

Healing the Wounds of Haiti

January 28, 2010 12:15 PM Fran Simon

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Dr. Elizabeth Bellino, a pediatrician with a public health degree from Tulane, was packing for a six-month fellowship in Africa, but after hearing about the earthquake in Haiti, she spent nine days there tending to wounded children.



Dr. Elizabeth Bellino, a clinical instructor of pediatric infectious diseases, cares for a wounded child in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. (Photo from Dr. Elizabeth Bellino)

"It was a nightmare. I have not been sleeping well at all since I returned," says Bellino, who describes the wounds she saw as "gruesome."

Bellino received an undergraduate degree in anthropology from Newcomb College, followed by a master of international health degree and later a pediatrics residency at Tulane. Days from now, Bellino leaves New Orleans again for Uganda to pursue the 2010 Piper Fellowship in International Health and Medicine. She will be running a study to prevent and treat tuberculosis in children.

In Port-au-Prince, she worked in two large tents that serve as a field hospital at the

United Nations compound near the airport. She saw many children with crush wounds, facial injuries, limbs that needed to be amputated and infections in wounds that had not been treated.

Bellino had packed 40 pounds of antibiotics but wished for more antibiotics and painkillers. The children were calling for their parents, who were nowhere to be found.

"Because of the disastrous ruin of infrastructure, it's impossible to know which of these children are orphans and which ones have extended family members in Haiti," Bellino says.

Many Tulane physicians and alumni who are doctors have been volunteering in Haiti. Haitian-born Dr. Charles Rene, clinical associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology, and Dr. Francesco Simeone, associate professor of clinical medicine, are part of a team that headed to Haiti recently with medical supplies.

For 20 years, Rene has been leading medical teams to a southeastern Haiti hospital. His next trip was planned for February, but was moved up after the Jan.12 earthquake.

Bellino adds, "Haiti is a 10- to 20-year project, and we can't forget about their needs."

Tulane University has established a [website](#) that serves as a clearinghouse for information about fundraising and other humanitarian efforts.