

**“I was a ménage (cleaner) at the hospital,
now I’m a doctor at the hospital.”**

Education.

Pierre Evens Lalanne, known as Evens, was 13 years old when he started working after school at St. Boniface Hospital as a ménage, or housekeeper.

“I loved being at the hospital,” Evens says. “I went to school in Fond-des-Blancs and then after school I came to work at the hospital.” He started helping out in the pharmacy, and then with food distribution to children and the elderly. But Evens was also a promising student whose family was running out of money to pay for his school tuition. His father had abandoned his mother and two sisters and his mother was challenged to put food on the table, much less cover school fees for Evens.

So SBHF stepped in and enrolled Evens in our scholarship program. Evens passed the 8th grade -- the highest grade then available in Fond-des-Blancs, and went on to a secondary school in Port-au-Prince. “I had so, so, so much work,” Evens remembers. “But I studied hard.” But he passed and after graduation, SBHF offered Evens a university scholarship that covered his housing, food, books and fees.

And when it came time to declare a course of study, he didn’t have to think hard about his decision. “I wanted to study medicine so that I could return to Fond-des-Blancs and work in the hospital,” Evens says. With the support of the scholarship program, he spent seven years pursuing a medical degree at Université Lumière Faculté de Médecine. He graduated in 2011, at the age of 28, and returned to his family’s home in Fond-des-Blancs to work as a doctor at St. Boniface Hospital.

In fiscal year 2011, SBHF disbursed more than 800 primary and secondary school scholarships and seven university scholarships to students like Evens, who otherwise would not be able to attend school. In a country where, according to the World Bank, less than half of all children complete primary school, education is an important component in improving health care and living standards. And it’s a benefit not accessible to everyone -- the majority of schools in Haiti are private and require tuition, book fees and uniforms to attend.

“Before St. Boniface arrived, young people here had no opportunities,” he says. “I could have worked in Les Cayes, or Port-au-Prince, but I wanted to return here, to work in my own community.” Evens plans to pursue a specialty in surgery with a residency at a hospital in the U.S. so he can bring the skill back to Fond-des-Blancs and become the hospital’s first resident surgeon.



**Dr. Pierre Evens Lalanne consults with
a patient at St. Boniface Hospital.**