

Emma's Story: Receiving Care in the Quake's Aftermath

Before the January 2010 Haiti earthquake, 20-year-old Emma Mentor lived with her mother and brother in a rented house in Carrefour-Feuilles, an area of Port-au-Prince. She and her brother were the only ones at home on January 12th when the earthquake hit. When their house fell down around them, Emma was struck and her leg was broken. She went to various clinics looking for help, but was unable to be seen due to the vast numbers of patients. A week after her injury, Emma was waiting outside the clinic set up in front of the Presidential Palace when she heard that doctors were treating people on the grounds of College St. Pierre, high school run by the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti. Having exhausted her other options, she went to see if this was true.

It was. In the days following the quake, diocesan staff at the College St. Pierre coordinated a team of local doctors who began providing free medical care and transfers. During this time, over 1,000 men, women and children were served, including Emma. On her arrival at the camp, Emma received immediate care and was then transferred to Hospital Zanmi la Santé in Cange, where her leg was set and she began to heal.

The idea of beginning mobile clinics was a continuation of these early volunteer medical services at College St. Pierre. In the weeks following the disaster, it became clear that mobile clinics were necessary to reach individuals who were in need of care but were residing far from centralized medical facilities. With support from Episcopal Relief & Development, the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti's development office (CEDDISEC) put their plan for mobile clinics into action. Now, six of these clinics are reaching 70 communities per month in heavily affected areas from Port-au-Prince to Jacmel, including locations surrounding the epicenter in Léogâne. The clinics are staffed with Haitian medical professionals—12 doctors and 12 nurses.

By late June, these clinics had served more than 45,000 people. The mobile clinic services are anticipated to continue through mid-August, helping Haitians through the current rainy season. After receiving care, Emma joined her mother at the tent camp at College St. Pierre. They planned to remain at the camp for at least a month until Emma's follow-up doctor's appointment. After that, they hoped to return to their hometown, Caixe, in the southern part of Haiti, where Emma can go back to school.