



Photo: Students in Haiti.

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From the Desk of Paul Farmer

The following piece is an excerpt from a speech Paul Farmer delivered to Boston University on January 19, 2009 to commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. To read his full speech, [please click here](#).

Dear Friends,
I've been invited to reflect on [one of] Dr. King's sermons, less well known than the 1963 "I have a dream" speech, but one with a message for this week and this moment in our country's history. It is fitting that this year's MLK celebration has blurred into our inauguration of a new president.

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"I believe in health care as a human right."

PIH co-founder Paul Farmer speaks of one of his most fundamental beliefs for National Public Radio's *This I Believe*. "The goal of preventing human suffering must be linked to the task of bringing others, many others, into a movement for basic rights." [Click to listen](#).

Running towards hope

A patient in PIH's Right to Health Care program was recently featured in the *Boston Herald*. Claudine Humure, a Rwandan orphan who lost her parents to genocide and her leg to bone cancer, recently came to Boston to receive a new prosthetic leg. [Read the inspiring story](#) about her bright future, including the possibility she will soon be able to run.

Free the patients

An outbreak of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) in South Africa prompted a virtual imprisonment of patients in jail-like hospitals away from the rest of the population. [An article on Slate.com](#) details how policies like these don't work because patients, many who are the sole breadwinners of their families, break out and put their communities at risk. The article quotes doctors Carole Mitnick and Salmaan Keshavjee who recently published research based on work by PIH's partner organizations in Peru and Russia proving that XDR-TB can be treated successfully using a community-based approach.

The dream described in the 1963 speech on the National Mall was about equality. "The Drum Major Instinct," Dr. King's last sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church, in 1968, is about leadership. Don't these two speeches seem to head in opposite directions: equality being for all of us, leadership a role only a few of us can play? But as Dr. King analyzes it, what he calls the "Drum Major Instinct" is the desire, most likely innate in all of us, for the praise and recognition that come with leadership. Who doesn't fantasize about being in charge, whether as drum major in a marching band or as leader of a movement or head of a department or, even, as president of a flawed but promising democracy?

But King also saw the darker side of leadership. He spoke rawly and honestly about the dangers inherent in "keeping up with the Joneses" and of striving to impress through material advantage. In particular, he had his eye on the treacherous point where the quest for excellence and for personal efficacy compromises the broader goals of equality and justice for all.

There's a reason, surely, that Coretta Scott King asked that this sermon be replayed at his funeral. For in this homily, Dr. King, Nobel laureate and hero to millions, refers presciently to his own funeral and asks that no mention of his many awards and honors be made. Let it only be said, he asked, that he strove to "feed the hungry," to "clothe the naked," to "be right on the [Vietnam] war question," and to "love and serve humanity."

To feed the hungry, clothe the naked, stand up for peace, and love and serve humanity... They are precisely the priorities that should guide public policy and private action in times of economic turmoil. How do we accomplish these aims without making them serve our own love of glory and admiration?

Today we celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King. Today we celebrate his courage and his paradoxical relationship to the Drum Major Instinct. Without that instinct, he would not have pursued either his career or his vocation. Had he lacked it, he would not have gone to jail, nor would he have spoken to millions, directly and with courage. But Dr. King was aware of the risks of seeking to elevate himself above others, and it is for this reason, among others, that he sought to ground himself in the struggles of the poor in this country and elsewhere. It is for this reason that he never became a gaudy and flashy "brand," to use the language of our day.

We need to acknowledge the Drum Major Instinct within all of us, the urge to be somebody and to succeed. If not for that impulse, who among us would be here today? I know I would not be here as a physician and teacher. Barack Obama would not be our nation's 44th president. But the greatest thing about King's redemptive vision is that all of us may, at



Paul Farmer

Rocking for Haiti

Haitian-born Grammy-winning rock star Wyclef Jean recently journeyed back to his native country to bring aid and hope to a slum struggling with poverty, despair, and disease. CBS's [60 Minutes](#) followed him and his charity Yele Haiti.

Gap year to gain focus

Instead of going straight to college, one Boston-area woman decided to spend a year away from academia to volunteer and gain work experience and a focus for a future career. One of her stops was at the Boston PIH office. [The Wall Street Journal](#) recounts her gap year and tips for what to look for if a high-school student you know is interested in taking a year off to explore a passion or career path.

A Hundred Dead People in My Truck

What is it like to work as a doctor in the poorest country in the western hemisphere? A documentary that recently aired on Irish National TV follows one of PIH's physicians as part of a gripping and inspiring story of aid workers in Haiti. [Watch the film.](#)

Paul Farmer's hopes for President Obama

Paul Farmer was recently quoted in Herald Media's *Boston Celebrates President Obama*, published on January 20:

The world is in a parlous state – a couple of wars and hot spots, the threat of genocide, a tottering financial sector and a lack of access to basic social services, including health care and education – but what American cannot but feel hope as a new administration, this administration, is inaugurated in Washington? It's fashionable, in some circles, to be cynical and a naysayer. But in our line of work, which is to provide basic social services to the very poor in 10 countries (including my own), it's not possible to proceed without a modicum of hope in the future. This movement is fueled by hope and optimism, and the inauguration of Barack Obama

any time, choose to place the well-being of others above our own. All of us may strive for compassion, justice, and altruism. None of us need have the vision, talent and heroism of an MLK to succeed in this humble and necessary task. "Everybody can be great," said Dr. King, "because anybody can serve."

Now, as our country and our world faces financial crisis, environmental disaster, war, and growing inequality, is the time to serve. It's a great time to serve a just cause, to concern ourselves with the oppressed or those less fortunate. If this is what we do with our Drum Major Instinct, we need not be troubled by it. Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve.

– Paul Farmer, PIH co-founder

(To read Paul Farmer's full reflection on Martin Luther King Jr., and the Drum Major Instinct, [please click here.](#))

seems to me to mark a milestone in so many ways. Yes, there are grave problems before us, but they are not insoluble problems when carefully crafted plans are linked to resources and resolve.

The publication can be purchased on newsstands or online at bostonherald.com.

Global Health Recommendations for a New Administration and Congress

In the weeks before the inauguration of Barack Obama, PIH teamed up with five other organizations dedicated to global health equity to prepare recommendations for steps the new Administration and the new Congress could take to seize "a unique opportunity to redefine foreign aid policy to help those most impoverished and to save lives." The introduction to the document states in part:

"We are at a pivotal point in United States history as the Obama Administration and the 111th Congress begin. We embrace the message of change and hope that brought this new administration to ascendance and look forward to the application of these principles in all sectors of government. While the U.S. financial crisis is likely foremost on the minds of many in Washington, the current global crisis threatens to worsen the extreme privation suffered by those in the developing world. At the writing of this document, 25% of the developing world lives in dire poverty and 80% of the world lives in countries where income inequality is worsening. Such social inequity threatens not only the health of the globe but peace, security, and the prospects of financial recovery. The U.S. government role in providing aid for health and development has never been more critical.

"A poignant example of the failure to deliver health to the world's poor is the fact that the number of women who die in childbirth has remained constant despite 40 years of development assistance targeted toward "safe motherhood." Programs taught traditional birth attendants sterile techniques for home deliveries

and when to refer women for medical care. Yet no money was spent on the development of modern medical facilities with access to blood, surgery, and the skilled providers needed to avert maternal death. The rare services that do exist in poor countries are simply too costly for the majority of poor women.

"We believe that U.S. health and development assistance should address both the root causes of ill health — poverty and inequality — and be directed toward building public sector institutions to help governments respond to the needs of their people. Aid should be transparent on both donor and recipient sides and accountable to the target populationthe poor who need services most. The new Administration and Congress have a unique opportunity to redefine foreign aid policy to help those most impoverished and to save lives. Implementing the recommendations of this paper would have an enormous impact."

[Read the full list of recommendations](#) submitted to the incoming Administration and Congress by PIH, Health Alliance International, Physicians for Human Rights, the Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, RESULTS, and ActionAid International.

Notes from the field: Training nurses and midwives in Rwanda

With as many as six births a day and 20 prenatal appointments a week, providing maternity care in rural Rwanda is a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week job. But this fall, the maternity nurses working with PIH's partner organization in Rwanda received some welcomed support in the form of Kate Sullivan, a certified nurse-midwife in the Brigham and Women's Hospital Global Nursing Fellowship program. This unique program offers experienced clinicians the opportunity to share knowledge with Rwandan colleagues and then return to Boston to share their global nursing experience.



Kate Sullivan training nurses in Rwanda.

For the past four months, Kate has worked to address the training needs of her Rwandan colleagues by introducing skills that will help bring the best clinical care to their patients. In the prenatal care clinic—where ensuring healthy births is the priority— Kate mentors and trains Rwandan nurses in screening for pregnancy complications, such as high blood pressure and infections, and determining gestational age and the expected date of delivery. The nurses also learn how to use ultrasound technology to listen to fetal heart sounds and assess the growing fetus's development. Accurately estimating the arrival of a newborn is very important in rural Rwanda, where getting to the health center may mean a 6-hour hike on foot.

In the labor and delivery room, Kate works side by side with Rwandan nurses and midwives, using patient cases to teach best practices for the rural patient population. At Rwinkwavu and Kirehe Hospitals, referral centers for high-risk cases from the rural health center network, the nurses work with women who face miscarriage, pregnancy complications, or prolonged labors.

Kate's team trainings on lifesaving emergency measures, such as newborn CPR and prevention of hemorrhage, give the nurses experience in handling the most difficult cases.

"Nurses in the rural setting are the foundation of the health system for the majority of the world," says Emily Hall, a nurse practitioner who works with Kate as the Rwanda-based clinical nurse mentor for the Global Nursing Fellowship Program. "At those health centers located away from a district hospital, nurses are supported by doctors one day a week or sometimes less. Therefore, investing in them is an investment in the lives of our patients."

Apply for a summer internship with PIH's Institute for Health and Social Justice

Every year, PIH's research and advocacy arm, the Institute for Health and Social Justice (IHSJ), hosts a summer internship program for a select number of students and professionals early in their careers who are interested in learning about current issues in health and social justice. In addition to working on individual projects, summer interns have a unique opportunity to learn firsthand about PIH and gain practical exposure to the administration of a non-governmental organization through interactions with staff members, movie and book discussions, and social activities.

[Learn more and apply for an internship.](#)

Change Haiti can believe in

Join us for a panel discussion with PIH co-founder Paul Farmer; actor and activist Matt Damon, who recently visited Haiti to assist victims devastated by hurricanes; Massachusetts State Representative and Haitian American Linda Dorcena Forry; and Brian Concannon, Jr., director of the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti. The panelists will share their stories of eradicating disease and injustice in one of the

world's poorest nation, and discuss how changes in U.S. policy can help to build a stronger, more resilient, and prosperous Haiti. Amy Goodman, host of *Democracy Now!*, will moderate. The event will take place at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston on January 27 at 5:30 pm, EST. There will also be a live webcast of the event. [More information.](#)

PIH launches online Health and Social Justice Video Network

The live webcast of the January 27 event at Kennedy Library (see above) will mark the debut of a brand new resource for sharing global health and social justice issues with people everywhere — the [Health and Social Justice Video Network](#). PIH is launching the network in partnership with Mogulus, a New York-based company that lays claim to being “the most powerful live broadcast platform on the Internet.” PIH will be using Mogulus’s browser-based Studio application to create LIVE, scheduled and on-demand Internet television. Video content from PIH and other organizations dedicated to health and social

justice will be made available on the PIH website and can be broadcast anywhere on the Web through a single player widget.

The network will go live on January 27 featuring a variety of videos by and about PIH as well as the beginnings of a library of video resources from other organizations that work to end poverty and bring health care to communities around the world. [Point your browser at the PIH website to tune in and join up.](#)

With a little help from our (waddling) friends

Last December, a flock of adorable penguins waddled onto a pirate ship to drop gold coins into a red bucket. Although the penguins only existed in an online, computer-generated world, their donations resulted in a \$300,000 donation to PIH’s programs.

[Club Penguin](#), a snow-covered virtual world for children, held its second annual Coins for Change campaign, which lets players donate virtual coins to real causes. Players earn the coins by playing games on Club Penguin in the persona of an animated penguin. The players can then use these coins to buy virtual accessories for their birds (such as a pirate hat or an igloo). Or, as part of December’s Coins for Change campaign, they can donate to a

cause that helps children. More than 2 million players chose to forgo the “material” and instead give their coins to help others around the world.



At the end of the campaign, the number of coins given to each cause was tallied. Based on the percentage of the total number of coins donated to each, four charities shared a \$1 million donation from the New Horizon Foundation, which

was started by the founders of Club Penguin. As one of the charities selected to benefit from the campaign, PIH ended up receiving \$300,000 of the \$1 million pot.

“The children who play Club Penguin often ask us for ideas on how they can give back and make the world a better place but we still never could have imagined when we launched Coins for Change we’d get this kind of response,” says Lane Merrifield, co-founder of Club Penguin. “It’s absolutely incredible to witness how our players jumped on board for the chance to help make a difference in the lives of kids throughout the world.”

Dateline PIH: Project updates from all over

Malawi: Warm hats and warm support:



Keep the babies in your life warm and stylish while supporting Malawian women affected by HIV by purchasing a hand-knit hat. These adorable hats are crafted by Gulu la anthu Oluka, a cooperative of women in one of the most impoverished districts of one of the world's poorest countries. Women in the group include HIV patients, former commercial sex workers hoping

for an alternate way to generate an income to support themselves and their families, and widows caring for HIV patients or children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. Each purchase will help the women buy food, send their children to school, and work towards financial independence. The cooperative was organized by POSER (Program on Social and Economic Rights) of PIH's partner organization in Malawi. The hats can be purchased online through [Global Goods Partners](#).

Malawi: A is for adult literacy:

With an adult literacy rate hovering around 64%, Malawi ranks near the bottom of the Human Development Index. PIH's partner organization in Malawi is working to help improve these numbers by working with the local Community Development Office to organize adult literacy classes. The classes began earlier this month at nine community-based organizations throughout the district, and will continue for the next 10 months. A total of 225 students enrolled, mostly women, many of whom are also patients. Another course is scheduled to enroll more students in the fall. The curriculum for the classes is based on the one used by Malawi's National Centre for Adult Literacy.

Peru: Painting a community:

Colorful posters, perfectly completed homework assignments, and popsicle-stick picture frames fill the inside walls of the Lois and Thomas J. White Community Center in Carabayllo, Peru. The community's children lovingly provided these works of art, so when it came time for the center to get a facelift, the kids eagerly moved their creativity to the outside walls. Staff of PIH's partner organization in Peru, Socios En Salud (SES) and members of the Carabayllo community recruited the help of three professional local graffiti artists to mentor the children in SES's afterschool education program in transforming their artistic vision into a vibrant mural painted along the center's exterior. The mural, filled with a landscape of smiles and messages of peace, was completed in December. [Read more.](#)



The children painted the outline sketched by the professional artists, adding in their own artistic flair.

Haiti: A congressional visit:

U.S. Senators Richard Durbin (D-Illinois, center rear in black shirt) and Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico, center front in blue shirt) recently visited PIH's partner organization in Haiti as part of an information-gathering trip to look at ways the new congress can help Haiti move past the destruction of the hurricanes last fall.

