

# Asbury Park Press

## Second annual strawberry festival to support clinic in Haiti

[Ashley Turner](#), @Ashley\_MTurner 4:02 p.m. EDT June 2, 2016



**A doctor seeing a patient** (Photo: Craig Bogard, Aslan Youth Ministries)

Youth Ministries, a nonprofit in Red Bank that provides community outreach programs to impoverished areas in Monmouth County and areas in Haiti.

Just by purchasing homemade strawberry treats and desserts, you can help Haitian citizens get the medical aid they need.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Brick is hosting its second annual Strawberry Festival on Saturday, June 4 to help fund a medical clinic in L'Acajou, Haiti.

The Clinic of Hope was started by Aslan

The donations made to Aslan Youth Ministries during and after last year's festival totaled to about \$14,000. All of the donations went to helping the clinic prosper; the money hired two doctors and two nurses and helped treat 464 patients in six months in 2015.



**A patient being treated at the clinic** (Photo: Craig Bogard, Aslan Youth Ministries)

The initial goal for the strawberry festival was to raise enough money to keep the clinic open for one half-day a week, but the number of donations helped keep the clinic open for five half-days a week for \$68 a day.

Craig Bogard, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Aslan Youth Ministries, said that it is a blessing that St. Paul's United Methodist Church has decided to support the clinic in Haiti for a second year in a row.

Bogard said that the conditions and poverty in Haiti is "overwhelming" and that the clinic wouldn't be able to remain open without the support of the strawberry festival because most patients are too poor to fund the clinic. Bogard said that the poverty in Haiti is so bad that

most of the people living by the clinic survive off of less than \$1 a day; sometimes mothers have to mix dirt into whatever little food they have for their children to feel full.

"That is hunger. That is starving to death," Bogard said. "Sometimes people will bring a fruit to pay for a visit to the doctor because that's all they have. That's wonderful, but you can't really run a real medical clinic with no money. That's why this event is so



**A nurse treating a patient at the clinic.** (Photo: Craig Bogard, Aslan Youth Ministries)

important because without it we can't keep the clinic open on a regular basis."

Kori Schiess, who is on St. Paul's United Methodist Church's Haiti mission team, said that the strawberry festival came about after the St. Paul's mission team went to Montrouis, Haiti and "left there with an intense calling to the people of Haiti."

They decided to return the next year with Aslan Youth Ministries. While in L'Acajou, Schiess and the other mission workers traveled between the clinic and a water pump to get clean water for the clinic. Schiess said she would notice people waiting for hours outside the clinic to see the doctor.

A few weeks after their mission trip to Haiti was over, Schiess and the other mission workers discovered that the clinic had closed since they left because it couldn't afford to stay open.

"This broke our hearts to know that there were so many sick and hurting people in L'Acajou who could have access to health care if only there were some funding to pay for the staff," Schiess said.



**The Clinic of Hope in L'Acajou, Haiti** (Photo: Craig Bogard, Aslan Youth Ministries)

The clinic is now up and running with doctors, nurses, a lab technician, and a diesel generator. The clinic has treated ailments such as anemia, asthma, kidney infections and intestinal parasites for patients.

"When we went back [to Haiti] this past February, it was special to see how the clinic has grown over the last year," Schiess said.



**The clinic's lab technician.** (Photo: Craig Bogard, Aslan Youth Ministries)

Entrance into the festival is free and donations can be made by buying the strawberry desserts and jams that members of the church made. Relay races and pony rides are planned for this year's festival. Schiess said that donations can also be mailed to 714 Herbertsville Rd, Brick, NJ

08724 with a note designating the donation to the Haiti clinic.