

# Evolve

## Reflections on a Journey to Haiti

Jen and Isaac's look back at practicing Physical Therapy outside the comfort of [Body Dynamics](#).

[Jennifer Gamboa](#), DPT, OCS

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*It's the little things that count: a pair of shoes that we would have thrown away here; a new soccer ball; a slinky, sidewalk chalk – simple things that bring great joy.*

"You know, Mom, the thing that amazes me is how much these people do for themselves, even though they are so injured. I'm not sure that would happen back in the U.S."

This was my son, Isaac's, observation after our first day working in the Jacmel Outpatient Rehab Clinic in Haiti. He had just spent the last six hours observing us treat more than 40 patients with amputations, unstable fractures, strokes, peripheral neuropathies and hydrocephalus due to untreated infections, and long-standing musculoskeletal pain due to untreated trips, falls, and accidents. Most of these folks had no running water, were cooking their food over open charcoal fires, owned one pair of shoes and may have come from over 3 hours away on the back of a moto-taxi (motorcycle taxi) or bouncing along the roads on the back of a tap-tap (a small pickup with seats mounted into the truck bed). Even more inspiring was all of these patients arriving as the clinic doors were unlocked in the morning, holding hands in community prayer and singing hymns to "start the business day", and patiently waiting until they could be seen – even if that was at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Yes, we brought gifts to Haiti, in the form of generous donations of shirts, shoes, and toys from all of you, as well as contributions of medical supplies from BDI. But, of course, we also received gifts. Gifts of the spirit and of lessons learned.



*Jennifer Gamboa teaching at the Jacmel Outpatient Rehab Clinic.*

**Resilience:** The Haitian people have an incredible capacity to be positive in the face of so many challenging conditions; to maintain their dignity and sense of purpose; and to simply keep on "keeping on" in the face of complex social issues, and significant devastation of economic and physical infrastructure. The most common refrain is "Bondye Bon," God is good. We could learn about a great deal about resilience from Haiti.

**Doing More with Less:** One pair of shoes, shined and stitched over and over again; living in a 6 ft x 6 ft tent or shack with dirt floors; walking up to 3 miles to fill a 5 gallon bucket with the day's water and returning home carrying the water on their heads; washing their clothes by hand and hanging them out to dry; swimming naked in the ocean to preserve their one set of clothes. While I appreciate our amenities here in this country, is more always better or is it just more?

## Life Lessons From Haiti

**It's the little things that count:** A pair of shoes that we would have thrown away here; a new soccer ball; a slinky, sidewalk chalk – simple things that bring great joy; greeting everyone they know with Bonju (Good Morning) or Bonswa (Good Afternoon) and a kiss to each cheek; starting each day in a prayer circle; it's finding just the right crutches, just the right brace, or just the right wheelchair to bring new mobility. These are not earth shattering moments, but an accumulation of small actions and interactions that build a depth of community that, perhaps, leads to resilience.

*Clockwise from left: Locals carrying groceries past earthquake debris, a young patient and her mom, living in tents A tap-tap truck (tap to get on, tap to get off),. All Photos provided by Jen Gamboa.*



## A Good Bye Letter from [Amy Humphrey, DPT](#)



I am writing this goodbye with a heavy heart. For those of you who have not heard my news, my husband received a promotion through work that requires our family to move to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. We will be starting our new life there this June. I'm blessed that this move brings me closer to my own family; however, I am saddened that I am leaving my family at Body Dynamics.

For the past 8 years, I have loved coming to work every day. This is due to the incredible group of people that I work with, and the remarkable clients that believe in what we do at BDI. What I will remember the most are the relationships I've made and the inspiring people that I have met along the way.

To my colleagues, I have been honored to work with such a fabulous team of experts. I am thankful for all the laughs and stories we have shared, and for the lessons I have learned from you all both professionally and personally. I owe my biggest thanks to Jen Gamboa. Jen, I am so grateful for the opportunity you gave me to work with such an amazing group of people, and I feel even more blessed for the opportunities and experiences I have had at BDI to shape the physical therapist I have become. You are a wonderful mentor and a great friend. Thanks. I will miss you all!