CATASTROPHIC EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

Death toll reaches 230,000 - Hundreds of thousands left homeless

On January 12th, the worst earthquake in Haiti in 200 years - 7.0 in magnitude - struck less than ten miles from Port-au-Prince reducing much of the capital to rubble. Six weeks after the earthquake, the Haitian government reports that the death toll in Haiti could exceed 230,000. An estimated 1.5 million people remain homeless and in desperate need of food, water, shelter and medicines.

IRT immediately sent critically needed medicines and medical supplies to support the first wave of medical teams entering Haiti. Within days, IRT also deployed a volunteer medical team, all highly experienced in response to disasters. The team worked at the general hospital caring for hundreds of people whose lives had been devastated by the horrific tragedy. The volunteers carried in with them emergency medicines and supplies worth thousands of dollars.

Hawaii Vacation Drawing 2010

Our 2010 Hawaii Vacation Drawing is underway!

This year’s winner will spend 7 days and 6 nights at the beautiful Sheraton Kauai Resort on the tropical island of Kauai + $1,000 towards airfare! Entry tickets will be mailed to you. Remember to return your tickets for the May 31st drawing! If you desire additional tickets, call our office at (619) 284-7979. Special thanks to the Sheraton Kauai Resort for helping to sponsor this drawing.

HELP SUPPORT OUR LIFESAVING WORK!

We want to thank the many volunteers who give so selflessly of their time and talent, as well as the thousands of individuals, businesses, organizations, schools, and churches who provide ongoing support - together we are making a difference! But in order to continue our lifesaving work to help families and children around the world facing desperate situations: we are asking you today to consider making a generous donation. Your gift of any amount will help save lives and bring hope and healing to suffering people. Please note that 98% of all revenues received are applied directly to our programs! THANK YOU for your continued compassion and support!

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As Chile grapples with a rising death toll in the aftermath of the earthquake, strong aftershocks continue to complicate rescue and recovery efforts. The scenes of toppled buildings, overturned cars and bodies being hauled from rubble resembled those from the recent earthquake in Haiti. But because of better building standards and because the epicenter was farther from populated areas, the scale of the damage from Chile’s significantly more powerful earthquake was nowhere near that suffered in Haiti, a much poorer nation, where more than 230,000 people are believed to have died.

IRT is closely monitoring the developing situation in Chile and stands ready to respond if needed.

IRT Updates

January
• IRT shipped a 40’ container of educational materials and medical supplies to Fiji to alleviate shortages in schools and hospitals.
• IRT sent more than $160,000 in medicines and supplies to support the first wave of medical teams entering Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake.
• IRT deployed a medical team to provide emergency medical assistance to earthquake victims at the General Hospital in Port-au-Prince.
• IRT sent its 25th team of skilled construction volunteers to Mississippi to repair the homes of poor and elderly Hurricane Katrina victims as part of a multi-year commitment.

February
• IRT shipped more than $3.4 million in medicines and medical supplies to The Democratic Republic of Congo for humanitarian relief.
• IRT airlifted 1,000 hygiene kits for earthquake victims in Haiti and more than 100,000 meals of shelf-life stable food to feed displaced families. IRT also airlifted $1 million in emergency medicines and supplies to the General Hospital in Port-Au-Prince and shipped 1,236 large family tents to Haiti for displaced families needing temporary shelter.

March
• IRT medical specialists established two more regional training centers in Viet Nam, as part of IRT’s Project “Healthy Baby”, a nationwide program to save newborn lives by upgrading the skills of practitioners who deliver or care for newborns.
• IRT volunteers returned to Mississippi to provide construction assistance for Hurricane Katrina victims.

2010 Volunteer Team Opportunities

Our volunteers change lives…ordinary men and women doing extraordinary things!
The only qualification you need is a willing heart.

- Skilled Construction Teams - Mississippi • Disaster Relief
  Skilled construction volunteers (carpenters, roofers, dry wallers, framers) are needed to help rebuild/repair homes for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Call Tamra at our office 619-284-7979 to volunteer or for more information.
Drilling Wells—Transforming Lives in Sudan

People are dying from water in remote villages in Southern Sudan. Every day, millions of Southern Sudanese, usually women and children, must trek miles to collect water from ponds, marshes, ditches or hand-dug wells. This water is often contaminated with disease-causing parasites and bacteria. The results are pain, sickness, even death, especially among infants and children. Where safe, clean water flows, health, education and economic development, spring up. Safe water brings new hope and opportunities to Southern Sudan’s people, empowering them to change their lives.

“In partnership with “Water for Sudan” and the Rancho Santa Fe Rotary Club, IRT is helping to provide clean water for communities in Southern Sudan by financing the drilling of wells. Eleven new wells have been drilled so far this year, each affecting more than 3,000 people. Since 2003 fifty-five wells have been drilled - affecting more than 165,000 people.”

IRT’s Project “Healthy Baby” is addressing Viet Nam’s alarmingly high rate of infant mortality by training Vietnamese doctors and nurses who deliver or care for newborns as instructors in how to effectively resuscitate babies experiencing breathing difficulties or other medical emergencies that demand instant effective intervention.

In partnership with Project Vietnam Foundation (PVF), IRT is establishing 14 regional neonatal resuscitation (NRP) training centers throughout Viet Nam (full country coverage). Each training center will be manned by IRT-trained Vietnamese instructors, who in turn train other practitioners who deliver or care for newborns in their regions.

Eight of the 14 regional centers have now been established and 102 Vietnamese practitioners have been trained as NRP instructors. The Vietnamese instructors have already taught 50 NRP courses, training 870 of their colleagues.

After months of discussion with IRT, PVF and other stakeholders, the Vietnamese national government in December 2009 passed legislation mandating NRP training at all hospitals throughout the country that have obstetrical and/or neonatal units.

This is a significant step towards reducing newborn deaths in Vietnam. This legislation will provide a ready market of practitioners who need NRP training. Furthermore, it will enable the IRT-trained regional instructors to procure funding from their provinces to support ongoing NRP training in their regions. The National Center of Pediatrics in Hanoi has been given the authority to issue certificates to all who successfully complete NRP training conducted by IRT-trained instructors.

Saving Newborns in Viet Nam

IRT Volunteers in Haiti

“January 21 - A day in Haiti”:

1) No aftershocks.
2) Beginning to have outbreak of tetanus.
3) Navy hospital ship Comfort began accepting patients for us at 0900 hrs.
4) Navy ship Comfort at capacity by 1300hrs.
5) Crowds of ill swarm shoreline land zones of the Comfort.
6) Airman transport loads of new patients back to us to fill beds we just emptied!
7) Fractures, amputations, gangrene and delayed infections beyond belief.

“Please do not let people forget Haiti. It will be a long recovery.”

Sean Neath, M.D.
From the Field:

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Nathan Watson, M.D.

“Working conditions in Haiti were almost unimaginable. With much of the 700 bed General hospital destroyed, no running water, electricity, radiology, lab, or sanitary facilities, it was extremely challenging to provide care to the critically ill and injured patients. But seeing patients actually get better in spite of the conditions and the lack of modern equipment was also very rewarding. Knowing that many of the people would have died without the care we provided was the best gift one could receive.”

Rick Goldsberry, R.N.

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“Our trip was extraordinary—the devastation was shocking, the Haitian people amazingly beautiful, resilient, and hopeful. I know I have been forever changed, definitely for the better. The roses are sweeter, the little things are littler, and I hope to be able to continue to help in these humanitarian situations.”

Colleen Buono, M.D.

“My trip was amazing. I was able to do what I love and change lives at the same time. I was amazed by the kindness and hospitality shown by everyone that I met. I was amazed by the Haitian people’s strength and their ability to laugh and enjoy the simple things in life. I was amazed by the difference that IRT was able to make. The Haitians are very appreciative of the help that we provided, and they recovered much faster than I thought possible. The Haitians could see that our team was dedicated. They reacted to our assistance with gratitude and hope. It was a truly humbling experience.”

Christian Sloane, M.D.

“Please do not let people forget Haiti. It will be a long recovery.”

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Haiti Earthquake

Meeting the needs of the large displaced population will remain IRT’s focus for the months ahead. To that purpose, IRT has already airlifted and/or shipped $1 million in medicines and medical supplies, 1,000 hygiene kits, 1,236 large family tents, and dehydrated food for 100,000 meals.

With your help, IRT will continue to assist the victims of this epic tragedy for as long as possible. If you have not already done so, please send your donation to:

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF TEAMS – HAITI RELIEF
4560 Alvarado Canyon Rd., Ste. 2G, San Diego, CA 92120 or call our office at 619-284-7979 for more information. (You can also make your donation on line on our secure website at www.iritms.org)

IRT Updates

January
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• IRT sent a team of medical specialists to Port-au-Prince to provide emergency medical assistance to earthquake victims at the General Hospital in Port-au-Prince.
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IRT’s Tragedy

230,000 people killed by the earthquake
1,500,000 people estimated to still be homeless
250,000 homes destroyed
300,000 injured
3 years needed to completely clear the rubble
10 years needed to rebuild Port-au-Prince

IRT Volunteer rebuilds home for Hurricane Katrina victim in Mississippi.
Catastrophic Earthquake in Haiti

Death toll reaches 230,000 - Hundreds of thousands left homeless

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IRT will host its 17th annual “Gifts of Hope” Gala on Saturday, October 23, at the San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina.

The proceeds from this special fundraising event will help provide ongoing support together we are making a difference! But in order to continue our lifesaving work to help families and children around the world facing desperate situations we are asking you today to consider making a generous donation. Your gift of any amount will help save lives and bring hope and healing to suffering people. Please note that 98% of all revenues received are applied directly to our programs! THANK YOU for your continued compassion and support!

We Want To Hear From You!

Please direct any comments, questions or feedback regarding TEAMNews to: Editor: Susan Callahan, Communications & Development 619/284-7979, callahan@irteams.org.