



The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)

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ATOP Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Mission to Haiti:

Follow up Community Healing and Meaning-Making for a Healthy Haiti

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Haiti has been in a state of turmoil for decades. The problems the people of Haiti face on a day-to-day basis are enormous. According to reports from globalissues.org, Haiti is ranked as one of the world's poorest countries when it comes to economy, healthcare, and resource distribution (Shah, 2010). Even acquiring basic necessities such as food and untainted water is a daily struggle. Cholera has ravaged Haiti since the Earthquake back in 2010 and as many as 8,450 people have died from contaminated water (UN, 2014). These unresolved issues leave the people of Haiti in constant fear, unable to live their daily lives safely and in good physical and emotional health. Still today, four years later, Haiti is trying to rebuild and reconstruct these damages, but has made little advancement. As of 2013, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation reported that some 358,000 of the Haitian people still live in poorly maintained camps, because their homes are still in ruins (Schwartz, 2013). CBC also reports that a major portion of funding for reconstruction has been lost within a corrupt Haitian government, leaving the Haitian people nearly helpless in obtaining fulfillment for their basic human needs such a food, shelter, health-care and work. Unfairness from the government and the devastating earthquake are external forces, which creates the internal social and personal struggles that 99% of Haitians face.

Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) Meaningfulworld, is a not-for-profit NGO affiliated with the UN, which helps aid in emotional well-being of people who have experienced both political and ecological trauma. [Meaningfulworld](http://www.meaningfulworld.com) is dedicated to fostering a meaningful, peaceful, and just world in which every individual enjoys physical, mental, social, ecological, and spiritual health. A sense of meaning, peace, and justice, although unique to each individual, is achieved through a transformative journey that integrates knowledge and experience with a sense of responsibility and reflection. This transformative process is also attained through healthy relationships that nurture open, honest, and transparent communication, insight into forgiveness, love and spiritual connection, and active collaborations (Kalayjian, 2014). In Haiti we wish to inspire such communication and connection through workshops, group discussions, meditation, and energetic chakra balancing exercises.

With the help of our 7-step the Biopsychosocial and Eco-Spiritual model of healing after trauma, previous teams were able to facilitate forgiveness and decrease the trauma symptoms (Kalayjian, 2012). The past eight ATOP Humanitarian Missions to Haiti, which began in 2010 immediately after the earthquake, have served over eight thousand survivors, including children. Our team has also been training students of psychology, social work, nursing, as well as faculty, administrators, lawyers, and teachers in the integrative healing model. As recently as 2012, there were still moderate levels of trauma, as we reach out to new communities who are still suffering. Through healing and forgiveness, the community will be able to recover, empower, and find positive meaning.



As an aspiring psychologist, I, **Alexa Kauffman**, join the ATOP team in the hopes of bringing some emotional and spiritual healing to the people of Haiti. I currently am a student at Teachers College of Columbia University where I plan on graduating with a master in psychology degree in 2015. Past personal trauma has led me to understand my purpose in this world is to help myself, and then others create and establish meaningful connections in their life which can help bolster their resilience during times of trauma. As an American and lifelong New Yorker, I have been blessed to grow up in a place where my psychological and safety needs have always been met. With this gratitude, I would like to help share this sense of security with others around the world who struggle with feeling secure in their most basic of needs. I look forward to visiting Haiti, and working with the people in the continued effort to bring them some emotional relief.



I, **Emily Bales**, am a first year student in the master program at Teachers College Columbia University. Dr. Kalayjian helped me on my personal path of forgiveness and introduced me to the Biopsychosocial and Eco-Spiritual model of healing, which has profoundly influenced my life. It is with this new sense of purpose that I join the ATOP team. My hope is that I can share this feeling of peace with the people of Haiti, and help them find the strength and peace within themselves, so that they can heal from the everyday traumas they face.

My name is **Shayla Tumbling**, I am a graduate student completing my doctorate in Counseling Psychology. I have had the pleasure of participating in two



previous Humanitarian Missions to Haiti and providing services to different communities. I love the ATOP mission & Humanitarian Outreach. Being able to volunteer & provide training and services to the international community fits in line with my life & career goals.

I am **Dr. Ani Kalayjian**, President and Founder of ATOP Meaningfulworld, and Professor of Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. Haiti has been in our hearts and souls and has motivated us to plan an outreach annually since 2010. We have a deep connection with the people, and we empathize with their suffering from the devastating earthquake, the political dysfunction, the horizontal violence, as well as the everyday human-made traumas. Our goal is to nurture a generation of conscientious Haitians who are motivated with love, inclusion, forgiveness, and unity to help one another. Our motto is: **When one helps another, BOTH become stronger.**



Meaningfulworld Haiti team in 2012



Meaningfulworld's Kathryn Kaze in 2011



Mileka, Lisa, and Shayla in 2013 table tennis project - Dr Ani assisting in relaxation session



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