

## **IAMM in HAITI, Chapter 1: February 21—27, 2010**

Approximately 2.5 million people once lived, crowded into the hillsides of Port-au-Prince. On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake further distressed an already troubled political and economic situation in the overpopulated capital city of Haiti. At the end of February, Haiti's President Rene Preval anticipated the earthquake's death toll to reach 250,000; it is estimated that over 1 million people are homeless.

Leaving immeasurable devastation in its wake, the earthquake has been followed by intermittent aftershocks and equally irregular international aid due to a crippled infrastructure. In the days following the catastrophe, many American organizations sent financial and medical support. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, The International American Medical Mission (IAMM) spend/sent almost \$60,000 in food, water, tents and tarps for temporary housing for our neighbors in Haiti, medical supplies and medication for the relief mission and support of 15 volunteers during the one-week February mission in the Delmas 43 area of Port au Prince, Haiti.

Greeted by hopeful and spirited Haitians, forced to live in unimaginable destruction and poverty as a result of the earthquake, the IAMM team pitched tents in the backyard of their host family and set-up a makeshift clinic in the church of Christ in Delmas 43, about 5 miles from downtown Port-au-Prince.

Awakened by roosters, dogs, and cats, the IAMM team prepared themselves for a day of service at the clinic. They came face to face with the great amount of destruction as they were driven to the "clinic" site, a church that suffered minimal damage during the earthquake. Members of the church and community who had been displaced gathered at the church at 5:00 a.m., blocking the street, anxious to meet and be treated by the IAMM volunteers.

Among other ailments and medical concerns, many patients were treated for anxiety-related and dehydration issues. Most still have no homes, and those that do are fearful of the constant tremors and they continue to sleep on the ground

in tents or under tarps. Lacking adequate security and basic needs, many suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Therefore, in addition to medical care, IAMM volunteers provided encouragement and hope by listening to the stories of the survivors:

- an elderly woman who had been taken into a family's tent only to be kicked out when it began to rain
- the grandmother who desperately wanted to make sure someone would take care of her grandchildren whose parents perished during the earthquake.

Grateful for the care they received, the Haitians thanked IAMM volunteers with "Merci, merci, merci." Overwhelmed and speechless, IAMM volunteers were humbled by the experience; their lives forever changed.

In the midst of their vulnerabilities, resiliency has many rebuilding their lives by selling food, clothing, and toiletries along the streets of Port-au-Prince during the day. At dusk, they pack up their goods and count few coins as profit. With their basic needs unmet, the rainy season upon them, and deteriorating conditions, the survivors need your help. **Please donate now.**

IAMM is the first group to provide medical assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Delmas 43. Pledging to continue providing support to the Haitian survivors, IAMM has developed a four-phase plan to span 5 years and cost over \$1 million.

As part of IAMM's mission to bring medical and emotional relief, as well as hope, IAMM volunteers will return to Haiti August 2-August 7, 2010.

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