top choice for health institutions in the far north of Haiti. Such a stellar reputation is thanks to exceptional employees who have spared no energy and no commitment to their respective work for the benefit of this institution. From those providing direct patient care (doctors, nurses, etc.) to those providing indirect or supportive care, the history of this institution is littered with exemplary employees who have always shaped it, writing its finest pages. Nurses are no exception, as they are the foundation on which patient care is built. Within this important category of employees, some stand out even more for their dynamism, know-how, and dedication to the well-being of patients. One of these is Régis Sablanka.

A Terrier-Rouge native, Sablanka completed her secondary education at the Collège Pratique du Nord in Cap-Haïtien and passed the competitive entrance exam with distinction. This allowed her to enter the Ecole Nationale d'Infirmière Notre Dame de la Sagesse (EINDS), where she studied nursing for four years, from October 2013 to September 2017. She was academically gifted and passed the state exams in the same year, 2017, earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

In December 2019, she joined the staff at Hôpital Sacré Cœur as an ICU nurse. Sablanka quickly adapted to the unit's demands and was one of the department's most vigorous personnel. Wise and always calm, the doctors and nursing colleagues with whom she works all express their appreciation of her know-how, dedication, and dynamism. Always available and flexible, Sablanka never hesitates to participate in the emergency rota to ensure continuity of patient care.



Vehement in her care of patients: Sablanka is much loved by her patients for her kindness, attentive listening, and compassion towards them. The hospital's Director of Nursing, Nathalie Dorcin, was particularly impressed by Sablanka's empathy and dedication in resuscitating a critical patient in intensive care when the ward was almost impassable following flooding caused by heavy rains.

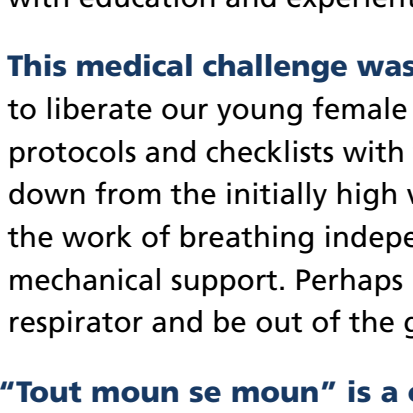
Courteous, wise, responsible, flexible, empathetic, cooperative, disciplined, intelligent, compassionate – there is no shortage of adjectives that can describe Sablanka's good qualities. She is a fine nurse on whom Hôpital Sacré Cœur can count to achieve its vision and accomplish its sacred mission. ■

## Building Capacity in the ICU

By Christopher Powers, MD, Medical Volunteer, and Haiti Health Promise Board Member

**I served again as a medical volunteer at the beautiful Hôpital Sacré Cœur to help advance the medical care delivery capacity to new and amazing levels.**

The patient was a 37-year-old Haitian female mother who had suffered ectopic pregnancy that was surgically corrected. Because of her late presentation to the hospital, she had developed a life-threatening inflammatory lung condition along with systemic inflammation that was causing multiple internal organs to shut down. Without time and support on a higher-level breathing machine (invasive artificial ventilation), she would soon die.



Celia Arañó Suárez, MD in the ICU.

ICU physician Dr. Celia Suárez decided to have this patient intubated, that is, put on an invasive artificial mechanical respirator, a life-saving intervention and certainly the right choice medically. Could we support this patient with what was now needed at this next level of ICU care? She would need expert attention to the ventilator, intermittent to continuous sedation to rest while her body was attempting to heal itself, days of powerful antibiotics for presumed systemic infection, and Adequate nutrition in the form of tube feeding to support the needed work of internal healing. The ICU team got to work to care for this deserving patient. My previous training as a pulmonary and critical care physician would again be put to good use. Our loving and infinite God was again working in mysterious and beautiful ways.

**I have served and volunteered among many other giving providers who also continue to volunteer.** Over the years, I have volunteered at Hôpital Sacré Cœur. I have received a hard-won, heart-felt perspective of deep love for the Haitian people and their desire and effort to build and sustain greater medical capacity amidst trying circumstances in their country. Many of us volunteers have partnered to form an ICU capacity-building team and have collaborated for a few years, leapfrogging our visits to space our time and supporting the providers on the ground with education and experiential support. We are making noticeable and sustainable progress.

**This medical challenge was a heroic effort that lasted my entire week in Milot.** We hoped to liberate our young female patient from the ventilator very soon, discussing and sharing both protocols and checklists with the ICU staff. The patient had made significant progress, weaning down from the initially high ventilator support to where the patient was doing about 50% of the work of breathing independently, and the ventilator was doing about 50% of the needed mechanical support. Perhaps in just 1–2 more days, she could be liberated from the artificial respirator and be out of the greatest danger of in-hospital mortality.

**"Tout moun se moun" is a classic and powerful kretyòl saying, meaning all people are equal, particularly in the eyes of our loving and Providential God. I had been holding this prayer in my heart all week.**

As I finished my Saturday rounds in the ICU, I decided to round one last time on the morning of my return to the United States. As I love to worship with the Milot Catholic community, I decided to round at the hospital early that Sunday morning, before 6:30 a.m. Sunday Mass.

The ICU bed for our patient was empty... I was stunned. I found the overnight ICU nurse and asked what had happened. She shared that the patient had desaturated overnight (rapidly losing life-saving oxygen in her lungs) and could not be successfully resuscitated. Thankfully, the staff cardiologist was in the hospital that evening and participated in the resuscitation effort. My heart broke... as I ran through every scenario that might have transpired in my mind. The nurse sensed my sadness and comforted me with a statement of faith.



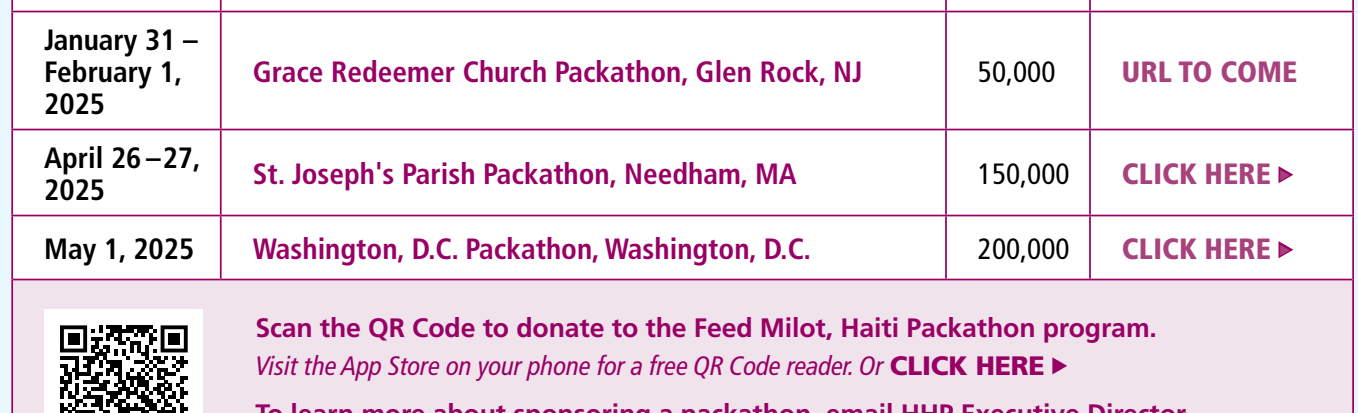
Dr. Christopher Powers and ICU Nurse Mercier

Though we lost this patient, it was the first time I had seen the real possibility of Hôpital Sacré Cœur or Lopital Sakre Kè (the Kretyòl spelling) being capable of this next level of ICU care.

**Our ICU team of volunteers has continued to learn from our experiences and discuss how to grow and sustain this critical care capacity to deliver needed and deserved care to our ICU patients in Milot. It is no longer a dream but an emerging reality, and I hope our collaborative efforts will result in something beautiful and lasting for our Haitian brothers and sisters.**

As the kretyòl proverb states... **"Men anpil chay pa lou." Many hands make light work.** ■

## St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Wyckoff, NJ Packs 103,680 Meals!



Nearly 2.7 million meals and counting! At a recent Haiti Health Promise food packathon, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Wyckoff, NJ, hosted 433 volunteers who packed 103,680 nutrient-rich meals for the families served by Holy Name's Hôpital Sacré Cœur in Milot, Haiti. We are so grateful to Father Stephen Fichter, Pastor, and all of the caring parishioners from the St. Elizabeth community. Your support and generous donations are great blessings to those in need. ■



### UPCOMING PACKATHONS

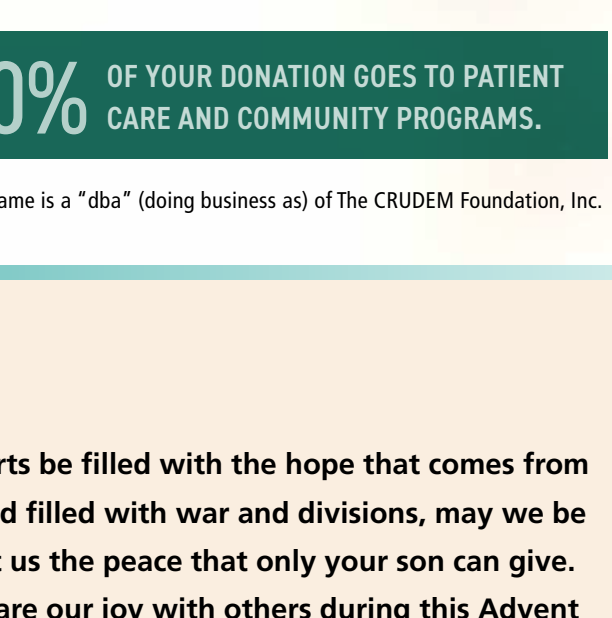
DATE	LOCATION	MEAL GOAL	FOR DETAILS
January 11, 2025	Church of the Presentation Packathon, Upper Saddle River, NJ	50,000	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a> ▶
January 31 – February 1, 2025	Grace Redeemer Church Packathon, Glen Rock, NJ	50,000	<a href="#">URL TO COME</a>
April 26 – 27, 2025	St. Joseph's Parish Packathon, Needham, MA	150,000	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a> ▶
May 1, 2025	Washington, D.C. Packathon, Washington, D.C.	200,000	<a href="#">CLICK HERE</a> ▶

Scan the QR Code to donate to the Feed Milot, Haiti Packathon program. Visit the App Store on your phone for a free QR Code reader. Or [CLICK HERE](#) ▶  
To learn more about sponsoring a packathon, email HHP Executive Director, Dr. Joni Paterson at [paterson@crudem.org](mailto:paterson@crudem.org)

## Hôpital Sacré Cœur's First Online Advent Calendar

### Your Free Hôpital Sacré Cœur's Advent Calendar Is available Online!

- Enjoy 24 days of inspiration.
- Try your luck with **3 contests**. Maybe you will be one of the **100 winners!**
- Watch **3 new videos** about Hôpital Sacré Cœur... **all set to Christmas carol instrumentals.**
- Pray along with **Advent and Christmas prayers.**
- Learn about **Haiti's Christmas traditions.**
- Follow the recipes to **cook 4 traditional Haitian Christmas dishes.**
- Solve an exclusive Hôpital Sacré Cœur **crossword puzzle.**
- Read and see ways **Hôpital Sacré Cœur puts love into action.**



The calendar opens December 1 and has a new door each day through December 24. Follow daily or catch up on the weekends.

Use the QR Code to open the calendar. Remember to bookmark the link and check back each day.

Please share with friends, family, and colleagues. Spread the fun and good news. Have a Healthy, Happy, and Peaceful Christmas season. We are deeply grateful for YOU!



Hôpital Sacré Cœur stands firm as the premier hospital in northern Haiti, a significant economic driver, and the stabilizing force in the region. Thanks to your generous financial support, Hôpital Sacré Cœur has cared for Milot since 1968.

Please, donate today. We could not continue this life-saving mission without you!

Thank you

*David G. Butler, MD*

David G. Butler, MD  
Chairman, Haiti Health Promise of Holy Name

**MAKE A DONATION** 100% OF YOUR DONATION GOES TO PATIENT CARE AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.

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## Advent Prayer

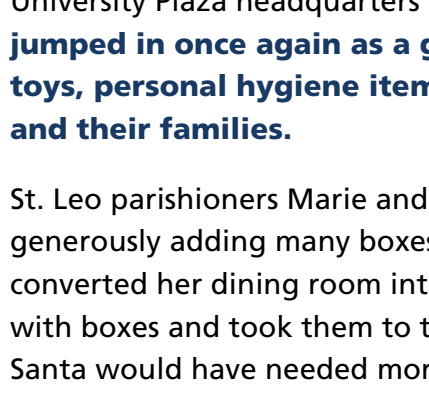
Almighty God, in this season of Advent, may our hearts be filled with the hope that comes from knowing that your promises will come true. In a world filled with war and divisions, may we be instruments of reconciliation and harmony, and grant us the peace that only your son can give. May we rejoice in the good news of salvation and share our joy with others during this Advent season. Help us to emulate and embody the love, peace, and joy that Jesus brings into the world. Amen.

Prayer Offered by Fr. Patrick Okafor, Director of Pastoral Care Department, Holy Name, Teaneck, NJ. ■



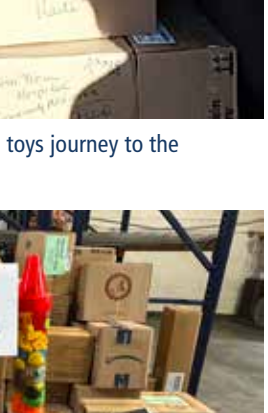
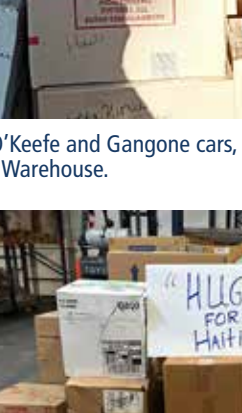
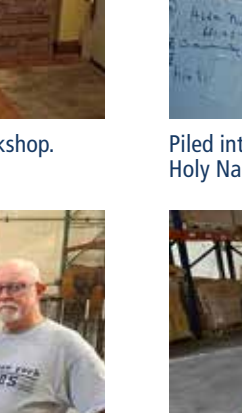
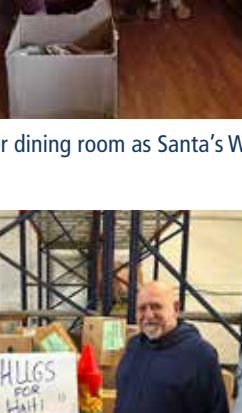
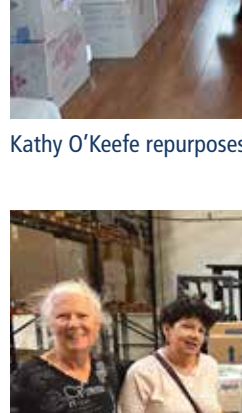
## Haitian Christmas Tradition

As posted on our free online Advent Calendar. Be sure to get yours!



On Christmas Eve, Haitian children don't Tonton Nwèl (Santa Claus) will come at night and fill them with presents — a piece of candy or food or, if they are lucky, a toy. In a country clothed in suffocating poverty, having shoes is a sense of pride for many children... many go without. Toys are often what they can make from materials they find on the ground. Any item they receive is a precious treasure.

Throughout Hôpital Sacré Cœur's long history, children have been prioritized. The thought of a child being empty-handed at Christmas is heartbreaking. When Christmas comes, with the generous support of the Haiti Health Promise community, toys, food, and clothing are shipped to the hospital. With festivities and joy, the staff distributes the cherished gifts to the children in the hospital and the neediest in the community. Often, the children and their parents are speechless as they take into their hands the material gifts and into their hearts the nearly incomprehensible thought that a stranger cares about them. Gratitude abounds for generations. ■



## Toys, Glorious Toys, On Route to Milot!

For many years, amid tremendous regional food insecurity, Hôpital Sacré Cœur management has asked for food for Christmas. This year, primarily due to the successful packathons, Christmas toys again topped the list. The call went out, and the response from the Holy Name and Haiti Health Promise community was inspiring and overwhelming!

Extra-large, beautifully decorated toy drop-off receptacles at Holy Name's Teaneck Park and University Plaza headquarters were filled to the brim. St Leo's Parish, Elmwood Road, NJ, jumped in once again as a generous Santa. They collected over 120 boxes filled with toys, personal hygiene items, and food — answers to the prayers of many children and their families.

St. Leo parishioners Marie and Tom Gangone, Kathy and Mike O'Keefe managed the collection, generously adding many boxes of their donations. So many boxes arrived that Kathy O'Keefe converted her dining room into a toy warehouse. The O'Keefes and Gangones filled their cars with boxes and took them to the Holy Name warehouse to be placed in a shipping container. Santa would have needed more reindeer to pull the inspiring number of toys to Milot.

Later in December, when the toys arrive in Milot, Hôpital Sacré Cœur staff will sort the items by age group and distribute them to pediatric patients and the neediest children in the area. ■



Kathy O'Keefe repurposes her dining room as Santa's Workshop.



Piled into O'Keefe and Gangone cars, the toys journey to the Holy Name Warehouse.



Marie Gangone, Kathy O'Keefe, Tom Gangone, and Mike O'Keefe arrive at the warehouse.



120 boxes are ready to be loaded on a shipping container to Milot.

## Merry Christmas from the Hôpital Sacré Cœur Staff

Please click on the thumbnail to watch the video!



## We've Expanded our Reach!



Haiti Health Promise is now on Bluesky. And, Facebook and X. Please CLICK ON THE ICONS TO FOLLOW US on Social media.



100% OF YOUR DONATION GOES TO PATIENT CARE AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS. PLEASE DONATE TODAY THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!