

# The Worm Project

## Combating World Hunger Through Parasite Removal

Newsletter

Issue No 4 Spring 2013

I'm continually amazed at how God uses the Albendazole donated by The Worm Project and made possible by your generous contributions. Below is a brief but touching story we received from one of our partners about a young orphan boy suffering from intestinal worms in an orphanage in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

The picture of Pierre before treatment and soon after his diagnosis of failure to thrive tells it all. Look closely at the picture of him before treatment. Look at his eyes. I see a little boy in trouble. Notice the distended belly, most likely a result of intestinal worms that were stealing nutrients critical for his physical and mental development. Without the intervention of medical volunteers from People for Haiti and the deworming medicine from The Worm Project, Pierre might not have survived. Look at the bright eyes of Pierre in the picture on the right four months after treatment and holding the same picture of him before treatment. I sit here looking at the picture

of this precious boy and tears of joy stream down my face. But these tears quickly turn to tears of sadness as I think of all the poor children that will not be treated because their life was not worth the 1.4 cents it costs us to purchase one tablet of Albendazole to rid their body of parasitic worms.

Our partners are willing to go into the remotest areas of the jungle and give children new life in the form of a small pill and offering them everlasting life by telling them of God's promise. But they need your help. I promise to continue to share the stories your generous giving will make possible and we can rejoice together as we read about God's children saved by a little deworming pill.

Blessings,

*Gary Delp*

*The Worm Project Board President*



Photo and story courtesy of People for Haiti

### Pierre from Port-au-Prince

This is Pierre Wendelson. People for Haiti, a non-governmental organization that provides medical care to the people devastated by the earthquake in Haiti, found Pierre in a Port-au-Prince orphanage with failure to thrive due to his intestinal worms. After treatment, 4 months later, we were able to return to the same orphanage. As the picture shows, he is a whole new kid - healthy, happy, thriving (and apparently a Steelers fan).



## Stories from the Field: Firsthand Accounts from Partners of The Worm Project: **The MAMA Project, Inc.**

### Childhood With Intestinal Parasites

By Herman Sagastume, MD

*Field Director, MAMA Project & Board Member, The Worm Project*

When we speak about intestinal parasites, it is hard for us in the USA to believe that humans can have these inside their bodies. We fail to understand why this happens. But when you live in poor countries like Honduras, where I grew up, many families have very few resources and intestinal parasites are common. It was a common occurrence in my childhood, as well. I remember our grandmother often took us to the health clinic for a dose of deworming medicine. My brothers, cousins and I knew that in the days and months that followed after taking this medicine, we would have more energy to play and go to school and we ate more food.

We had eliminated some of the parasites that were robbing us of our energy, our focus at school, and our food. We didn't realize that this small pill was also benefiting our growth and development. After a few months we return to the same problem. We had more parasites due to the environment in which we lived. There was a lot of pollution and we consumed unsafe water. Again my grandma or my parents would take us to get our deworming dose. It never tasted well but we knew we needed it. My childhood was a constant struggle with these infections and other diseases that, fortunately, aren't a problem with children here in the USA.

Growing up, my mother always encouraged us to help others. I believe that is the reason that later I

decided to go to college and become a doctor. It was not easy because of the lack of resources available to my family, but I was able to graduate from the University of Honduras with my medical degree as a general physician. It's hard to believe that my friends and I who grew up in poor environments and with such sicknesses from intestinal parasites became professionals and are now the ones helping others who suffer from these same problems and more.

I always had the dream of helping many patients. Although I was able to see hundreds of patients in a week through my various jobs in medical clinics, I dreamed of helping more. Then in 2005 my family and I decided to move to Pennsylvania and I began working with MAMA Project, Inc. MAMA Project focuses on health education and helping malnourished children and their families in poor communities in Honduras and Haiti.





Dr. Sagastume, the First Lady and wife of the President of Honduras, and Dr. Benner, founder of MAMA Project, kicking off the National Deworming Campaign in Honduras that treated 1.5 million school-aged children for parasitic worms.

As their Field Director, I'm able to help many people in my country. Dr. Benner is well-known for her work in Honduras and I'm glad that I have the opportunity to serve alongside her. Dr. Benner and I began working on a possible National Deworming Campaign in Honduras,

working alongside the First Lady's Healthy Schools Program. We could supply the deworming medicines and they could hand them out in schools all over the country. It was a long process of a few years and, finally, in 2009 we were able to deworm 1.5 million children in more than 15,000 public schools around Honduras. This was only possible with the partnership of The Worm Project that supplied a lot of the deworming pills. My dream had finally come true. I was able to reach millions of children in need!

Once I was a child with intestinal parasites. Today I am a doctor helping others with similar problems. I could not have been where I am today without, in part, those small deworming pills that were supplied to my family every six months. I trust that God will continue to put the people and organizations in place to help programs like The Worm Project and MAMA Project supply necessary medicines to people around the world to survive and thrive!

## Soil-transmitted helminthiases

### Definition

Helminthiasis is any macroparasitic disease of humans and animals in which a part of the body is infected with parasitic worms, called helminths. These include pinworms, roundworms, and tapeworms. Helminths often live in the gastrointestinal tract, but may also burrow into other organs. (Source: Wikipedia)

### Situation and trends

Soil-transmitted helminthiases are widely distributed in tropical and subtropical areas. According to new WHO estimates about 883 million children worldwide require preventive chemotherapy for these diseases, of whom more than 300 million suffer from severe morbidity. In 2009, 21 countries have reached the World Health Assembly's target of treating at least 75% of school-aged children for the disease. However, many countries where soil-transmitted helminthiases are endemic will not attain the target set for 2010 by World Health Assembly resolution WHA54.19, and adopted in 2001, to treat at least 75% of school-aged children. **In 2009, 31% of children aged 1 to 15 requiring preventive chemotherapy for soil-transmitted helminthiases were treated worldwide.** (Source: The World Health Organization [www.who.int](http://www.who.int))



*A. lumbricoides* from a child in Kenya.  
(Photo: J. Gathany, 2007)

# You can help!

Tax-deductible donations can be made by check or through our website. PayPal option is available at

[www.wormproject.org](http://www.wormproject.org)

(click on the "Donate" button)

Checks should be made payable to  
"The Worm Project" and sent to:

## The Worm Project

Franconia Mennonite Conference Center

569 Yoder Rd.

Harleysville, PA 19438



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## Contact Us

**Website: [www.wormproject.org](http://www.wormproject.org)**

**E-mail: [info@wormproject.org](mailto:info@wormproject.org)**

**Phone: (267) 932-6050 Ext. 136**



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