

SPEECH



Beginning of Satellite Conference by François-Xavier Bagnoud International Pediatric HIV Training Program

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By Albina du Boisrouvray, Founder and President

I welcome you to this important international meeting with profound gratitude for all you have done on behalf of children with AIDS. You have devoted your professional lives to the most worthy of causes: Your tireless efforts in hospitals, clinics, and neighborhoods help to alleviate the suffering of millions of children affected by AIDS all over the world. Your skills in the laboratory are continuing to bear fruit as new treatments emerge. And your commitment to learning and teaching is contributing to the spread of new knowledge – a powerful weapon in the battle against AIDS.

I am particularly proud to address you today, even though I cannot have the pleasure of doing so in person, because this special conference represents the first time that the needs of children are being given such full priority within the context of an international AIDS meeting. The Association François-Xavier Bagnoud, named in memory of my son, has a similar mission. We created the Association to give a voice to the youngest victims of disease and poverty -- those who are unable to speak for themselves.

The Association supports direct service, research, and training programs throughout the world that touch the lives of children and families affected by AIDS.

Last month, I announced in Washington, D.C., that the Association François-Xavier Bagnoud had endowed the François-Xavier Bagnoud Chair in Community Nursing with Mary Boland being appointed its first François-Xavier Bagnoud Professor, one of the few endowed chairs for a nurse and unique in the field of pediatric nursing.

We did this because we believe that the work she is carrying out at the François-Xavier Bagnoud International Pediatric HIV Training Program in Newark together with Dr. Oleske is vital for the health care workers of the world who treat children with HIV/AIDS.

We chose to work with these people because they care with tender loving care and the highest quality of multiple and indispensable services. FXB-ITP combines compassion with the highest medical competency. It reaches out to people who work among poor children who suffer from a disease that most of the time the governments of the countries in which they live do not understand, and because of that, ignore the global and tragic implications of a human emergency. Dr. Oleske and Nurse Boland have created an experience for these health care workers – doctors, nurses, aides, professors – which leads them through corridors of care where they learn the deepest feelings of parents and children as they face the life-threatening disease. They blend this experience with an exposure to the best in medical technologies which deal with this disease. And then they adapt it to the countries in which FXB-ITP fellows work.

The FXB-ITP transcends cultural differences, political affiliations and national boundaries. Through the program, the Children's Hospital AIDS Program in New Jersey has welcomed nearly 80 health care workers from 17 countries. These Training Fellows spend time in

clinics, laboratories and classrooms. They meet patients, observe treatment and diagnostic methods and take back practical information that can prolong life and ease the burden of the disease. We can see tangible effects of this program in many ways: a new "low-technology" diagnostic test for HIV now available in a Russian village; the satisfaction of nurses in Thailand who helped create an interdisciplinary care team; the first combined clinic and residence for HIV-infected children built in Brazil.

The Association François-Xavier Bagnoud sees this program as an essential part of the program we are trying to weave in an organic manner globally. On the basic human level, we have the François-Xavier Bagnoud Houses in 3 continents to provide tender loving care for children suffering from these diseases. Then, we have Jim and Mary's program to train those who will care for the children. And on a broad political level, we have the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights at the Harvard School of Public Health to be outspoken advocates for the rights of children and everybody to health care and to defend those who are denied these rights.

The message I want to leave with you today is that you also become advocates for these children. That in the war against the tragedy of pediatric AIDS, you weave the weapons of health and human rights. That you seek to promote and replicate institutes like the FXB-ITP all over the world. Only in this way, can we really begin to say that we are starting to care effectively for the millions of children with HIV/AIDS. In our now global village, all the children are our children.

At Vancouver, we have a rare and valuable opportunity to share triumphs. Challenges and dreams with colleagues from throughout the world. If we are to vanquish the scourge of AIDS, it will also be through meetings like this one where we come together as healing professional, scientists, researchers and those who simply care about children.

Thank you for participating in this meeting. Your work and commitment are admirable and I wish you success.