

On Feb. 16-23, 2007, Pat Laudisio led an Insight Trip to Petit Trou after a long absence. With her went her husband Antonio, Leslie Sosnowski from St. John's Church in Boulder, Jennie March-Aleu (Photo-Journalist), Aimee Heckel (Staff writer for the Daily Camera in Boulder), and Warren Berggren, MD (Board member and Research Coordinator). Here are excerpts from Pat's trip report:

It was Carnival time; and for the first time in three years, people were able to celebrate. So, in spite of Fr. Kesner's best intentions, both the school and women's center were closed on Monday and Tuesday. This mission was the opportunity for Warren to begin the first survey for further program development, based on the criteria established for the UN Millennium Development Goals. From my perspective, this was the most important part of the trip. It was also a personal opportunity for me to get a glimpse of how community development work begins. The high point for me was the moment I stepped into the classroom, just as Warren was ending his full day of teaching the women what the survey was about and how they could go out to collect the necessary information. The women stood up, sang a hymn, one woman offered a prayer and then they picked up their folders with surveys and sharpened pencils and walked out the door to begin their task.

Seven Cuban doctors came to stay with us during this three-day period. This gave us the opportunity to learn more about their work in this region and how they are connected to the larger network of Cuban doctors in Haiti. Dr. Elieser Gonzalez Reina and Alina Hernandez Sanchez, nurse, are currently living in the staff house at St. Paul's and providing ongoing medical care to the community. They are enthusiastic about making the connection with CHP and greatly appreciate having the medical supplies that were left by the January Medical Mission group. They can often feel quite isolated.

Our group included a team of journalist and photojournalist, Aimee Heckel and Jennie March-Aleu, who came to gather material for a series of articles in the Boulder Daily Camera. Leslie, Aimee and Jennie were able to take walks, visit people in their homes, visit the potential water sources, participate in a wonderful Sunday service, observe part of a community meeting and two teaching sessions about the survey, watch a soccer game, meet the women from the Couture class who were wearing the dresses (uniforms) which they had made. They got to dance in the streets of Petit Trou on the night of Carnival, and do some coloring and play games with the children.