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A MISSION *for* MEDICINE

By Michael E. Haskew

From wilderness medicine to international relief efforts to community activism, Dr. Chris Moore has built a life filled with adventure and service to others.

Recognized around the globe as a pioneer in the field of wilderness medicine, Hutcheson Medical Center Chief Medical Officer Chris Moore is a man of many talents. Moore has tirelessly given his time in relief efforts far and wide, traveling to earthquake-ravaged Haiti, New York City following 9/11, and New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. He's also an outdoor enthusiast, staying active in open canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, and mountain biking.

In each of his endeavors, Moore has carried his medical expertise along, teaching others, comforting, and healing—from the wilds of Siberia to the hospital emergency room. To top it off, he has also been a passionate advocate of Chattanooga's many outdoor amenities for nearly 40 years.

"I see all of these interests as interconnected," Dr. Moore says. "When I go to the hospital every morning, I feel that connection to the other aspects of medicine and the outdoors. I have been very lucky and blessed to have the skills and wherewithal to do these



HAITI RELIEF EFFORTS

Describing his 2010 trip to Haiti, Dr. Moore says he found himself aboard a private jet with an anesthesiologist and nurse from Erlanger, and two orthopedic surgeons from Kentucky. The group had no specifics about the task at hand other than their destination. They subsequently spent 10 days in a children's hospital on the outskirts of the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, treating severely injured earthquake victims.

"I already had a great affinity for Haiti and had been there eight times over the course of 10 years," Dr. Moore says. "I knew how these people suffered in general and had smiles on their faces anyway. I saw things I never thought I would see."

things. By wherewithal, I don't mean the ability to write a check. I mean the support system with kids and my wife, Ellen, who understood, particularly when the kids were young, that I needed to go and do things."

WORLD TRAVELER

Trained in family practice, Dr. Moore realized early on that his desire to travel and explore the outdoors wasn't compatible with building a practice and maintaining an office. So in 1993, he switched to an emergency medicine specialty and began seizing opportunities to develop a wilderness medicine protocol.

Wilderness medicine, Moore explains, involves learning how to treat everything from heat illness to extreme cold to sun-related injuries to snake bites to bee stings to broken bones to just about any other ailment that may arise in the outdoors.

Prior to his appointment as CMO at Hutcheson, Moore worked with Erlanger's emergency medicine residency program to develop a wilderness medicine component. "There aren't many programs in the country that offer that kind of track," Moore says.

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As he had hoped, wilderness medicine has given Moore many opportunities to see the world. From 1989-90, he took two memorable trips to the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan, just at the time the Soviet Union was dissolving. During both expeditions, which were organized by Project RAFT (Russians and Americans for Togetherness), Moore served as team doctor for a group of kayakers attempting a descent down the Obihingo River. ESPN filmed a documentary of the first trip.

Dr. Moore's other adventures include serving as wilderness physician for an MTV reality show in the Amazon jungle, backpacking through the Rocky Mountains, scuba diving in Belize, and whitewater rafting in Siberia. He also served as medical director for the U.S. Whitewater Competition and team trials, and was the venue medical coordinator for whitewater competitions during the 1996 Olympic Games.

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

Locally, Moore's desire to promote the area's outdoor scene led him to found Outdoor Chattanooga in 1997. Today, the organization continues to grow and nurture the area's outdoor culture, contributing to the city's broad appeal to local citizens and visitors alike.

Currently, Moore is energized by the prospects for the 9th annual Southeastern Wilderness Medicine Conference, scheduled in Chattanooga for June 22-26. "There are a lot of reasons why I am so passionate about this conference," he says. "It involves using your skills, being resourceful, and relying on your clinical intuition."

Moore founded the conference in 1997, after he was inspired by one of the Wilderness Medical Society's first conferences. "Just about everything was west of the Mississippi River at the time," Moore says. "I made a case that

Chattanooga was the perfect place for a similar conference. I wanted to show off the area. The genesis of Outdoor Chattanooga actually was this conference."

Land conservation has also been a lifelong passion for Dr. Moore. He has served as a trustee of the Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, as a commissioner of the Tennessee State Conservation Board, and as an advisor to the Land Trust for Tennessee. He received the 2012 Mountain Laurel Award from the Appalachian Center for Wilderness Medicine in recognition of his contribution to the discipline.

For decades, Dr. Chris Moore has lived out his commitment to medicine, the outdoors, and to offering help, hope, and healing to those in need. At 62, his life of adventure is just gaining momentum. So where to from here? "Wherever there is a need," he says.



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