



KALINAGO COLUMN

May—August 2009

Salybia Mission Project

Recruited 127
New Members
This Semester,
Breaking the
Old Record by
Over 20 New
Recruits!
Thanks for
Joining!

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WHAT IS THE SALYBIA MISSION PROJECT?

In March of 2002, Ross University School of Medicine professor Dr. Worrell Sanford posed a challenge to students in his Problem-Based Learning (PBL) group. He asked them to organize a clinic in the Carib Territory for people in need. Despite the demands of their academic pursuits, the group of students took on the challenge and gave birth to the Salybia Mission Project (SMP). SMP is an independent, non-sectarian,

non-profit student organization dedicated to providing healthcare to the Kalinago people (the indigenous Carib Indian tribe) in Dominica. SMP gives Ross students the opportunity of direct clinical exposure with Dr. Sanford and other physicians, 6-8 times a semester, on Saturday clinics which form the core of SMP's outreach efforts. For more information please visit: www.salybia.org or email smp@rossmed.edu.dm

*Let's Give a Round of Applause to the
Outgoing E-board Coordinators for a job well done this semester:*

Advisor: Mr. John Hawley
Directors: Nadine Hewamudalige & Spandana Nallapati
Secretary: Tamara Augustine
Treasurer: Mary Tierney
Clinical Directors: Parichart Koonkitti & Stephanie Young
Clinical: Jeff Chou, Jessica Gonzales, Chris Hancock, Hiep Nguyen, Anna Wani
Supplies: Shannon Graves
W.H.I.: Raman Muhar & Kimberly Roskam
5k: Robert Etheridge, Shannon Graves, & Johnquia Patterson
Dodgeball: Christopher Betts & Crystal Yee



Webmasters: Asiya Hussain
Newsletter: Jason Tsang
Fundraising: Asiya Hussain & Derrick Moriarty
Recruitment: Marjon Vatanchi

A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

Jeff Chou, 3rd Semester, Clinical Coordinator

He looked up from his lunch and told me that he wanted to be a doctor someday.

He was a local Kalinago boy, somewhere around 8 or 9 years old, who I met at a SMP Health Fair down in the territory. While waiting with his mom to see the doctor, he sat down next to me on a bench and stared at the camera that hung from my neck. When I offered to take his picture, he nodded eagerly and flashed me a huge smile. It was one of those spontaneous, 100% heartfelt kind of smiles that kids do best. When I was done, he shyly asked me for my camera so that he could take a picture of me. That slightly blurry image of me sitting on a hardwood bench in a small, makeshift clinic is a testament to the extraordinary places that fate and opportunity can take you if given half a chance.



Flashback to three years ago, and you'll see that I was stuck in that unfortunate purgatory of being unfulfilled where I was but not knowing what to do about it. I was both unchallenged at work and

“...extraordinary places that fate and opportunity can take you if given half a chance.”

uncertain about my life's direction. I still remember how I used to stare out of my little workstation window at the end of my shift. Each day seemed identical to all ones before, and I wondered if this was how the rest of my twenties would turn out. Where were the excitement and the adventure? When was it my turn to live a life less ordinary? Luckily for me, the chance I was looking for arrived when I was invited to study at Ross. Fast-forward a few years, and here I am, volunteering with an organization that brings essential medical care to a unique population found nowhere else in the world. I can honestly tell you that the first time I put on that Salybia shirt, checked my stethoscope, and packed my penlight for a clinic, I finally felt it. That spark of inspiration was welcoming me to the rest of my life.



Leave home.

Try something new.

You might find an experience that's all kinds of wonderful.

SATURDAY CLINICS

Paul Lam, 2nd Semester, SMP Member

This was my first semester being part of Salybia, and so far I have enjoyed every experience with it. During my undergraduate years, I was an active volunteer at a student run free clinic, and so my strong interest in providing health care to underprivileged populations carried into medical school here at Ross.

This semester, I attended the Saturday clinics twice and both times were exceptional experiences. Before joining Salybia, I wondered if I could sacrifice half of my Saturdays to the clinic when I could instead be studying, but after my 1st and 2nd experiences, I realized that it was time well spent.

The minute you walk into clinic, you get the opportunity to immerse yourself in the clinical aspects of your medical training. Having completed my 1st semester a month prior to my first clinic, my patient interviewing skills were not as strong as I



wished them to be. Although 1st semester DPS gave a good introduction into HPI's, the clinic provides a chance to actually apply what you have learned. Being able to practice these skills outside of class and in a low pressure environment is one of the most useful aspects of being part of Salybia. These patient interaction skills will be more emphasized and throughout the semesters.

After the initial interview, you are given the chance to present the case to the doctor working at the clinic that Saturday. While presenting, you are constructively critiqued and taught better ways to present a case. From using the proper medical terms to more effectively analyzing the patient's situation, the doctor spends a lot of time showing us ways in which we can improve our techniques. While going through each case, the doctor brings in information that we have learned from each of the classes we are taking. From biochemistry to pharmacology, we are given a very broad way of looking at the patient's condition, something I found very enriching about attending clinic; it made me feel better spending half my Saturday at clinic without thinking about having to miss those hours for studying. I think it is also a very useful way of integrating and applying the concrete information we learn in our classes into a clinical setting. In my opinion, it makes the learning process a lot more interesting and effective.

Overall, I look forward to the following semester with Salybia. I hope to gain useful knowledge about all aspects of medicine, and continue my passion in providing care to those who need it the most.

Ana Rosado, 1st Semester, SMP Member

This was my first experience participating in a clinic, and I'm glad that it was. Being a first semester with minimal clinical experience, these clinics gave me the opportunity to practice doing HPIs as well as basic clinical skills like pulse, BP, and blood glucose. You get paired with an upper semester student, which allows you to interact and observe so that you can become confident that you are competent to do an HPI. Doing the HPI with an actual patient was a great learning tool. You can read all about taking an HPI from notes, but you cannot truly learn until you do one.

“It was great to see how our donations can go towards helping make somebody's life different.”

On our way back, we stopped to visit a young man who is a paraplegic sponsored by SMP and gave him art supplies to help him pass the time. We also gave him a wheelchair for him to use as transportation. It was great to see how our donations can go towards helping make somebody's life different.

Overall, I found the experience to be very educational, as well as humbling. I will definitely be attending more clinics in the future.

A LETTER FROM CHRIS HANCOCK, SMP INITIATIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Hancock, 2nd Semester, Clinical Coordinator

Hello everyone, my name is Chris Hancock and I am the Director of SMP Initiative, the new branch of the Salybia Mission Project in the Bahamas. When I decided to leave Dominica for the Bahamas I could not contemplate leaving Salybia behind me. I am going to bring together current and non-members of Salybia who are making the move to the Bahamas. My plan is to identify a population on Grand Bahama that is underserved



and in need of our help. Together we will bring them the necessary healthcare that they need to live happy, healthy lives through health fairs and clinics similar to what Salybia does in Dominica.

We do not know yet exactly what the health needs are in the Bahamas; it may be a greater need for preventative screening or for better education about living healthy lifestyles for youths. SMP Initiative will strive to improve the condition of whatever the health needs in the Bahamas are that we can identify. There is an opportunity here to bring the mission of SMP to another group of people in need. I've already assembled a small group of both current SMP members as well as some new faces to get this project rolling. However, it will take a great deal of hard work and dedication to our mission to make this project a success. So I ask you for your help. Together we can make a positive difference in the lives of others and bring some of that Salybia magic to the Grand Bahamas!

Coordinator's Note: For those who wish to contact Chris with any questions, suggestions, or donations of supplies or capital, he can be reached at Hancock.Chris@gmail.com

PHLEBOTOMY CLINIC

David Y. Lee, 1st Semester, SMP Member

Like many popular events held by the campus clubs, the Salybia phlebotomy clinic started with a long line of students waiting outside classroom 2. That was when I knew it was at the right place.

As an incoming first semester, I had already heard about the great deeds that Salybia had done before I had arrived on the island, and I was looking forward to join the first event of the semester that the group put on. Dr. Mallik welcomed us to Salybia and soon jumped into his lecture on the risks and indications for IVs and blood tests. My fellow classmates and I listened warily as we were to get what was, to many of us, our first hands-on experience with a basic clinical skill.



At the ICM building, the lessons continued with many of our skilled instructors. They detailed us with the precise procedures they used, from making the alcohol swabs, to the individual veins they preferred. Hanging on to all of this information, we held the needles in hand and pushed into our favorite veins.

Of course, things don't always run as smoothly as we'd like. On our first tries, many of us missed our mark. I must have nicked the side of the vein I was aiming for, gathering only a spray of red fluid in my test tube, while on my friend's try, he seemed not to have gone deep enough into the vein. After our first tries, many of us were left holding only empty Vacutainers.

Undeterred, the students gathered around and exchanged tips. Our instructors, as well, gave us hints garnered from years of experience as EMTs and paramedics. We held the last Vacutainer we had left, and as a group, we went over step by step the procedure for the venipuncture. I palpated the vein, angled the needle at thirty degrees, and gently aimed the needle in. All of a sudden, I felt a sudden release of pressure in the needle, and the red, colored water flowed into my vial.

I had just accomplished my first venipuncture, marking in my mind the beginning of my clinical career. Thanks to Salybia, I had just learned what will doubtlessly be an integral skill in my medical education.

THE ROAD TO SALYBIA

Hiep Nguyen, 3rd Semester, Clinical Coordinator

I get motion sickness pretty easily. I turn my head too fast or look cross-eyed for just a moment, and it's another Dramamine down my throat and a day of unproductive drowsiness in my study schedule. You might say that the winding roads to the Salybia Clinic have a way of wrecking havoc on me. However, I can also see this road as a metaphorical path through medical school.



Just like that road to the Salybia Clinic, medical school has been an incredibly challenging experience for me, more so with being away from my family. There have been days when all the homesickness, and mental and psychological pains have manifested themselves into literal, physical pain, an experience that I think we've all felt. Nevertheless, those who have been and will be successful at Ross are the ones who forge forward, despite the pain.

Since my first semester, the Salybia Clinic has served as a reminder for me as to why I am going back to school and changing careers, why I must overcome many challenges, and why I am more than 2,500 miles away from my family. When times are rough and the roads feel out of control, serving the patients at the clinic reminds me that I am here to pursue my life-long dream of becoming a compassionate physician, devoted to improving the health of my patients. However, I also hope that my endeavors may encourage my own children to discover their own future paths. My hope is that these experiences will show them that the world is much bigger and greater than the bubble in which they live.

The road continues to unravel, and I continue to cycle through good days and challenging days. However, the days ahead are becoming more and more meaningful as I come into contact with more and more patients. The Salybia Clinic has not only given me new-found

meaning and purpose while I have attended Ross University, but it has also given me a new goal: to return to Dominica with my family and volunteer at the clinic as that compassionate physician.

FOUR SEMESTERS IN 20 KILOMETERS

Crystal Bass, 4th Semester, SMP Member

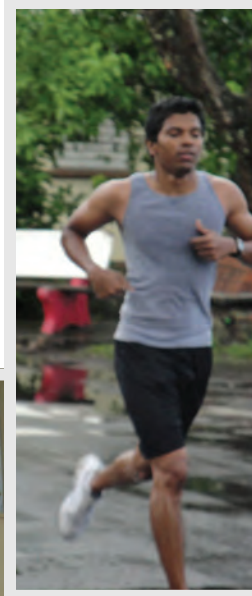
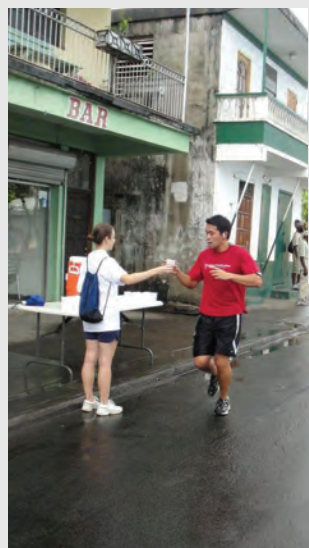
My shirt was plastered to my skin with a mixture of sweat and rain. Ahead lay the most treacherous stretch of the race: the winding, crumbling asphalt road that comes just a few hundred meters before the entrance to the Cabrits National Park. I knew I wasn't last but I'd already seen several runners dash past me and now I was alone, wet, thirsty and tired. It was seven-something on a Sunday morning and I should've been in bed sleeping. Why then, was I running in the rain?

It was after my first Salybia 5K on a bright Sunday last July, that I noticed something curious. The course of my 5K seemed to parallel the course of my semester. After an initial burst of energy that got me over the hill and past the Annex with the rest of the pack, my pace slowed and by the time I got to the Purple Turtle, I'd stopped running altogether, wondering what had possessed me to even attempt a 5K. Similarly, I'd begun my first semester at Ross with exuberance, excited finally to be pursuing the thing I'd wanted for as long as I could remember. But after the first mini, my momentum began to slow, and by mini three, I wondered if I'd be able to finish at all. I finished that race in 33 minutes 30 seconds; not first, but not dead last as I'd feared, and I made it through my first semester, with not quite as many A's as I would have liked, but with my head held high. Every subsequent semester I'd enter the 5K, finishing faster (30 minutes in second semester, 27 minutes in third) and making it further before having to rest, all the while noting a peculiar sort of synchronicity with school. Each semester I'd hit the ground running, but somewhere along the way, I'd lose my stamina and my stride would falter. What was I doing this for, I'd wonder sometimes, doubting my ability to maintain my pace. But I'd developed a bit of a superstition: If I could make it through the 5K, I'd make it through the semester. If I could just keep going, eventually, I'd reach my goal.



It had been a tough run but I was almost there, almost at the end of the race. I could see everyone waiting, waving hands and shouting encouragement. I'd made it this far; there were only a few meters left and it was my final 5K, the last one I'd run on Dominica. I had to keep going. How would the rest of the semester turn out if I gave up now? So I wiped the wetness from my face. I took a deep breath, sped up and ran toward the finish line.

A SEMESTER OF SALYBIA



A SEMESTER OF SALYBIA



SALYBIA 5K



This semester, the Salybia 5K was staged on July 26th. Despite the rain and the less-than-pleasant weather, the event was, once again, a success, raising \$4,125 for the Salybia Mission Project. Great job everyone! Below is a list of the top three winners for each category with their times.

Men

Alfredo Lloreda 17:59

Sam Seymore 18:01

Imran Ally 19:57

Faculty

Dr. Beevers 18:48

Dr. Hernandez 27:36

Women

Iris Moore 20:10

Florette Sime 22:25

Tatiana Moroz 23:42

DODGE BALL

Chris Betts, 2nd Semester, Dodge Ball Coordinator

On June, 20th we held our Dodge Ball tournament with a new addition: the SMP Dodge Ball Trophy. A total of 12 teams came out to battle. In first place was the 4th-semester team, *Smoke You In the Face*, who crushed their way to the top. The 2nd place team, *Your Next Loss*, were a group of agile 1st semesters who lost one round but fought back all the way to the final battle. The championship game was a classic 1st vs. 4th semester battle, but *Smoke You In the Face* came out on top. According to the winning team, they've played Dodge Ball for the last few semesters, but never ended up winning until this semester, holding up high the Dodge Ball trophy.

As a post-tournament special was an exciting game between the faculty and the winning team. Dr. Grogan, Dr. Hernandez, Dr. Barremkala, and Dr. Bergeron joined forces to battle against *Smoke You In the Face*. In a surprising upset, the faculty team came through to win! Both teams put on a good show. It was a fun-filled event with music, a thrift sale, a raffle contest, and some memorable matches. In total the Dodge Ball tournament raised \$1,030 for the Salybia Mission Project.



ROSS COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

Johnequia Patterson, 3rd Semester, 5K Coordinator

On Tuesday, July 7th, 2009 Salybia along with SNMA (Student National Medical Association) hosted the 2nd tri-annual Ross Community Health Fair on the campus of Ross University. The fair was designed for students, faculty, staff, and other family members to come out and get their blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, BMI, and eyes checked.

There are many health fairs sponsored by various Ross organizations that reach out to the people of Dominica, but this is the only health fair that is designed to encourage the Ross community as a whole to check their health status on a regular basis. It is geared towards helping the Ross community become more aware of any potential health risks that they may face.

The Community Health Fair was a huge success with more than 100 students, faculty, and staff in attendance.

ADVISOR'S REPORT

John Hawley, SMP Advisor

I am happy to report some very encouraging news to all of our Salybia Mission Project members, supporters, founders, and alumni. At the beginning of this month, August 2009, an election was held on the Carib Territory to select a new chief of the Kalinago people, and Garnette Joseph was elected for a second time as the Chief. Garnette was the chief at the time that the new Salybia Clinic was conceived. Under his leadership the land was acquired and construction began. He was close enough to the founders of SMP that he served on our Board of Directors. His departure as chief delivered a setback to the Clinic project which it could not overcome.



Even though he was out of office for the last five years, Garnette continued to do what he could to advance the completion of the new building. About two years ago two large grants became available to complete the building, but each required that a committee be established

to oversee the project. The committee was established with representatives of the two funders—the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives and the Christian Children's Fund, members of the Carib Council and the Kalinago community. I was asked to serve as a representative of the Salybia Mission Project in recognition of our advocacy for health care in the Territory. Garnette was chosen to chair the committee because of his dedication to the project and the high regard in which he is held.

Under his leadership the committee recruited an engineer to assist in hiring a contractor and to assure the quality of the construction. We hired Hilford John as the general contractor, we monitored the progress of the construction, and we reviewed the expenditures to assure proper use of the grants. Garnette called and conducted all of the meetings of the committee and provided the leadership that assured that the project would proceed.

Unfortunately, when the CFLI and CCF funds were exhausted, the sitting chief disbanded the committee and the project ground to a halt. People throughout the Territory and, indeed, throughout Dominica have been frustrated at the continuing failure to complete the Clinic, but it seemed no one was capable of resolving it. Chief Garnette Joseph is determined to bring this project to a successful completion, opening the Clinic we have all been waiting for, and SMP will stand with him in his determination.

SALYBIA WISH LIST

The Salybia free health clinic is always in need of medications and disposable/durable medical goods. When you travel home over break, keep some extra space in your suitcase and bring back supplies for the clinic. Please ensure medications have at least 3 months of shelf life remaining. Drop off your donations in the SMP Donations Bin just to your right as you enter the library, or you may contact the SMP Supplies Coordinator directly at: ShannonGraves@rossmed.edu.dm. We greatly appreciate anything and everything you give. Thanks!

Medications:

- Antifungals
- Antibiotics (basic)
- Benadryl tablets
- Hypertension medication
- Oral rehydration salts
- Zantac

Disposable/Durable Medical Goods:

- Crepe Bandage
- Betadine solution
- Disposable probes for thermometers
- KY Jelly Lubricant
- Pampers, adult and XXL
- Selsun blue
- Shampoos and conditioners
- Skin lotion
- Spatulas
- Syringes (3cc, 5cc, 10cc)
- Urine catheter equipment

A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO SPONSORED SMP DURING THE PAST SEMESTER!



CABRITS DIVE CENTER

NEW CHARLES PHARMACY

Port of Call Restaurant & Bar

Adaj Restaurant

Picard Grocery

Springfield Trading, Ltd.

James Store

NEED A RIDE TO THE AIRPORT?

WANT TO SUPPORT THE CARIB TERRITORY AND A KALINAGO MAN?

Ryan, the official Salybia Mission Project Driver will be available for Airport pick-ups and drop-offs this break! Ryan has been providing SMP transport for over six years and is a very trustworthy man. He loves to talk about his people and the territory so just ask him some questions and you will learn a lot.

Driver: Ryan
Cost: \$40/person
Call: 295-7705