

The Impact of Hurricane Georges on the area of Belle-Anse, Haiti
September 26, 1998

Background:

A group of medical volunteers from Marietta, Georgia arrived at the area of Belle-Anse, in the southern coast of Haiti, on Monday, September 21, 1998. The location was chosen because our church, Transfiguration Catholic Church in Marietta, GA has developed a relationship with the local church at Belle-Anse. Notre Dame, the Lorette through the Haiti Parish Twinning Program based in Nashville, TN.

Our mission was two-fold; to deliver basic medical care to a population we knew to be devoid of such care, and to survey the conditions of the area with the aim of developing further humanitarian missions to the area.

The team consisted of:

Dr. Geronimo Lluberas: physician.

Catherine Kling: Dietitian, former Peace Corps volunteer and a MPH graduate student (who is also fluent in French). She has experience and training in Third World needs assessment particularly as it pertains to nutritional programs.

Leslie Parish: registered nurse

Myriam Conte: medical assistant (who is also fluent in Creole).

Kathleen Nagy: French teacher and translator.

David Heinen: who has visited Belle-Anse previously and served as our pharmacist.

We visited Belle-Anse until September 26, 1998. On September 22, we visited one of the small villages under the jurisdiction of Notre Dame de Lorette—Bel-Air and saw about fifty patients there. We then saw an average of 100 patients on each of September 23, 24, and 25 at the church rectory. Our medical supplies—which we flew in—were exhausted by the early afternoon of September 25.

What follows is an account of some of the events we witnessed as a result of Hurricane Georges.

Areas assessed:

Personally we visited Belle-Anse and had the opportunity to discuss with the locals the situation in town. We also visited Bel-Air, a small village up the mountain to the north of Belle-Anse, which is about seven kilometers away on a very steep mountain road.