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## Let's take a look ...



John Russ / Record-Journal

Dr. Jackson Maille checks out 1-year-old Roberto Mendez of Meriden at the Community Health Center.

## Local doctor flattered by honor

By Diahara Traoré  
Record-Journal staff

**MERIDEN** — Jackson Maille is the kind of doctor whom doctors call when they need medical attention.

That's according to a Connecticut Magazine survey of 450 doctors statewide that asked doctors to name one of their colleagues they would trust enough for their own medical care.

"I was flattered to know that some of my colleagues nominated me because doctors are difficult patients," said Maille, a physician at the Community Health Center on State Street.

Maille, 44, was born in Tanzania. He attended medical school in Cuba and practiced medicine in Jamaica before landing in Miami. There, Maille completed his residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

For the past four years, he has been treating patients from Meriden and surrounding towns.

"He is a caring and compassionate physician. The fact that he was honored by his fellow doctors is a high tribute," said Michael Rohde, who, as an organizer for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, has worked closely with Maille.

When it comes to health care, Maille said more could be done for the community.

"I think a lot more could be done.

Health care is very expensive. No matter how hard you try, there are limitations," Maille said. Transportation, insurance and the high cost of medication are too often obstacles to quality health care, he said. But Maille said he tries not to let these obstacles stop him.

"I try to go the extra mile to make sure that my patients get help within my abilities. It troubles me to know that I am not able to do some things for my patients because they cannot afford it," said Maille.

Meriden's diverse population is not challenging for Maille, who is fluent in Swahili, French and Spanish.

"Having lived in a Hispanic country (Cuba), I sort of understand the culture and the set of values, and that goes hand in hand with providing care," said Maille. By learning another language, doors open to a whole civilization, he said.

According to Community Health Center Director Shirley Fryer, 22 percent of CHC patients are self-pay patients who do not have insurance. CHC is a private, nonprofit agency, whose motto is "health care is a right, not a privilege."

But Maille is no stranger to poverty. While practicing in rural Jamaica,

Maille dealt with a population that lacked both education and economic means. That, he said, taught him a lesson in humanity.

"I learned that everybody is just the same everywhere you go," he said.

Maille declined to talk much about his accomplishments, and he consistently refused to, in his words, "be in the limelight."

"I don't think I did anything extraordinary. I prefer my anonymity," said Maille.

Rohde conceded that having Maille talk about the merits of his work would be difficult.

"He's very humble. He'd rather have the attention on the health center than on him," Rohde said.

But Fryer did not spare the praise. "Dr. Maille is very competent, very compassionate of patients' needs, and respectful of their rights," Fryer said.

Patients trust him, she said. "He has a very busy practice and has built lasting relationships with his patients."

She said Maille also enjoys medical students and teaching them what they need to know.

As a youth, Maille said, he never saw himself becoming a doctor, unlike many children who know what they

want to be when they grow up. He said his high school biology teacher was very interested in medicine and encouraged his students to get into medical careers.

"What drew me to medicine was a combination of things. The challenge of medicine was one of them," Maille said. "I was a good student so I was able to make it."

Maille yearns to see the CHC have a strong presence in the community, Fryer said.

"I'm happy for him. He's well deserving of the honor," she said.

For Rohde, who is also City Council Democratic majority leader, doctors such as Maille are an asset to the community.

"He's been in many cultural situations, speaks many languages so has special ability to relate to his patients," Rohde said.

Last year, 25,000 patients received treatment at the CHC, which offers a pharmacy program with a limited amount of medication at a reasonable rate.

The health center also provides dental services and has been receiving a medical grant for the elderly from South Central Connecticut Agency on Aging for the past six years, according to Fryer. In October, the health center will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

**'He is a caring and compassionate physician.'**

— Michael Rohde