

## **March 8th-13<sup>th</sup>, 2011 - Jamaica**

On March 8th-13<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a team of volunteers arrived at the Norman Manley Airport for a life changing experience. Most of the members were visiting Jamaica for the first time and therefore had no idea what to expect.

The team consisted of two student organizations from Florida State University: International Medical Outreach (IMO) and Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED). IMO sent 8 students including their leader Andrea Brown (her second trip) and AED sent 9 students with their team leader Mary Jane Tucker (also on her second visit). While waiting for another delayed plane to arrive with other students, the first set of arrivals, took a tour to Port Royal, an old Historic city which has the reputation of being the richest and wickedest city of the world, in the days of the Buccaneers.

After finally getting the entire group together including Mike Webb, PA and Dr. David Keen of Tallahassee, we stopped to have a first taste of the Jamaican beef patties and Devon House ice cream, then on to Cameo's hostess, Mrs. Norma Edmondson for refreshments. During this drive through the city, we were able to see some of the Island's historic and interesting places. At this point, the teams divided: Dr. Keen and the IMO group headed to Vere, Clarendon where they will be joined by Patrick Baxter, PA and the AED group went with Yvonne Keen, RN of Texas and Dr. Danielle Nelson (a local doctor from Cornwall Regional Hospital) went to Buff Bay, Portland. At Vere, the team grew even more with Claudette Powell, RN from New York and Yvonne and Anserd Fraser from Tampa Florida. Mrs. Fraser is our coordinate for the Vere trips.

Sunday was spent sight seeing, enjoying the beaches and waterfalls and getting fully charged for the week ahead. After this, the real work began with the sorting of the medications in preparation for Monday's clinics. The routine for both sites were similar; however, the accommodations in Vere were a bit more modern and comfortable. In Buff Bay it was more like camping out with 12 of us staying in a 2.5 room and 1.5 bathrooms.

On Monday, Mama Keen's group (the official nickname Yvonne Keen has earned from previous student volunteers) traveled an hour into the hills, through steep narrow roads to a place called Bangor Ridge. It was situated literally looking across the valley to the mountain peak, a scene that was very breathtaking! This group worked till 8:30pm seeing a total of 93 patients, all of whom waited patiently until all who came were seen. On Tuesday they were off to Chepstowe with a similar patient load, ending at about 8:30pm too using extra lights from the headlights of the van to fill prescriptions. Wednesday was a different pace at the Portland Infirmary, where more emotions were involved. Bedside care was given to the crippled and infirmed. Thursday was a well clinic for the Golden Agers.

At Dr. Keen's venue in Vere, the church in Mitchell Town, the community center in Portland Cottage and another church in Rocky Point were all converted into clinics. The usual screenings for hypertension and diabetes were done with educating the patients on their diseases following. In spite of the repeated teachings, uncontrolled diabetes and

hypertension were still being detected. The problem we have determined is always mainly due to the lack of funds to continue their medication until we return or to maintain the proper dietary food intake.

After having an experienced the cross section of Jamaican mountains and plains, the introduction to many different foods, especially in Buff Bay to Bobby's local cooking, and seeing 800 patients in total, it is now time to recuperate before returning home. We spent Friday and Saturday enjoying the tourist things like climbing Dunns River Falls, zip lining and just chilling on the beach at the Sunset Jamaica Grand Hotel in Ocho Rios.

A busy, full-filling week and it was all worth it!

Thank you to all our volunteers - you showed superb team work both at home and at the clinics.