



HAITI UPDATE 2 / 12 / 10

Heroic. Tireless. Compassionate. Capable.

Those are just four of the words used to describe the work done by graduates and nursing students at the **FSIL School of Nursing** in Léogâne, Haiti in the past month.

Since January 12, the day a 7.0 magnitude earthquake changed the future of Haiti, we have been grateful to know that the school is still standing, and inspired to hear how the school has responded. All buildings are intact, and a temporary hospital has been erected near the dean's home (until nearby Hôpital Ste. Croix can be repaired). **FSIL is serving the community in ways that we couldn't possibly have imagined.**

The campus quickly became a refuge for thousands of Haitians who found themselves homeless. A tent village sprang up where people are now receiving food, water and medical care. While it took international medical teams five days to arrive, FSIL is now serving as the primary location for care in the area.

"The school of nursing is a part of the Haitian culture, so we are reassured to know it will be there long after the camera crews and volunteer organizations have left," said Rosemarie Rowney, board president of Haiti Nursing Foundation. Plans are already in place to teach FSIL nursing students the skills needed to offer loss and grief counseling, as well as rehabilitation for the many amputees now in Haiti.

Michele Sare, MSN, RN, arrived in Haiti one hour before the earthquake. She was at FSIL simply to see what it would take to teach an online-supported course. She wrote of her experience:

*"I was beginning to feel a desperation well up in my throat... It was still too dark to make out much beyond 10 feet around me, but I could feel a greater press of humanity: Waiting there, patiently. . . for someone to care for their or their child's profound wounds. I knew that there was no time to wretch or gag, to sit and think, to plan or to cry, but I felt so uncertain of my abilities, confused by what I was seeing, what I was smelling, what I was sensing and what I had experienced in just 14 hours in Haiti. Then, I felt a gentle hand at my right elbow, and a soft voice saying 'Here, I will go with you.' It was Rigan, fellow nurse.
[FSIL graduate]*

The student nurses. . . and nurse graduates had begun tending the injured in the short span of daylight between 5 and 5:30 after the quake. Today, there were already hundreds waiting for care. 'What do you need Michele, I will try to find it,' Rigan would say to me.

. . . We must shine a light on the success of nursing – of care – in Haiti... to highlight the FSIL- SON, the amazing work of Dean Alcindor and the Haiti Nursing Foundation . . . The world is seeing only 'poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, 80% poverty, 57% illiteracy,' etc. I met and worked side-by-side with bright, talented, skilled nurses who want to change the world...

Nowhere is the effort of aid going to be more worthy and sustainable than in the strengthening of education – the strengthening of care – the strengthening of nursing education."

If you're among the many who have sent contributions to HNF, we offer deepest thanks. With your help we were able to get cash to Dean Alcindor for generator fuel, medical supplies and other necessities of daily living for the students and staff remaining on site. Work has begun on replacing FSIL's collapsed wall and water tower.

If you'd like to support an effort that will continue to provide health care, you may donate on our website: www.haitinursing.org. Please also visit our new Facebook page: www.facebook.com. Search for "Haiti Nursing Foundation."

Haiti Nursing Foundation and the FSIL School of Nursing are here for the duration. After the visiting medical teams have returned to their own countries, and when the injured of Haiti being their long recovery process, the FSIL School of Nursing will be more essential than ever. For now, we're keeping our sights on the goal of having our nursing students return to school and complete their educations. **Thank you for joining us.**



BEFORE AND AFTER

Left: *FSIL - Faculty of Nursing Science of the Episcopal University of Haiti in Léogâne, before the earthquakes.*

Below, left: The same view after the tent village was created by the injured and homeless.



2009 FSIL grad Shirley Dieuveille with the baby she delivered, and Jimmy Hite, Governing Board member and architect of FSIL

FSIL opened January 2005, the first and only 4-year baccalaureate nursing program in Haiti. Two classes have graduated: 22 women and 4 men, the first Haitians to earn a BSN degree within their own country.



Earthquake victims receiving treatment at FSIL



FSIL dormitory room converted to an operating room