

# Taking Help to Haiti

*LAW  
students  
become  
medics*

MARC ASPIS HAD two things on his mind while preparing to graduate from law school last May: final exams and searching for a great job.

But when he overheard a student say she was heading to Haiti to help victims left homeless by the earthquake that struck there in January, Aspis—an avid traveler—was eager to hear more. One week later, Aspis (LAW'10) and classmates Joel

**WEB EXTRA**  
Jonathan Glick describes a medical mission trip to Haiti that he and two other BU LAW students made in May at [bu.edu/bostonia](http://bu.edu/bostonia).

Schmidt (LAW'10) and Jonathan Glick (LAW'11) were on a plane to Port-au-Prince to work for a week with *Iniciativa Comunitaria*, a Puerto Rican nonprofit that provides medical services to communities in need.

“We had absolutely no idea what we would be getting into over there,” Schmidt says. The trio rode with *Iniciativa Comunitaria* to rural and urban communities with two goals in mind: to administer street-level medical care and to try to console

a community struck by disaster.

Of the three, only Glick was a trained emergency medical technician. But that didn't mean Schmidt and Aspis didn't scrub up. They helped triage patients, sort medicine, and maintain crowd control and took a crash course in disinfecting wounds and giving injections, practicing on mangos.

*Iniciativa Comunitaria's* volunteers provided free care to patients with a range of problems, from grossly infected wounds to urinary tract infections to apparent post-traumatic stress disorder. It was the first medical care some Haitians had ever received.

Two extreme cases Glick treated still haunt him. One was a five-year-old boy whose eye infection was so severe flies had to be plucked from his socket. The other was a two-year-old girl who was treated for a sexually transmitted disease. “In Haiti, there's no police to call, no social worker to call,” Glick says. “You treat it the best you can, but there's no backup.”

When Schmidt and Aspis weren't providing rudimentary medical assistance, they soothed and enter-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOEL SCHMIDT (LAW'10)

tained children at the clinics. They played games, sang songs, and danced with the kids to music blaring from a mobile sound system attached to one of the nonprofit's vans. “Our job was bringing a smile to children's faces when they didn't have anything to smile about,” Schmidt says.

Each night the volunteers returned to a small compound, with living conditions similar to those of the earthquake victims. They slept in tents, had no running water or electricity, and subsisted on rice and beans.

“I have never seen anything like this,” says Schmidt, who has traveled to Africa and Asia. “I don't think even a war zone could look so bad.” And yet, they say, what made the biggest impression on them was the resilience of the Haitian people.

Days after returning to the United States, Aspis and Schmidt graduated from LAW and began studying for their bar exams. Glick flew to California to work at a law firm for the summer.

“There's definitely a transition of going from a place where people have nothing and nothing is wasted,” Glick says, “to going to a country where people have everything and so much is wasted.” LF



Jonathan Glick (LAW'11), who provided free health care in Haiti, has a light moment with some new friends. Marc Aspis (LAW'10) (above) tends to a young patient.