

THE Bulletin

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PROVIDING RELIEF IN HAITI

Alumna Patty Greene P'93 travels to Haiti to put her education to good use.



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Lisa A. Lawson
Taking a Step Forward

Putting Up Road Blocks
to Metastasis

Article On
Page 11

First Person: Providing Relief In Haiti

BY JENNIFER O'BRIEN PMM'11



With duffle bags full of much needed medicines, **PATTY GREENE P'93** was able to provide relief in the midst of tragedy.

Buildings crumbling, families living in tents because they no longer have homes, people dying, children left orphaned—all part of the terrible aftermath of the earthquake that shook and demolished Haiti and its capital city of Port-au-Prince. Most Americans were touched by the tragedy and opened up their wallets, yet pharmacist **PATTY GREENE P'93** did one better. She joined forces with the nonprofit organization group Explorers Sans Frontiers (ESF) to work as part of a five-person disaster relief team.

After having received a series of vaccines, her body was physically ready for the trip, but was she psychologically ready for what she was going to observe?

“Pretty much you just prepare yourself emotionally to see whatever. Our expectations were...well, we really didn't have expectations because we didn't really

know what we were going to see. What you see on the TV wasn't necessarily what we would experience. I kept an open mind to seeing anything and treating anything.” However, not knowing what exactly to expect, Greene prepared for the worst.

Greene, who is the wife of **SCOTT GREENE P'92**, a PCP experiential field supervisor, spent a week in the country, from April 1 to April 8, 2010. Her team, composed of Joseph Buchanan RN, BSN; Bridgette Nelson RN, MSN; Shonta Collins, RN; and Dr. Stephen Pedron, came bearing all the supplies they could carry in large duffle bags.

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PATTY GREENE P'93

Every day was a different location, but it didn't matter where they went because the mayhem and devastation were everywhere.

“Sometimes we went into a tent city, other times we went into a village, and sometimes we went to the countryside,” said Greene. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, they would set up their mobile clinic and hundreds of people would be eagerly waiting in line.

Wherever they traveled, villagers were notified and asked to provide safe working quarters, but it didn't always work out that way. Most villages scarcely had enough to take care of themselves, let alone Greene and her team, so she would have to dispense medicine right out of her duffle bag.

Occasionally, she would have a table and, if she was lucky, a makeshift tarp held up with sticks, similar to what the villagers had to living in.

No matter what the conditions, they always held a clinic. One nurse, with help from her interpreter, would be triage to determine the primary symptoms. The nurse would write them down, direct the patient to the doctor who would do an exam or ask more questions. The doctor would write a

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PATTY GREENE P’93

prescription, and then Greene would dispense the required medication and instructions.

Along with the generosity from an organization called AmeriCares, who had a large warehouse of prescription medications, the relief team was able to supplement their supplies with antibiotics, general maintenance medications, and sleeping medication.

“Everyone went home with things like rehydration salts because they don’t have food or water. We treated dehydration, malnutrition, hypertension, and diabetes. Also, a lot of people didn’t sleep at night because they were stressed. Some lost their [spouses] in the earthquake; others lost their children,” recalled Greene.



The Haiti disaster relief team, left to right: Joseph Buchanan, RN, BSN; Bridgette Nelson, RN, MSN; orphanage caretaker; **PATTY GREENE P’93**, RPh; Shonta Collins, RN; and Dr. Stephen Pedron, maternal and fetal medicine.

Crowds of people in distress greeted the team wherever they went.



It is feared that the earthquake is not the end of the pain. The poor sanitary conditions increase the threat of disease. Yet, according to Greene, most Haitians aren’t concerned with what is to come tomorrow, but rather they are just trying to make it through today, dealing with the misery and the loss they have regrettably experienced.

“The villagers were very grateful that we were there. You just needed to sit down next to them and if you put your hand on their knee, that’s all they needed because of that feeling of touch to them,” Greene reflected. “They just appreciated that you were there to spend the time with them, ask them questions, and a lot of them just needed to talk.”

Even through all the pain and despair surrounding Haiti, Greene was able to see the positive. The experience was one of a lifetime—one she would not have had without her USciences’ background. Through the foundation laid by her schooling, Greene was able to provide the appropriate tools to help the Haitian survivors.

Scenes of the devastation caused by the earthquake were widespread.

