

Learn about your classmates' work in international health and the connections ClassACT is making between them!



ClassACT Newsletter

ClassACT's International Health Connections

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Over the past several months, ClassACT has had contact with several classmates who have strong interests in international healthcare. In this newsletter you will learn about **Ron Dieckmann**'s work to advance pediatric care, **Dan Scoppetta**'s efforts to develop a surgery program in Haiti, **David Weeks**' efforts to develop first a clinic and now a hospital in Haiti, **Phyllis Carr** and her husband **George Whitelaw**'s work with children in Costa Rica, and **Jono Quick**'s new book on epidemics.

IMPROVING PEDIATRIC CARE AROUND THE WORLD

Using Advanced software to Improve Pediatric Care for At Risk Populations

Classmate Dr. [Ron Dieckmann](#), Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine at University of California, San Francisco, has dedicated his career to **dissemination of knowledge in pediatric emergency medicine** and to **improving technology** for the the specialty. He co-founded PEMSoft, a powerful electronic pediatric decision support software, in 2002. A point-of-care reference library available as both a mobile app and on the web, PEMSoft has 1000 topics, 5000 images, 120 movies and multiple interactive modules. It was acquired by EBSCO Health a few years back but Ron retained the rights to share the product for nonprofit use through the Bay-Area based nonprofit [KidsCareEverywhere](#).

KCE has worked in a long list of countries in different capacities, training practitioners in using their software on both a large scale in India, Peru and Vietnam, and on a more limited basis in a long list* of countries in South America, Africa and Asia. KCE would like to extend and enhance its mission to save more kids' lives and improve its processes, and Ron is "quite excited about the prospects of working with ClassACT." In his words, "what we offer is a well tested, already-highly successful model that could be easily replicated and further improved with additional support and expertise from our Harvard classmates—with international contacts, and with educational and systems expertise."

Although Ron welcomes any classmates interest, KCE has several needs, including

- supportive **inside contacts, particularly in health departments of countries where its impact could be large;**
- **innovative expertise from educators** as they continue to teach how to use absolutely state-of-the-art medical software in countries whose doctors are not primarily English speaking, and
- **knowledgable system consultants** to help them with **sustainability**

Contact [Ron](#) if you are interested in exploring how you might assist with his work.

Improving Pediatric Care in Costa Rica and Making Connections Between Classmates

In the Boston area, classmates include Dr. **Phyllis L. Carr**, whose husband **George Whitelaw** is also a physician. Phyllis is an Internal Medicine specialist who was Dean of Students at Boston University Medical School. Her academic interests have focused on the role of women in academic medicine among other topics.

George received his medical degree from BU and joined the faculty of the BU Orthopedic Department where he became Chief of Orthopedics at Boston City Hospital. He has volunteered his time in Nepal, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Ukraine, and most recently in Costa Rica, where the nonprofit he founded, the [Children's Well-Being Foundation](#), has worked to advance pediatric care, including having a refitted bus used as a mobile care site, visiting 22 locations.

Now, if you're thinking that there should be a connection between helping kids in Costa Rica using PEMSoft, which KidsCareEverywhere employs—you'd be right! **Through ClassACT, Ron, Phyllis, and George have been connected, with the goal of making PEMSoft available for use in Costa Rica by CWB.** It turns out that Ron Dieckmann's daughter will be in Costa Rica later this year, and while Ron is visiting, he and George plan on connecting to explore how Costa Rican providers can use the software.

Additional Countries in Which KCE has Worked:

Bhutan
Cambodia
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Ethiopia
Kenya
Laos
Mongolia
Morocco
Senegal
Tanzania
Vanuatu
Yemen
Zambia

Contact [Phyllis](#) and [George](#) if you are interested in exploring how you might help with their work.

IMPROVING HEALTHCARE IN HAITI



One of the places that KCE has done Emergency Relief pediatric care is Haiti. ClassACT hopes to connect this work to the work of two other classmates, also working in Haiti to improve medical care.

In Jeremie, the capitol of the Grand'Anse department in southern Haiti, an area known for having Haiti's most rugged terrain, there is a functioning hospital with limited surgical capacity. Classmate Dr. **Dan Scoppetta**, a general surgeon who had a longtime practice in Bristol, CT, is involved in the development and support of a general surgical care unit. "The surgical staff mostly includes a busy obstetrician/gynecologist and a young general surgeon," Dan writes.

"Through the Grand'Anse Women's Health Program we have **targeted breast surgery** for benign and malignant disease and thyroidectomy for goiter as our initial areas of concentration. Other common general surgery conditions are treated as encountered. We are involved in **providing equipment, manpower, and education to staff** in and outside the operating room. We have agreed with our Haitian partners that the ultimate goal is for them to perform safe and efficient surgery independently. We hope to expand the types of operations that are performed to address better the needs of the community."

In order to build the surgical program Dan would like to **hear from classmates with experience in any realm of surgery**—nurses, program developers, anesthesiologists, OR technicians and of course surgeons themselves—to consult and make connections.

More [in-depth information about the Grand'Anse Women's Program](#) can be found on our Resources page.

David Weeks, whose [nonprofit efforts](#) the Salih Self-Development Foundation in Ghana and Kenya's Osiligi Foundation have been part of the ClassACT community from the beginning, has been Chairman of the Board of the [Build Haiti Foundation](#) and rallied his school community to help construct a health clinic in the village of Camp Coq after the devastating earthquake of 2011.



In another example of ClassACT cross-pollination, **Gina Myerson (Roger Myerson's spouse)** has been a great help to the Build Haiti Foundation website to develop the Foundation's marketing.

Recently visiting Haiti, David spent time learning about Bethesda Hospital, which in his words "has just begun to address the medical needs of some of the 20,000 people in the Camp Coq community with one GP and three nurses." The Camp Coq community is in the north of Haiti, a distance away from where Dan Scoppetta is. Nonetheless, ClassACT has introduced Dan and David to each other to see whether there are any opportunities for collaboration.

Bethesda Hospital needs **consultation, pharmaceutical guidance and support services**, and would welcome a **gynecologist, a pediatrician and a neurologist**.

David will be going to Haiti again in early July 2018—join him if you have an interest in helping develop the medical care there. [Contact him](#) if you are interested in exploring ways to assist David with his work.

ENDING EPIDEMICS

The [January 2018 ClassACT bulletin](#) noted a new book by our classmate **Jonathan "Jono" Quick, *The End of Epidemics***. While Jono discusses the threats of epidemics in America, most of his analysis is rooted in **the challenges of preventing epidemics from spreading from underdeveloped countries** around the world. If you are interested in learning more about the threats of epidemics and pandemics and what can be done to prevent them, Jono's book is a great read. The organization that Jono founded, Management Science for Health, has helped to develop health systems in many countries, including Haiti. ClassACT hopes to connect some of this work with the work of Ron, Dan, Phyllis, and George.

WHAT CAN I DO TO LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED?

There are **many members of HR'73 in health-related professions** and ClassACT is interested in building a network of connections to see how classmates might learn from and assist each other. We hope that this

newsletter will stimulate your interest. If you would like to be part of our growing community of classmates interested in health, please contact [Jonathan Sprague](#).

We also encourage you to go to the [ClassACT website](#), sign in and register (create a new password by clicking the "Forgot Password" button and following the prompts), and further explore connections with your classmates. You can connect with any of us via email via the website! (Since ClassACT is not a fundraising channel for the classmate-connected non-profits, we encourage you to go to their websites directly if you are interested in providing financial support.)

ClassACT is always on the lookout for ways to connect classmates to create positive change. Please see the [discussions of projects](#) on our website. You can [contact us](#) if you have interests that you think could benefit from links with classmates, or if you just have general interest in getting involved with ClassACT.

On a small matter, related to our upcoming 45th Reunion, ClassACT would like to encourage you to complete your Class Report submission for Reunion Red Book. You should have received an email and snail mail about this recently. The deadline is April 27. Although this date might be a bit soft, timely submission will be important if you do not want to be left out. Mark your calendars for the Reunion, October 11-14, 2018.

Please add ClassACTHR73@gmail.com to your contacts so future messages don't end up in spam or some other odd spot in your inbox.

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