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## Photos



Amber Gray, a Santa Fe therapist who specializes in movement and dance, works with Haitian children who survived the January earthquake. She leaves today for her second trip to provide counseling services. - Courtesy photo



## Santa Feans answering Haiti's call for aid

Phaedra Haywood | The New Mexican  
Posted: Wednesday, February 17, 2010 - 2/18/10

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The 7.0-magnitude earthquake that rocked Haiti in January has spurred to action Santa Feans from all walks of life.

Days after the tragic event — which killed an estimated 200,000 and left thousands injured and homeless — local residents began to organize dances, supply drives, auctions and other events to gather supplies and money for Haitians.

Amber Gray, a 49-year-old therapist who specializes in dance and movement therapy, leaves today for her second two-week trip to Haiti, where she's been offering counseling to survivors.

Gray was in a unique position to help post-quake because she developed strong connections in the country while working on her master's thesis there in 1998. In 2005, she started a nonprofit, Restorative Resources, to aid Haitian victims of organized violence and torture. She's been using the nonprofit to funnel cash donations to three other Haiti-based aid groups. She's raised about \$7,500 so far.

On her first trip to the island nation, Gray provided counseling to more than 90 Haitians, many of whom are employed with nongovernmental organizations there.

She wept Wednesday as she described those who have lost family members and homes but are still helping others.

Gray said the layered effects of aftershocks, rubble and huge migrations of people have had an impact on Haitians.

"People are terrified all the time," Gray said, explaining that they don't know how to keep their children safe, and they don't have access to food, water and medicine. "People are terrified about the future of Haiti. One of the questions I get all the time is, 'when is it going to stop? When is it going to be over?' It's heartbreaking when they ask that."

On her first trip to Haiti, Gray carried with her six "massive" bags crammed with medical and hygiene

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supplies. She will bring three more today filled with essential oils and natural sleep remedies donated by Trader Joe's, Pharmaca and Herbs Etc.

The Santa Fe New Mexican · 2 hours ago

Gray said one patient told her a bottle of lavender oil she gave him had provided a lifeline of sorts. "He said, 'Every night I just cling to it and when I wake up and smell the bad odors of death and my child is crying, we smell it.'" Gray said.

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The first batch of supplies Gray delivered to Haiti was collected in large part by Naja Harrell, 30, another Santa Fean whose past experiences organizing charitable drives allowed her to spring into action soon after the earthquake struck.

Harrell, who works at the Institute for American Indians Arts, also collected \$500 to help pay for the extra baggage fees to transport the supplies.

She said much of the money and goods were donated by participants of an African and Haitian dance class that takes place at the Railyard Performance Center.

Medical professionals are in demand in Haiti, and several locals have answered that call.

Dr. Mike Patterson, a pediatrician with 24 years of military experience, some in Iraq, has been recruited by the International Medical Corps to become part of its approximately 80-person team in Haiti. He is scheduled to depart Monday to join his wife, Susan Griggs, and her fellow nurse Veronica O'Halloran, who are already in Haiti. All three work at Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center.

Santa Feans with less obviously disaster-related talents are also getting involved.

Students at Santa Fe Preparatory School have raised \$5,000 for Haiti via on-campus collection cups. A group of local DJs threw a dance party to benefit Haiti at Corazón nightclub Wednesday.

Eric Doerrer of Albuquerque will host a fundraising event in the Wild Oats Community Room from 5 to 8 p.m. Friday to further his efforts to drive 2.5 tons of supplies — including solar stoves — to Miami and ship them to Haiti.

Contact Phaedra Haywood at 986-3068 or [phaywood@sfnwmexican.com](mailto:phaywood@sfnwmexican.com).

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