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NEWS / PROFESSION

Interdisciplinary Expedition to Haiti

Editorial Staff



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The average citizen of Haiti has limited access to medical care, and virtually no familiarity with

chiropractic. Palmer College of Chiropractic, in conjunction with other medical professionals, is trying to change that.

For three consecutive years, Palmer students and faculty have successfully worked with medical teams in Haiti. During a recent journey to the troubled Caribbean nation, possibilities increased three-fold; instead of one annual trip, three separate groups set up interdisciplinary clinics in the cities of Trouin, Jacmel and Gressier.

Two Palmer faculty members and three Palmer student externs joined 60 members of the Friends of the People of Haiti for this year's expedition. The group set up five full-day clinics and one half-day clinic, seeing more than 1,000 patients during their stay.

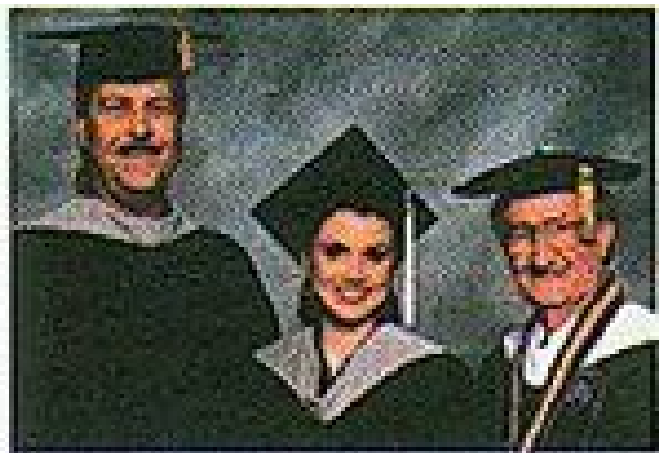
"For 10 days there, we lived and breathed chiropractic," said Julie Taillefer, a Palmer student from Quebec. "I wish all Palmer students could share our experiences ... For me, it was a great experience that I'm not ready to forget."

Administrators at Palmer are deciding whether faculty and students could join an osteopath and other medical professionals, work again with the Friends of the People of Haiti, and initiate a temporary clinic in the city of Les Cayes. Says Dr. Garry Krakos, the director of the Palmer Chiropractic Main Clinic and a Palmer team member for the past three years: "We would like to give more students and faculty the opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary environment and experience how the Haitian patients respond to chiropractic. It gives them a clearer idea of improving people's health in a different environment from the United States."

Dr. Krakos looks forward to expanding the number of Palmer students and faculty involved in trips to Haiti in the near future. There have also been preliminary discussions about legalizing chiropractic in this third-world island country.

Former Miss America Contestant Graduates from Palmer

(From left): Ken Murkowski, DC, vice president of the Palmer College of Chiropractic International Alumni Assoc.; graduate Lisa Desroches, (Miss Massachusetts 1992-93); Palmer President Dr. Virgil Strang.



Lisa Desroches was the first chiropractic student in her family. She was also the first Miss America contestant to accept Palmer College's full-tuition scholarship. Now, she's the first Miss America contestant to graduate from Palmer College of Chiropractic.

Desroches' accomplishment comes from winning the Miss Massachusetts contest in 1992. Each state pageant winner in the Miss America program is extended a full-tuition scholarship to Palmer, which is currently valued at more than \$46,000. The scholarship program, the brainchild of 1972 Palmer graduate Dr. K.S.J. Murkowski, was first implemented in 1992.

Desroches excelled as a student at Palmer, achieving the 3.5 or higher grade point average required for the Dean's List three times. She served as a member of the Palmer ethics board and worked as a teaching assistant with one of the Palmer faculty members. Lisa, who has experience as a professional dancer, also took the time from her busy schedule to teach ballet lessons to children in Bettendorf, Iowa.

The competitions in the Miss Massachusetts and Miss America pageants prepared Desroches to excel. "The pageant helped her with public speaking, gave her more confidence and made her very independent," observed Lisa's fiance, Joseph Herbert, DC (1996 Palmer graduate). "Lisa has been successful because of her accomplishments and hard work."

After a taste of interdisciplinary patient care at the Palmer Clinic, Lisa is eager to work in the field. Following a few years of general chiropractic care, she plans to pursue studies in chiropractic pediatrics, eventually earning a diplomate through Palmer's continuing education program.

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