

the **TOTAL HEALTH** issue

STAMFORD

2020

Fire up your goals—it's go time

THE YEAR OF YOU!

Getting happy, healthy
and **wise about
wellness**

Empowerment
Coach **Suzanne
Vita Palazzo**,
founder and
CEO of Upper
Deck Fitness

healthy curiosity

You Have Questions
About **Allergies, Asthma,
Heart Attacks and Aging**.
These Doctors Answer!

that was easy!

**5 New Year's
Resolutions**
You'll Want
to Keep

power moms

Protecting
Kids' **Mental
Wellness**

let's talk

**Senior
Living
Options**
Now

**TOP
DOCS**
Who to call when you
need medical care
**624 doctors
57 specialties**

THE PROMISE

THE LIFE-SAVING MISSION OF THE NONPROFIT CALLED **HOPE FOR HAITI** BY DIANE SEMBROT



above: Hope for Haiti CEO Skyler Badenoch **below:** The organization supports mobile clinics to bring healthcare directly to those in need.

Over thirty years ago JoAnne Kuehner changed the lives of people in Haiti. With the loftiest of intentions, she started a nonprofit to address their most essential needs, including education, healthcare and water. It was a bold and brave endeavor, and she gave it a direct, mission-revealing name: Hope for Haiti. Year after year, the organization has been true to the founding purpose of helping Haitians, especially children, and earning their faith in that promise of hope.

Twenty years ago, in 2000, the country faced political upheaval. Headlines worldwide announced that Jean-Bertrand Aristide was reelected for a second five-year term as president, and the opposition claimed election fraud. By 2004 the unrest turned into a crisis, with protests and rebel attacks. Ultimately, the

president was forced into exile.

Ten years ago, on January 12, 2010, Haiti faced another kind of crisis. According to CNN, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake left between 220,000 and 300,000 dead, 300,000 injured and some 1.5 million displaced. Then, just six years later, Hurricane Matthew hit. With winds up to 145 mph, heavy flooding and landslides, it destroyed infrastructure and ecosystems. News reports were devastating: nearly 550 people lost their lives and some 1.4 million needed immediate humanitarian assistance.

Through all of nature's calamity and man's political upheaval, the Haitian people tried to keep hope. They had help. For example, within a day of that 2010 earthquake, Hope for Haiti provided medicine, supplies, construction materials, food and water and helped arrange a trauma center in the capital. The nonprofit's ongoing mission is to put hope into action—it regularly distributes medicine and supplies to rural areas, trains Haitian medical professionals and provides low-cost, quality care. It has provided over 108,000 patient visits at its Infirmary St. Etienne, and over 10,000 students have received health and hygiene education, since the 2010 earthquake. It also distributes water filters to families

BY THE NUMBERS

142,156

Gallons of water filtered

7,261

Clients participating in educational programs

429

Teachers provided with subsidized salary

96

Percentage of the charity's total expenses spent on the programs and services it delivers

to ensure they have clean water and provides wells where they are needed. Additionally, it alleviates poverty by improving education.

In short, to help the children, it supports local institutions, systems, community members and businesses—trusting that, with help, strength ultimately comes from within.



Q&A

with Skyler Badenoch

Why was Hope for Haiti founded?

"Hope for Haiti was founded on the belief that there is always a path to a better life in Haiti, despite the complex challenges that exist. When Hope for Haiti's founder, JoAnne Kuehner, traveled to Haiti for the first time over thirty years ago, she was confronted with a question she'll never forget. A girl, no older than twelve, approached her and asked, 'Will you help me so that I can go to school?' That simple question had a deep impact on JoAnne, and she was inspired to raise funds to pay the school fees for families who could not afford them. It is one of Hope for Haiti's fundamental beliefs that education is the foundation of economic and social development."

How has its mission changed over the past thirty years?

"Our mission has always been to improve the quality of life for the Haitian people, particularly children. Our approach, however, has changed over the years based on what we've learned to be most effective in accomplishing our mission. Education is the cornerstone of our work, but we have expanded our focus on poverty alleviation to include programming in healthcare, water, infrastructure and economic development. This holistic approach has been proven to help lift families out of poverty by simultaneously empowering Haitian communities to develop in a more comprehensive way."

What about the organization today?

"Today, Hope for Haiti works to ensure 7,200 children have access to a quality education, and that 420 teachers receive a salary and relevant teacher training. Our team also operates an infirmary in Les Cayes that treats 15,000 patients a year under the leadership of an incredibly talented team of Haitian doctors and nurses. We implement public health programming

in local schools and mobile clinics that reach Haitians living in rural areas. Because safe drinking water is an issue in Haiti, we've provided filtration systems to 2,700 families, and we also collaborate with local communities to build schools, sanitation blocks and wells. Our newest and fastest-growing program is focused on strengthening the economic system, and through our partnership with the Dalo Philanthropies, we are able to provide loans and grants to local businesses that have a social impact."

What would you like the people of Stamford to understand about Haiti?

"Haiti tends to be negatively portrayed in the media, with a singular narrative of poverty, corruption and natural disasters. We know that Haitians face many challenges, and like in years past, this year was full of difficulties. Rising inflation, political uncertainty and civil unrest tested the Haitian people's ability to thrive on a daily basis. However, we know that this is not the full story of Haiti. We believe that as long as human beings exist, there is always hope. History has shown us that even in the most challenging circumstances, we have the fundamental ability to rise above poverty, inequality and uncertainty. We are inspired by our Haitian team, who work daily to empower their country and those around them. In addition, Haiti is an incredibly beautiful country, with a rich culture and resilient people. This is the Haiti we want the world to see."

How can Stamford people help?

"Stamford actually has a large Haitian population and we are working to build a community with those who want to support the Haitian people, here at home and overseas. Every October, we invite the Stamford community to join us for our annual Harvesting Hope Celebration, a time where we focus on the incredible impact of our work in Haiti. On January 12, 2020, it will have been ten years since the Haitian Earthquake. To honor and support those impacted by the earthquake, we recently launched the Haitian Solidarity Campaign to raise \$10 million to help improve education, healthcare, infrastructure, access to clean drinking water and economic opportunity for more than 300,000 Haitian children, parents and grandparents over the next five years."

CONTRIBUTED



above, left: The studio offers coached full-body workouts—for beginner to experienced rowers—on rowing machines. **above, right:** The group classes have session options that incorporate work that is done off the rowing machines as well.

READY ALL, ROW

FULL-BODY TRAINING AT A NEW **INDOOR ROWING STUDIO** BY DIANE SEMBROT

Whether you crewed for Yale or have never picked up an oar in your life, now Stamford has a new way to get fit year-round—big time. The fitness boutique **ROW HOUSE** (therowhouse.com), just opened at 5 Broad Street, puts the workout on land, thanks to rowing machines. You can take it lightly or drive and pull as hard as if you were chasing down a record time at a regatta. Rowing is a full-body workout that lets you push your muscles, heart and lungs and mental gamesmanship. On water or in a studio, this sport offers a true workout.

Row House launched in New York City before finding its way to Fairfield County.

When you attend a class, you'll sign in at the front desk, put your stuff in a cubby, and

take a long sip of water, knowing you'll need it. Then head into the studio, in which the rowing machines (called ergs) are lined up in tidy rows. Once everyone is settled, the lights are lowered and a coach takes the lead erg at the front of the class.

When you start, you'll be encouraged to follow the instructor's moves and to move in unison with your fellow rowers. A satisfying *whoosh* of the erg's fanwheel can help keep everyone on pace as the class works on technique and runs through drills. Specific classes can help you focus on a preferred goal, such as technique or stamina.

By the end of class, you'll agree that this low-impact workout is killer. The proof will be in the river you're sweating.