

H Hospital News & More

Western Pennsylvania

The Region's Monthly Healthcare Newspaper

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Award-winning doctor works to aid uninsured

By Vanessa Orr

3,500 patients annually who do not qualify for Medicaid but can't afford insurance.

For many individuals and families, being able to afford health insurance is simply not an option. Despite holding full-time jobs, they don't have the means to afford this ever-increasing expense, yet they still occasionally need to see a doctor or undergo medical testing.



Submitted photo

Dr. Zane Gates, director of Partnering for Health Services.

"Unlike a lot of free clinics that, because of funding, are only open to patients one day a week, we are a fully functioning free clinic that is open every day to provide all of the same services that a person would receive at a doctor's office," explained Gates. "Patients can see a nurse practitioner, or any of the specialists who volunteer their time; they can also receive all of the tests and lab work they need, which is donated by Altoona Hospital."

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In 1999, Zane Gates, M.D., of Altoona decided to do something to help the working poor. In conjunction with Altoona Regional Health System, Gates opened a free clinic, Partnering for Health Services, which today treats more than

Brother's Brother Foundation responds to needs of Haitian earthquake victims

By Christopher Cussat

global community.

The tragic earthquake that struck Haiti made the entire world pause in shock, horror and disbelief.

The United States' tremendous outpouring of sympathy and support is embodied in the response of and donations from the people of western Pennsylvania and by the outreach of organizations such as the Pittsburgh-based Brother's Brother Foundation.

But as pictures of the devastation began to spread around the globe, so did the human stories of hope and Haiti's awe-inspiring resilience — a spirit that helped to fuel a response of generosity from the

See **Earthquake** On **Page 37**

ONE STEP AT A TIME



Submitted photo

Allegheny General Hospital's Dr. Raymond Benza and Jessica Lazaar are used to climbing the stairs at AGH; they have a much bigger climb awaiting them on Mt. Kilimanjaro. See page 4.



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Earthquake From **Page 1**

Because of BBF's long history of helping the Haitian people, it was no surprise that the charity was a first responder after the earthquake hit.

The 50-year-old group has provided more than \$3.4 billion in medical supplies, textbooks, food, seeds and other humanitarian supplies to people in 141 countries. In 2008, through funding gifts from the general public, corporations, and the United States government, BBF sent product contributions worth more than \$1.08 billion (and weighing more than 6,500 tons) to those in need in Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Philippines, Rwanda, Slovakia, Vietnam, and of course, Haiti.

Karen Dempsey, vice president of BBF, said much-needed supplies were already en route even before the earthquake struck. "We actually had a container of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, wheelchairs, face-masks ... on the water, which we sent December 30, 2009," she said. Dempsey noted that her organization has performed relief work in Haiti for 40 years.

When the foundation learned of the earthquake, BBF's experience in that region gave them the ability to react quickly and effectively. In fact, when the news came, BBF immediately began working with its partner organizations, Food For The Poor of Miami and the Pittsburgh-based Functional Literacy Ministries of Haiti to send needed relief supplies.

"When we heard that there was a 7-point earthquake outside of Port-au-Prince, we knew that this was going to be a tremendous disaster — so we soon connected with partners like FFTP," Dempsey said.

In late January, BBF sent its first air-shipment of requested antibiotics, surgical packs, surgical instruments and other medical items to Haiti. BBF's medical director, Dr. Chip Lambert, personally escorted the shipment.

"We talked to FFTP representatives who said they needed whatever we had, including all of the pharmaceuticals that we can come up with and basic health kits for the hospitals," said Dempsey.

BBF then asked people and organizations in the greater Pittsburgh area for hygiene essentials that will be needed.

"We requested that donors pack toothbrushes, toothpaste, brushes, combs, bars of soap and new washcloths into 5 gallon buckets with lids because these can be easily wrapped, stacked and shipped with the pharmaceuticals," Dempsey said. "It's a very efficient way of distributing these items into clinics and hospitals because volunteers can just pick up buckets and take them to the people in need."

Dempsey admits that any chance of healing Haiti will require a long-term com-



Submitted photo

Last summer, Brother's Brother Foundation provided support to a health clinic in Haiti.

mitment by everyone, but she said she is encouraged by the amazing generosity and compassion shown by the people of western Pennsylvania.

"It's going to be a long haul for Haiti, and we're going to need continuing financial support," she said. "But BBF would like to thank the greater Pittsburgh community because when we ask for help, they always come through overwhelmingly. Their love for the rest of the world is a result of the diversity of this city — and that, in itself, is such a blessing."

BBF and the people of Haiti still need assistance. The best and most effective way to assist in this effort is through monetary donations that help cover shipping costs. Checks made payable to "Brother's Brother Foundation" and labeled "Haiti Earthquake" can be mailed directly to: Brother's Brother Foundation, 1200 Galveston Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

To make a donation via the Internet, visit www.brothersbrother.org or call (412) 321-3160 for more information. †

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