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Gardner-Webb Athletic Trainer Accepts Another Mission to the Dominican Republic

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Office of University Communications

May 9, 2013

Stephenie Stark to Work with Orthopedic Surgeon During Second Trip May 19-24

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – To say that her heart was captured during a mission trip to the Dominican Republic last year would be an understatement. Gardner-Webb athletic trainer Stephenie Stark first visited the Caribbean island as part of a Christian Sports Medicine Alliance (CSMA) trip in July of 2012 and immediately knew that someday, she would return. What she didn't realize was that her second trip would come just 10 months after her first.

"I don't know how everything will come together this time because I'm really traveling on my own instead of with a large group," Stark admitted. "I will be doing more administrative work and am not exactly sure how much time we will have for hands-on ministry opportunities with the people. But I am holding out some hope that I might get to reconnect with my little friend from the orphanage."

Stark's reference to the 10-year-old child with whom she bonded at a Dominican Republic orphanage makes her smile. "I don't know if she'll remember me, but I know I'll never forget her," she reflected. "But either way, I'm really looking forward to helping launch a brand new ministry and see how CSMA can provide assistance."

She will get that opportunity on May 19 as she assists a Virginia orthopedic surgeon named Dr. Doug Duncan in establishing a new ministry to the impoverished country. Duncan is working with SCORE International and his entire family is relocating to the Dominican Republic in order to offer much-needed medical services to the people.

"I know I'm being called back to the Dominican Republic," she shared. "I believe I can help get the structure of the program established even more and help with other organizational aspects while I'm there. We've also been asked to assist a primary care doctor who is already there providing health services to the people."

With that in mind, she has been asked to collect eyeglasses of all types, sizes, and prescriptions. Wire frames, plastic frames, reading glasses and more will be collected by Stark from now until May 14. Everything she is able to collect prior to her trip will be hand-delivered to the missionaries in the field who can then distribute them to the people who need them most. For some, it is the first time they will see clearly.

“For people in the community who want to help, if they could just pick up a couple of pairs of reading glasses from the dollar store [with diopter strength between] 1.00 to 1.75, they will be put to great use and will benefit someone who otherwise would not have access to such a luxury,” she encouraged.

If you would like to contribute to the cause, simply drop off your used eyewear or readers in the office of Alison Kernicky, located in the Athletics Suite of the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. For additional information, contact the Office of University Communications at 704-406-2349.

Additional information on Christian Sports Medicine Alliance, including their fundraising efforts, is available at christiansportsmed.org. Stephenie Stark can be reached via email at stephenies@christiansportsmed.org.

SCORE International was founded in 1984 by Ron Bishop and started out as a sports mission ministry. Today, SCORE has expanded into a full-service mission organization that sends thousands of groups on short-term mission trips all over the world. Their goal is to evangelize, equip & encourage.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).