



## **Local Non-Profit Assembles Dream Team for Relief**

### **Mission to Haiti**

**PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania -- February 16, 2010 --** To hear Shonta D. Collins tell it, volunteerism is less about giving than it is about getting and she is greedy enough to want more.

Collins, the Founder and President of Explorers Sans Frontières (ESF), one of the region's most active non-profit relief agencies, has spent the better part of the last two years finding donors, gathering funds and funneling that money directly into on-the-ground missions, where medical professionals spend days or weeks helping people in places like Senegal and Haiti.

"I tell people, if you volunteer once, you will get hooked," Collins says with a smile. "When you realize that your being there makes the difference between hope and despair for those people, you just want to find others to share in the experience."

On Thursday, February 19, from 5:30 to 10:30, Collins and her ESF team will be holding a fundraiser at XIX Nineteen, Park Hyatt at the Bellevue, 200 South Broad St, with all proceeds going directly to funding the teams upcoming mission to La Plaine, Haiti.

"You would be surprised at how many people are interested in volunteering. Some people are using their vacation time, others are just taking leaves of absence and some are students who want to give back," Collins explained.

"We need the fundraiser because the only barrier to helping people is the cost of getting us and the supplies to the region."



To give you an idea of the cost and coordination that goes into a medical mission like the one EFS is organizing, consider this:

The March 4-11 trip consists of a team of 14 people:

- Eight Registered Nurses
  - 3 from Penn Presbyterian Medical Center
  - 1 from Pennsylvania Hospital
  - 2 from Holy Redeemer
  - 1 from Albert Einstein Hospital
  - 1 from Independence Blue Cross
- 1 Physical Therapist from Albert Einstein Rehabilitation Center
- 1 Philadelphia-area Firefighter/EMT
- 1 Medical Doctor from New York Private practice in Staten Island
- 3 local non-professionals from ESF Partners, Elise Joseph Foundation and First Haitian Church of Prophecy.

The team will go from Philadelphia to JFK airport in New York, then fly to the Dominican Republic, where they will join a UN convoy for an 8-hour bus journey into Haiti. All materials, including food, water, and medical supplies must be purchased by EFS and shipped into La Plaine. ESF is working in partnership with the Elise Joseph Foundation, First Haitian Church of Prophecy and AMURT along with a host of Community-Based Organizations (CBO).

Total Cost for transportation, travel, shipping and supplies: \$15,000 to \$22,000+

- \$800 round trip to transport team from Philadelphia to JFK
- \$2,000 round trip to and from Santo Domingo
- \$5,500 to ship a container of supplies
- \$5,200 for round trip airfare from JFK to Santo Domingo
- \$7,500 to \$15,000 in kind donations of supplies



<http://www.ExplorersSF.org>

Building Cultural Connections, One Person and One Community at a Time

For Collins, each mission builds on a lifelong desire reach out to other people, other cultures and other lives.

“These people are just like us, with one real exception. Their community is in crisis. If that means I have to drop everything to lend a hand, then I’ll do it,” said Collins. “But I will also make sure I bring a bunch of my friends with me,” she concluded with a smile.

**About Explorers Sans Frontierers:**

ESF is a grass roots organization seeking to foster the growth and development of local professional and student humanitarians in the Philadelphia area to develop independent research initiatives, travel abroad to countries in development, obtain hands-on practical experience in area of study, support humanitarian efforts and participate in cultural exchanges with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

ESF has supported, sponsored and collaborating on 55 outreach projects in 2 years. We have supported 7 student humanitarians to obtain hands on experience in Senegal, West Africa on two separate occasions, and our 3rd outreach project in January 2010 to Jamaica included 2 students. ESF was also named Bank of America’s Local Hero and have also received awards and grants to sustain our local and global projects and recognized by Fox 29 News, Penn Medicine and the Philadelphia Inquirer in January 2010 for our efforts to support and deploy local Philadelphians into Haiti.

For more information about ESF, the LaPlaine mission and Collins, please contact:

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