In 2003 on my first trip to the DR, I met Dr. Antoni Diehl (Dr. Toni), a pediatric cardiologist and tremendously dedicated physician to the underserved Haitians and Dominicans living in the Dominican Republic.

In early conversations with Dr. Toni and in the numerous trips that followed, I learned what he considered to be important in our interactions with the people. I also learned something of what motivated him to continue coming to the DR to work for improved health in poor communities there.

He loved the people and the place, he prioritized caring and respectful relationships, and he encouraged the development of "measurable outcomes" in the medical work of the mission. As I caught Dr. Toni's passion for this work and in my involvement through the years, I often remember his words and example.

I thought of him recently and smiled when I read a report on the Hypertension Program in place for two and a half years as a collaboration between JonasPhilanthropies, Village Church/DRMP, University of Missouri Doctoral Nursing Program, and Light A Candle Foundation (a Dominican NGO).

The success of this program is the result of contributions and commitment of many dedicated people here and there.

It is a wonderful blend of compassionate medical care by both Dominican and US clinicians, measurable outcomes, and engagement of the communities.

This program has forged new trails in batey medicine with its innovative strategies and methods to establish ongoing high-quality care for chronic illness in underserved communities.

The program's success is evaluated through blood pressure measurements collected and analyzed over time, as well as through other indicators such as patient retention, clinic attendance, medication adherence and reports expressed by batey residents.

Dr. Toni always said, "Any day in the batey is a good day." He also closed his prayers by saying, "May all we say and do be pleasing in Your sight."

It is our hope and prayer that the work of this mission is pleasing in God's sight, as Dr. Toni expressed. Dr. Toni passed away in 2015, but his influence and legacy continue to impact the work of DRMP of Village Church.
Hypertension is the second leading cause of death in the DR and unfortunately nearly 35% of the population suffer from this condition. People living in the bateys have very little opportunity for rehabilitation if they are afflicted by debilitating heart attack or stroke.

Knowing that prevention is the key to reducing cardiovascular disease, DRMP established a hypertension program in 2016 to evaluate and manage hypertension. The program drew from lessons learned of earlier DRMP efforts and was developed as Community Based Participatory Research by Maithe Enriquez, APRN, PhD, along with DRMP and our Dominican partner organization, Light A Candle Foundation.

Since 2016, a total of 358 adults have been diagnosed with hypertension and have received antihypertensive medications. There is a notably high level of community engagement in this program. Clinic attendance and patient retention are high. Batey residents express their enthusiastic appreciation for this medical care and ways that it has improved their lives.

We believe that this type of sustained, measured, high-quality healthcare has not previously existed in the bateys. It provides a model for management of chronic illness in developing country settings. One manuscript has been published on the results of this program and another is in progress.

Analyses of data by Dr. Enriquez and MU doctoral nursing students reveal a reduction in blood pressure over time:

![Figure 1: Mean Blood Pressure Over Time for Adults in the Program for at least 1 Year](image1)

![Figure 2: Percentage of Mean Adherence to Hypertension Medication and Hypertension Cases Over Time](image2)
MULTIPLYING LIGHT STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT HEART HEALTH

Multiplying Light, a collaboration between DRMP and our Dominican partner organization Light A Candle Foundation, is an educational program for young batey residents that aims to increase health knowledge and develop leadership skills. Multiplying Light students attend sessions to learn about various health topics that impact batey communities such as hygiene and disease prevention, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, and heart health.

We recently completed a session on heart health that extended into 11 bateys and included 230 Multiplying Light student participants. The students took pre- and post-tests to measure the improvement of heart health knowledge. As a result of interviews with program participants and their areas of interest for future learning, we are preparing a new program to reinforce and expand heart health concepts. The students will be charged with leadership assignments to improve the health in their communities and work with Light A Candle doctors to carry out these roles.
**PLEASE JOIN US FOR CELEBRATION DOMINICANA**

DRMP of Village Church Presents

**Celebration Dominicana**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2019 | 7PM**

**THE MADRID THEATRE**

3810 MAIN STREET | KANSAS CITY, MO 64111

**SPONSORSHIPS**

$300 | FRIEND (TICKETS FOR 2 GUESTS)
$500 | SUPPORTER (TICKETS FOR 4 GUESTS)
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$2,500 | BENEFACTOR (RESERVED TABLE FOR 8 GUESTS)
$5,000 | SPONSOR (PRIORITY TABLE FOR 8 GUESTS)
$10,000 | UNDERWRITER (2 PRIORITY TABLES FOR 16 GUESTS)

**TICKETS**

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS | $75
18 & UNDER | $25

**WWW.DRMP2019.EVENTBRITE.COM**

Celebration Dominicana makes it possible for the DRMP to continue our vital work of providing medical care and health education to improve the health and well-being of children and families living in impoverished communities in the DR. Tickets and sponsorships include dinner, open bar and a wonderful night of dancing with your friends.

**For tickets, sponsorships and other information, visit:**


**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE**

Construction of Light A Candle’s new Centro de Salud Comunitario (Community Health Center) is progressing ahead of schedule. This past March, Light A Candle received a generous donation of nearly ½ acre of land from the township of Caleta (four miles southwest of La Romana) to build a for a much-need community health center. The health center will serve approximately 16,500 low-income residents living in the surrounding area. The building will include a health clinic, social service department, dormitory & computer lab for scholarship students (nursing students from bateys and other scholarship students), and other related community services.

**JOIN US FOR GIVINGTHANKS IN THE DR**

DRMP’s first annual is launching its 1st annual Givergthanks Dominican Republic from Nov. 22 – 27, 2019. We will head to La Romana to help with construction of Light A Candle’s new Community Health Center, assist with healthcare and education work in the bateys and help host a medical clinic. Thanksgiving is on Nov. 28th so team members can be home in time for the holiday. Some members are choosing to stay the rest of the week to celebrate Thanksgiving Dominican-style! For more information, contact Lora Garrison (contact below).

**THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS**

The DRMP is grateful for your support in helping to achieve our mission of serving our brothers and sisters in the Dominican Republic.

For more information, please contact:

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