

## **The MedNet/TEMS DOMINICA PROJECTS**

### **Introduction**

At a time when the nation of Dominica is struggling through a situation of unprecedented devastation, a significant number of its professional nationals reside and work throughout the Bahamas. Pertinent to their presence in the Bahamas, is the contribution of those in the field of medicine; especially in service through MedNet/TEMS. Such is their dedication, it is impossible to overlook the immediate need to identify with the conditions that adversely impact the people.

### **History**

In a 1984 historical expose on Dominica, Jean Casimir, the Haitian historian, noted that Dominica is best represented as a Maroon Society, rather than a Plantation Society; the importance of which is expressed in the uncompromised nationalism and dignity of its people. The national sense of ownership is unprecedented, and the regard for its ecological heritage and history in the region is exemplary. Dominica was the last island in the Caribbean to be colonised; but even so, there were factors that did not allow for the conventional exploitation of the island:

- (1) There were settlement of Maroons in the interior
- (2) The rugged mountainous terrain confounded the British forces
- (3) The Maroon population increased in spite of attempts to wipe them out
- (4) Survival tactics of the indigenous people out lasted the cruelty of the British

The heart of who Dominicans are may be best understood through the persona of the Maroon reality: a people prepared to face adversity and to surmount the odds against it.

### **Perspective**

Dominica has one of the largest agricultural economies of the Caribbean region; a context that goes a long way in the fierce protection of their individual and national sense of freedom and independence.

Dominicans are a loving, generous, hardworking people; they always aim to set a high moral standard. There are fewer problems with the Dominican migrant nationals than their counterpart throughout the region. In addition to Dominicans contributing to stability and productivity, their persona sets the parameter/expectation when partnering with them, whatever the context. In as much as they begin from a positive work ethic and moral rectitude, very little or no effort is wasted on them.

IT IS IN THIS REGARD the principals of the MedNet/TEMS Group of Companies initiated a response to the hurricane relief to Dominica.

## The Team

Dr. Alphaeus Allick (TEMS), Associate Clinical Director of Emergency Medicine and Dr. Livingstone Malcolm (MedNet), Clinical Pastoral Counselor were appointed to represent the companies in facilitating two projects in the community of Wesley, Dominica.

The Team left on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, and returned Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

## Accommodations

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February:** Arrived in Antigua at about 3:30pm – and had to overnight. Hotel arrangements were made, but due to the high volume of tourists on the island, our rooms were given to other guests. After much searching, and with the help of colleagues from the Dominican Diaspora in Antigua, we got lodging for the night in a private home, the Spencer Family.

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February:** The flight to Dominica was 6:30am; at 7:00am we arrived at the Melville Airport, a short distance from Wesley. We were met by Dr. Allick's father who had already prepared a scrumptious breakfast ready for famished travelers as we 'hit the ground running', two miles away from our first assignment at the Northeast Comprehensive High School. Mid afternoon we proceeded to Roseau where adequate arrangements were made for our housing.

## The Projects

Two projects were identified;

- 1. BUS STOP:** This by no stretch of the imagination is a casual provision. The bus stop is just outside the ONE comprehensive school that services several large communities in the North Eastern District over a 25 km stretch; with just under 400 students enrolled. In addition to students having to wait long periods of time for their transport vehicles, Dominica is a rainforest and the weather is highly unpredictable. The bus shelter is the only provision for students to wait and to be protected from the elements. The space is large enough to accommodate quite a few students at a time. The restoration of the Bus Stop is significant for students and the whole community.
- 2. WESLEY 'PLATFORM':** The independent spirit of the Dominican people is demonstrated, locally, in many ways. At the heart of every community there is a common space where anyone could, at anytime, call an assembly on issues pertinent to their common good and wellbeing. The Wesley Platform is centrally located at a major intersection of the Community. It is unique in its structure, and holds much history and pride among the people.

In addition to the restoring the structure, public restrooms will be built. This added feature will serve the community 24/7, and will be overseen by the Village Council.

The crucial importance of these projects should not be underestimated. Already, the hope generated by the prospects of having the projects restored is most encouraging.

## Cheque Payable

In a meeting with the members of the Village Council, held at centre stage of the community, and others around, a cheque of **\$ 8,000.00**, was presented on behalf of Dr. Charles Diggiss, our Boss and Principal of the MedNet / TEMS Group of Companies. Opportunity was taken to mention the work being done by Dr. Charles Diggiss, and his interest in promoting the projects.

The anticipated success of the projects rests with Mr. Alphaeus Allick Sr, father of Dr. Alphaeus Allick. Outside of his competence to complete the projects, Mr. Allick is a Justice of the Peace and a community activist who is well known and respected by all. Needless to say, he is an active advisor to the Village Council. There is every assurance the projects will be done expeditiously and within budget.

## Other Activities

### 1. Northeast Comprehensive School:

- a. Drs. Allick and Malcolm addressed the students during the morning assembly. Dr. Allick, a past student, admonished students to keep in mind that no situation or circumstances should rob them of taking advantage of the right to be the best they can be. He further advised that crises can bring out the best in people, revealing in them strengths and talents which they never realized before.
- b. Dr. Malcolm pointed to the need for teachers and students to discover the value of showing support for each other; he pointed out the importance of sharing confidence in each other and how it helps significantly in overcoming unprecedented conditions causing emotional and physical upheaval.

Later in the morning two separate sessions, 2 hours each, were held with students and form teachers:

- a. Dr. Allick met with the 5<sup>th</sup> Form and shared with them tools and modules for personal growth and strategizing, especially with regards to examination preparedness and rethinking and redirecting negative views of the aftermath of the hurricane.
- b. Dr. Malcolm met with the group of students from the school population who were considered to be problem individuals. In his presentation he dealt with: **“The Journey to better/best...Discovering personal worth and value”**. Some of the primary questions were: Why? When? Where? Support/Resources?

## **2. Sabbath Days:**

- Dr. Allick, a Seventh Day Adventist, spent the Sabbath at his local church, where, being the featured speaker, he furthered his greeting and message of hope with the people. During this time he presented the Wesley SDA church with a substantial cheque from parishioners and supporters in Nassau.
- Dr. Malcolm, a Methodist Minister, preached at two congregations, and addressed the island wide Men's Rally in the afternoon. On all occasions, the purposes for our being on island and those we represent were fully explained. Dr. Malcolm also presented a cheque for funds raised through Churches/friends in Nassau.

In all cases, the people requested that their thanks and appreciation be conveyed to Dr. Charles Diggiss and those who willingly supported the renewal effort in Dominica.

## **3. Wesley High School:**

- Monday morning Drs. Allick and Malcolm address the Wesley High School, an all girl school, Roseau. Once again Dr. Allick addressed the conditions acutely associated with the disruption currently affecting the way of life in island. Teachers and students were encouraged to pay attention to the new opportunities that are intimately a part of the process of survival. The truth is, the tactics to be adopted today, will be useful for the rest of their development.
- Dr. Malcolm used historical data to show where the school used to be, thirty years before, and how fresh bold steps had to be taken to encourage students and teachers. The students were admonished to careful not to laugh at someone who has a dream of becoming something which, for the moment seems impossible. Dreams are usually forged out of difficult circumstances and by the most unlikely persons.

## **4. Princess Margaret Hospital**

- Dr. Allick attended meetings with the director of Emergency Medicine Services, Dr. Mallet Marie, and the Medical Chief of Staff Dr. Ruby Blanc.
- He toured the construction site for the new Emergency Room funded by the Chinese government, and give critical advice with respect to logistics and equipment. He held discussions, reflected on challenges faced during/after the storm, and the ongoing deficits. The ongoing goal for Dr. Allick, with the help of the Dominica Bahamas Association, to access more needed funds to provide further assistance to a distressed medical system.

## **Conversations:**

Throughout the rest of the day strategic visits were made; among which was a three and a half luncheon meeting with Mr. David Edward, consultant and program developer for international companies. A number of projects were discussed that could give individuals and groups a head start to recovery and for future income.

The day ended with dinner the evening with a small group of men. Interesting conversations.

**Community Base:**

Dr. Alphaeus Allick is a Village Hero. The demonstrated love, respect and support for his presence among the people was phenomenal. This was further extended when he went to Roseau where, for two years, he worked in Dominica; there he made a name for himself as a caring and a knowledgeable physician. His persona gave credit to the proposed projects.

In each instance, Dr. Malcolm was remembered for his contributions and presence in the island. Though not like the enthusiasm for Dr. Allick, there was a grand reception for him.

**CONCLUSION**

There was much more value to this trip than a monetary donation; its scope went far beyond the projects. This trip brought hope to people who were absorbed in the overwhelming aftermath of a disastrous hurricane. It brought encouragement and a sense of family to people who needed to be reminded that they were still in the hearts and minds of fellow countrymen, diasporans, and members of the Caribbean Community. It revealed the greater power and responsibility that we as professionals wield, with respect to making an impact in our society. It is further humbling and encouraging to know that we work with a leader with a generous heart, and is not afraid to demonstrate his willingness to support the human effort in creating a new space in time.

Thank you Dr. Charles Diggiss.

Submitted by: Drs Alphaeus Allick and Livingstone Malcolm  
3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2018

# TEMS/Mednet Dominica Project

Dr Alphaeus Allick/Dr Livingstone Malcolm



*First Visit – North East Comprehensive  
School (Formerly St Andrews High School)*





*The Gift*



*The Handover*



*Wesley High School Visit*



*The Collaboration of Minds*



*Community Outreach/Parishioners*

