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## **Caring for a Ravaged Nation**

*Grandview CQO Answers Call for Help in Haiti*



Grandview Medical Center CQO Shirley Scarlatti recently spent 14 days in earthquake-stricken Haiti as part of the National Disaster Medical Assistance Team's relief efforts. Scarlatti is shown here in Haiti with husband Bobby, also a member of the DMAT team, and a Haitian infant they nicknamed "Little Bit". The baby was literally born on a Port-au-Prince street days after the earthquake struck.

JASPER, TN – The scene was - and still is - heart-wrenching. No amount of descriptive language can adequately describe her experiences.

Those are the words of Shirley Scarlatti, Chief Quality Officer of Grandview Medical Center. Spoken in a halting, measured tone and invoking a profound sense of sadness for what they attempt to convey, Scarlatti's thoughts drift back to a recent place and time where the word "disaster" has added a new, tragic chapter to the book of human history.

Scarlatti recently spent 14 days in the earthquake-ravaged nation of Haiti as part of the Federal Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), an organization of healthcare providers answering the nation's call to assist during times of disaster. The team consists of healthcare providers from all disciplines including physicians, nurses, and administrative personnel. Scarlatti was joined by her husband, Bobby, a mental health professional, who is also a member of the Tennessee DMAT team.

“Words can’t describe the images we saw, and perhaps more tellingly, the constant and pervasive scent of death we experienced,” Scarlatti said. “It was overwhelming at times, but we had a job to do in continuing to care for the living. That commitment kept all of us grounded and committed to our task.”

The team provided emergent medical and psychological care for those affected by one of the worst natural disasters in history. It is structured along a military-style command and works under the direction of the National Disaster Medical System, which is a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For a disaster on the scale of that suffered by Haiti, a nation with little to no infrastructure or resources to cope even in the best of times, the team and many other national and volunteer agencies are taking action. If not for their efforts, the human suffering might only be multiplied on an exponential level.

Indeed, it was not unlike a war zone military operation for Scarlatti and her fellow team members. Lack of water, exposure to the harsh elements, social unrest, infestations of fleas and clouds of mosquitoes that threatened malaria, dengue fever and other diseases were but some of the personal dangers they faced daily. Still, they managed to save countless lives in extremely adverse conditions, a strong testament to the skill and determination of those who provided the care.

While Scarlatti is a valuable member of the Grandview administrative and clinical team, CEO Bruce Baldwin said that when Scarlatti was called into service by her team, it was a sacrifice the hospital was graciously willing to make.

“We are proud of the work Shirley does with the disaster management team,” Baldwin said. “It’s indicative of the humanitarian activism this hospital emulates in our own community. While our local disasters and emergencies have been nothing close to the scale suffered by the people of Haiti, we’ve seen firsthand the response and professionalism all the members of our staff exhibit when called to do what they do best: care for the health and safety of others.”

“The people of Haiti will need the most basic humanitarian assistance on a huge scale for a long time to come,” Scarlatti said. “When we say hundreds of thousands of them have nothing, we literally mean that most of them have just the clothes on their backs – and some not even that. We all can play a role in helping the people of this embattled nation recover from this terrible disaster. ”

#### About Grandview Medical Center

Grandview Medical Center, a member of Capella Healthcare’s family of hospitals, is a fully accredited 70-bed licensed hospital located in Jasper, Tenn. The hospital serves Marion, Sequatchie counties in Tennessee and north Jackson County in Alabama. Grandview Medical Center also operates the Marion County Ambulance Service; North Valley Medical Plaza, a 24-hour emergency department and outpatient clinic in Dunlap; and Mountainview Treatment Center, an adult inpatient psychiatric program located on the grounds of Grandview Medical Center. For more information, please visit [www.grandviewmedicalcenter.com](http://www.grandviewmedicalcenter.com).