

## **Stockton's Dr. Mary Lou Galantino Takes Daughter, Student to Haitian Clinics**

Helping Earthquake Victims at Two Locations

### ***For Immediate Release; with photos***

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**Galloway Township, NJ** – Dr. Mary Lou Galantino, professor of Physical Therapy in the School of Health Sciences at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Sara Pitcher, of Hillsborough, NJ, and a student in the doctor of Physical Therapy program and Dr. Galantino's daughter, Madi Pack, are helping patients at two clinics in Haiti this summer.

The July 21-Aug. 3 trip to two locations on the island covers a lot of ground – literally and figuratively. Healthcare professionals are providing medical services and Madi “will be assisting in Jacmel, facilitating dance performances and yoga with 100 kids over the course of a week,” her mother said.

The project will also include working with physical and occupational therapists, doctors and nurses from various countries, studying traditional healing practices and doing research that will continue when they return home.

Dr. Galantino said she is particularly pleased that Madi, a 13-year-old student at Cab Calloway School of the Arts in Wilmington, DE wanted to go and devoted funds that would have sent her to summer camp to help pay for the trip.

“Watching her grow and decide she wants to volunteer in this capacity is wonderful,” said Dr. Galantino.

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“Our family commitment is feeding the homeless in Wilmington, where we live, but Madi’s eyes will be opened even more by the abject poverty in Haiti,” she said.

Dr. Galantino is on the roster of Fulbright specialists for her expertise in HIV-AIDS rehabilitation, cancer rehabilitation and integrative medicine, and is also a yoga instructor and certified wellness coach. “This is an optimal way to serve others, explore a different culture in their context of health and well-being, and have students join in the clinical and research experience,” she said.

Student Sara Pitcher said, "I am very grateful to everyone at Stockton College who made this trip possible, especially Dr. Mary Lou Galantino. Working with Global Therapy Group and Haiti Family Initiative to provide physical therapy care for the people of Port-Au-Prince and Jacmel, Haiti, will be an amazing experience."

The first week is being spent at a clinic run by Global Therapy Group outside Petion-Ville, near Port-Au-Prince, Haiti’s capital and largest city.

Global Therapy Group, based in Overland Park, Kansas, went to Haiti immediately after the January 2010 earthquake and is still offering rehabilitation services, Dr. Galantino explained. “This is a pro-bono clinic –welcoming volunteers from all over the U.S. and the world and has been running year-round since 2010,” she said.

They will be helping earthquake victims and individuals with chronic disease including musculoskeletal issues, HIV, high blood pressure and stroke, and other diagnoses, she said. Many people lost limbs to the quake, and still need physical or occupational therapy, and there’s a need to help children with developmental disabilities as well, she added.

“Despite all of the world’s financial contributions to Haiti (after the quake) – Haiti is still a third-world country in many respects” and has compromised infrastructure in terms of medical care, hospitals and even roads, she said.

The three will spend the second week at Jacmel, about four hours from Port-Au-Prince, working with the Haiti Family Initiative, based in Wilmington, DE.

There they will be working with a team of physicians, nurses, social workers offering physical therapy wellness programs and services. “We will specifically be targeting women’s and children’s health issues,” Dr. Galantino said.

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She noted that this was a perfect “laboratory” for doing research on inter-professional education.

“I’m studying the art of inter-professional practice with a cadre of healthcare practitioners from various backgrounds – handling conflicts, navigating cultural and language challenges,” Dr. Galantino said.

“It’s a true cultural immersion through an international clinical experience and is a rich training ground for our Health Sciences students.”

“We will also be exploring traditional Haitian healing practices,” she said. “As coordinator of Holistic Health at Stockton, we aim to understand the cultural practices that lead to perceptions of well-being for individuals and return to share our experiences and observations in a respectful way for others to appreciate.”

Emily Bessemer, another student in the doctor of Physical Therapy program who is from Brick, will be helping with the research on this end, she added. “She was instrumental in doing a lot of the leg work on where we should go and serve,” Dr. Galantino said.

**Download Photos Here:** [Mary Lou Galantino](#), [Madi Pack](#), [Galantino’s students](#)

**Captions for headshots:**

Dr, Mary Lou Galantino of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Madi Pack, 13, is Dr. Galantino’s daughter. She gave up going to summer camp to work with Haitian children.

**Caption for students:**

Doctor of Physical Therapy student Emily Bessemer of Brick, left, helped plan the trip and is providing research, while DPT student Sara Pitcher of Hillsborough is working with Stockton’s Dr. Mary Lou Galantino at two Haitian clinics this summer.

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