



Counseling Connections

Devastation in Haiti



Photo courtesy of MSNBC.com

The magnitude 7.0 quake that hit Haiti on January 12 was the most powerful to hit the nation in a century. The quake devastated the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, which virtually paralyzed the government. According to Dr. Alix Lassegue, the physician who runs the largest hospital in the capital including the morgue, has estimated that at least 10,000 bodies have been removed for burial from his morgue alone. Haiti's communications minister says that the most recent death toll of 150,000, estimated twelve days after the quake, is based on a body count done by a state company that has been collecting corpses in the capital and burying them in mass graves, but U.N. disaster relief experts report that an exact number may never be known.¹

What cannot be disputed is that the nation is in desperate need. Not unlike other disasters, the Haiti earthquake has brought a flood of well-intentioned volunteers to the island. Unfortunately, many tend to hinder the relief efforts rather than help; they arrive without the proper supplies or training.² search-and-rescue team or a medical team, the best thing you can do is give

“Unless you’re in a money for food, water, shelter and first aid supplies. Those are the things we need,” according to Former President Bill Clinton, U.N. Special Envoy for Haiti.³ Jeff Nene, a spokesman for Convoy of Hope, an agency that feeds 11,000 Haitian children a day urges cash donations: “When people give \$1, it translates into \$7 in the field. If they spend \$5 for bottled water, that’s nice and it makes them feel good, but probably it costs us more than \$5 to send it. If they give us \$5, we can get \$35 worth of water.”⁴

The ACA Foundation, through its Counselors Care Program is accepting donations to assist counselors in providing services to family member of Haitians directly affected by the earthquake. This particular fund was originally established as a response to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that devastated the Gulf Coast region in 2005 to assist ACA members in reestablishing their practices. The program now includes funding ACA members in addressing the needs of relatives of disaster victims.⁵

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- 1 Landers, K. (2010), “Haiti death toll 150,000 in capital alone: minister” *ABC News*.
- 2 Romero, S. & MacFarquhar, N. (2010), “Haiti’s Many Troubles Keep Bodies Uncounted” *The New York Times*.
- 3 *ABCNews.com*.
- 4 Aleccia, J. (2010), “Disaster do-gooders can actually hinder help” *MSNBC.com*.
- 5 “Haiti Earthquake” (2010), *American Counseling Association*.



How You Can Help

To contribute through the ACA Foundation, visit the ACA Foundations Website (www.acafoundations.org), select “Donate Now” and be sure to specify “Counselors Care Fund (Haiti Relief)”.

Other Agencies receiving donations on behalf of the Haiti Relief:

The Red Cross. Text “Haiti” to 90999 from your cell phone. An automatic \$10 will be charged to your cell phone account.

UNICEF. (800) For- Kids or <https://secure.unicefusa.org>

The Salvation Army. Text the word “HAITI” to 52000 to automatically give \$10 to The Salvation Army’s relief efforts.

Doctors without Borders. <http://doctorswithoutborders.org>

For a more complete listing of agencies, visit the ABC News website at <http://abcnews.go.com/> and select “Learn More”



Photo courtesy of MSNBC.com

From the Editor:

As I compiled information about the earthquake in Haiti for this newsletter, my mind began to wander about the long-term effects that most, if not all, survivors and their families will be facing. So many times these epic disasters that we are privy to through a camera lens seem so far removed from our own lives. Over 150,000 bodies found so far. It is difficult for my mind to comprehend such devastation; after all, that would be as if the whole population of Asheville was wiped out...twice. So far, in my life, I have been fortunate enough to not personally experience the devastation of a natural disaster, so I do not have any frame of reference. I have however, met people who have.

A little over a year ago I met someone who had relocated to Asheville from New Orleans (NOLA). He had lived in NOLA for several years establishing a home, an art business, and a close social network...then Katrina hit. He had enough time to move most of his belonging to the second floor of his house, and the house itself received little flood damage due to being on higher ground. His livelihood did not fare so well. Many of his painting that were not in galleries or his home were warehoused in a section of town that was almost completely decimated by the surge and subsequent flooding that occurred after Katrina had moved on. In spite of the financial setbacks, he, like many others, decided to stay in NOLA and rebuild his life, but after almost two years the stress, anxiety, and depression that Katrina had stealthily brought with her was too great to bear. He left the city that he thought would be his home for the rest of his life seeking peace and renewal here in the mountains. It strikes me that almost five years later, Katrina still sneaks into his conversations. When he speaks of New Orleans, it is as if he speaks of a family member for whom he mourns; hints of both loss and anger can be heard in his voice and words. He has revisited the city several times since settling in Asheville, but it does not quite feel the same he says.

Haiti is approximately 700 miles from the U.S. shore; a little farther than Asheville is from the Gulf Coast, but those of us living in the Western North Carolina Mountains are not immune. I was reminded of the fall of 2004 when flooding, which resulted from two back-to-back hurricanes that hit the Florida coasts. It literally changed the topography in some places. I remember venturing out several days after the waters receded and was amazed. The local high school football field looked as if it had been bombed...huge craters big enough for a small car to be buried in littered its entire length. Little homes that I used to pass on my usual route to work were no longer there. I was teaching at the time, and fortunately, most of my students were unaffected, but there were a few whose homes had been completely demolished. There was an outpouring of support for the families...food items, bedding, clothes, temporary shelters, etc. In a few short weeks, on the surface, life returned to normal. FEMA arrived on the scene, rebuilding began, parents returned to work, and students could no longer use the floods as an excuse to miss school. Now, six years later, I have to wonder how those particular students are doing....not physically, but emotionally and

From the Editor: continued

mentally. I have no idea if any sought counseling during that time; I know that as a classroom teacher I did not receive any guidelines or instruction regarding what issues my students might be facing. My guess is it that school and community counselors were available to monitor the needs of those involved.

As a counselor and I speak mostly of myself, I need to be mindful that long after the initial disaster has passed, and the immediate needs met, and even after the physical reconstruction is in process, there can be the lingering fears, stress, anxiety, depression that remain under the surface. Not only for the actual victims, but also, as the ACA foundation pointed out, for the families of those who had gone through the actual experience. —Jolene Gervasi

Note: to the right is a photo taken in Biltmore Village....Exxon did not rebuild after the flood.



I want to thank those who assisted me in the transition, especially Bryan Wilson, who took the time out of his schedule to show me the ropes and “transfer power” so to speak. Thanks Lisen for my very first news item! I would appreciate any suggestions or ideas for future newsletters. I promise I will not be so long-winded myself, which means I am counting on YOU to contribute and share. You can send your comments or suggestions to me at jolenegervasi@aol.com

PODCAST HTO16 – STRESS AND HAITIAN AMERICANS, AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Speaker: CIRECIE A. WEST-OLATUNJI, PHD, Associate Professor, University of Florida and **SHIRLEY ST JUSTE** doctoral student at Howard University who will translate in Creole for our Haitian American listeners



Host: REBECCA DANIEL-BURKE discusses the following topics with the presenters:

- Acknowledgement that being in the U.S. with family in Haiti is very stressful
- Key symptoms of distress
- Ways to mitigate symptoms of distress
- When to get help
- Where to get help

Running time: 48:27

Spring 2010 Comprehensive Exam

Those of you who have comps this spring, make note:

****Saturday, March 20 ****

Group Experience

Arika Shafer, Counselor in the WCU Counseling Center, will host the following group experience in February. She specifically invites Counseling graduate students...

“SoulCollage® is a process of making collage cards through an intuitive selection of images from magazines and photos. The group will be guided in reflection and sharing of cards. Participants will become present to their unique and many-faceted Soul in a new way. This illumination often answers questions that are deep in our souls, allowing for peace, rejuvenation, or focus. This is a simple and creative process that holds deep meaning for many and does not require any artistic ability! “Group size will be limited. Contact Arika for further details, to see examples, and to sign-up! You may also view soulcollage.com. Phone: 227-7469. E-mail: ashafer@wcu.edu

Looking for Alumni!! Next newsletter a special section will be designated for Alumni news. It would be nice to keep in touch and track those who went before us in the Counseling Program. A kind of “Where are They Now” feature. If anyone has any contact information (please get their permission) regarding our Alumni, please forward it on. Thanks!

In Retrospect...

As we take this long roller coaster ride through the counseling program together, I am going to ask folks from both tracks to take a look backwards, forwards, inside, and out and to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Morgana (Megan Davis) graciously shared her thoughts as she finished her semester of practicum field experience as a second year Mental Health Counselor Student:

"I did my practicum this fall at Eliada Homes, a PRTF and Day Treatment facility for at risk kids. I am currently also doing part of my internship there. This was not an entirely new experience for me, as I had worked there in the past as a teacher. However, the experience of being a counselor was enormously different! I really felt honored by getting to go deeper with the kids, which is not part of the teacher's role. This time I am able to address what I see as the most crucial stuff instead of trying to teach Shakespeare while someone is having a panic attack! This reinforces for me that I am moving in the right direction professionally.

I love the structure of getting our feet wet in practicum before diving into internship. It makes a lot of sense.

It has been almost a whole year since many of us made the drive out to Cullowhee for "the interview." In many ways it does not seem that long ago and in others feels more like a lifetime ago. Minnesota transplant Jenita Pace, who has just started her second semester on the school counseling track, was among the large group that cold February morning:

"I remember so well arriving at the interview a year ago. I arrived a half hour early, in a business suit, armed with the invitation letter and agenda for the day. As I walked in, I was a bit overwhelmed with the number of people.

And then it began- like the American Idol try-outs. In small group discussions, I heard people share how they'd practically interned for Mother Teresa, some had saved lives, traveled the world, counseled youth on the brink of death. And then there was me. What had I done?

I left that day, driving home, and thinking about my answers and essays and how I acted in my small group. My husband called, anxious, asking, "How did it go?" My response was, "Honestly, I have no idea."

And so, when I got my acceptance letter, it was such a compliment for me. I tore open the letter the minute it arrived and when I discovered it was congratulatory, I screamed and danced and then called everyone who was waiting with me.

Yes, there are times where I'm tired of reading and writing papers. The APA manual has been my nemesis the last few months and I get sleepy on the drive to Cullowhee. But then I think about that interview and the acceptance letter and I feel so blessed. Somehow, someone thinks I can do this. And that's what keeps me going."

Thank you to Jenita and Morgana for sharing; I appreciate that you both took the time and effort as you re-adjusted back into student mode after the winter break.

"Go not to the elves for counsel, for they will say both yes and no."

--J.R.R. Tolkien

MentalHealthHumor.com

By: Chato B. Stewart



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

www.MentalHealthHumor.Today.com

In the Counseling World...

Legislative Day: June 16, 2010

School counselors from across the state will come together to advocate for our students and our profession. Counselors will receive training on legislative issues in the morning and will have the opportunity to meet with senators and representatives in the afternoon.

ASCA Annual Conference: July 3 – 6, 2010, Boston Massachusetts

Network with school counselors across the country and engage in professional development to enhance your service to students. Go to www.schoolcounselor.org for more details and registration information.

A physician in Britain has proclaimed January 25 as the Most Depressing Day of the Year. A month after the holidays, bills start to arrive, New Year's resolutions broken, days are shorter, and your favorite football team might not be going to the Superbowl.



Announcements/Upcoming Events

Scholarship Opportunity *(for school counselors)*

NCSCA has money available for you!! Are you interested in attending professional educational opportunities to enhance your knowledge and skills for developing a comprehensive school counseling program?

~ Would you like to develop a program in your school to enhance the delivery of your comprehensive school counseling program?

~ Are you a graduate student in a Professional School Counseling program and need a scholarship to help pay for graduate school expenses?

If you said yes to any of these questions, check out the NCSCA website's Professional Development section for ways to accomplish these goals (www.ncschoolcounselor.org) and then select "Scholarships" from the menu.

Review the application processes for the NCSCA Professional Development Grant, the NCSCA Graduate Student Scholarship or the NCSCA Comprehensive School Counseling Program Grant (mini-grant application). The application deadlines are Sept. 30 or April 30 to secure funds for the following semester's programs. Please apply one semester in advance of the semester in which you want to begin your program and receive funding. Incomplete applications will be disqualified, so be sure that you read the requirements carefully!

Upcoming Events

9th Annual Southeastern Conference on Cross-Cultural Issues in Counseling and Education

February 12-13, 2010 at Georgia Coastal Center in Savannah, Georgia.

This conference focuses on racial identity development and gender and sexual orientation, from infancy through adult maturity. An understanding of this development is necessary to understand the dynamics of multi-ethnic and multi-racial groups in the United States. The workshop embraces an anti oppressive and multi cultural perspective.

For more information or to register for the conference, visit <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/ccissues.html>

2010 Annual NCCA Conference

February 17-19, 2010 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Concord, NC

"Advocating for Your Clients, Yourself, and Our Profession"

"Transgender Issues in Counseling," "Dating Violence Among College Students," "Twins are People Too,"* and "Self Care of the Counselor" are just a few of the dozens of programs offered at this year's conference. For further information, costs, and registration information, visit the NCCA site at <https://nccounseling.org/conference>

* presented by Jennifer Belham, one of our first year counseling students

The 17th Annual School and Community Counselors Conference

Friday, April 23, 2010 at the Covenant Community Church in Asheville

This one day conference will be focusing on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Issue in Ethics. Guest speakers will be Trent Codd and Dr. Sherry Baldwin. Mr. Codd works in downtown Asheville and specializes clinical application and dissemination of evidence-based treatments for mood, anxiety and substance use disorders. He has a special interest in Trichotillomania, Chronic Skin Picking and other repetitive behavior disorders. Dr. Baldwin is retired from the Buncombe County School System and currently works with Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and Crisis Negotiation Team.more information regarding registration will be passed along as it is received

WCU Counseling Programs' 3rd Annual Coming Full Circle Conference.

Thursday May 6 at WCU.

This is a professional conference featuring our 2010 graduating students as session presenters. All students are invited. Details in the next newsletter!