



# Health Volunteers Overseas

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## *Improving Global Health Through Education*

Health Volunteers Overseas Press Release

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**Release Date April 7, 2010**

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### **Mary Jo Geyer, PT, PhD, FCCWS, CLT-LANA, C.Ped, Recognized for Commitment to Global Health**

[Washington, DC – April 7, 2010] Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO) is pleased to announce that Mary Jo Geyer is a recipient of the fifth annual *Golden Apple Award*. As part of its World Health Day observances, HVO created this award to recognize the extraordinary educational contributions of volunteers to international program sites. Each volunteer honored with this award has demonstrated a strong commitment to HVO's educational mission by working on curriculum development, teacher training, didactic or clinical training, or the enhancement of educational resources.

Dr. Geyer has promoted and stimulated multidisciplinary involvement in wound care and lymphedema at the global level. She has forged relationships with multiple medical disciplines and promoted programs in wound and lymphedema management in India, Peru, Cambodia, and St. Lucia. Additionally, she worked with a World Health Organization (WHO) project to improve wound and lymphedema management in Ghana and served as a consultant to the Lymphatic Filariasis Partnership. She has also served as a consultant with WHO to co-edit a white paper "Wound and Lymphedema Management" which has just been published.

In addition to her work as a volunteer, Dr. Geyer has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills as Chair of the HVO Wound and Lymphedema Management Steering Committee and has helped establish 4 programs involving physicians, nurses, and physical therapists. The educational contributions of these volunteers are key to upgrading the management of wounds and lymphedema. Dr. Geyer has been a member of HVO since 2007.

Dr. Geyer is a physical therapist, a board certified wound and lymphedema therapist and a pedorthist. Her research focuses on the prevention and management of secondary complications from chronic disabling diseases. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Rehabilitation Science and Technology Department, University of Pittsburgh.

According to recent reports from the World Health Organization, the global shortage of health care workers is estimated to be 4.3 million with the greatest shortages occurring in the poorest countries. The WHO's Global Health Workforce Alliance has stated, "The global community has clearly recognized that the health workforce is the very heart of functioning health systems, and that without greater quantity and quality of motivated, equally distributed health workers, progress toward health and development goals will not be possible."

"I am very pleased that the contributions made by Dr. Geyer to HVO's wound management program are being recognized with this award," said Nancy Kelly, HVO Executive Director. "By highlighting the accomplishments of volunteers like Dr. Geyer, we hope to raise awareness of global health issues and of the role that individuals can have in making a difference."

World Health Day is celebrated annually by the World Health Organization and the international community. Since 1950, it has been held each year on April 7<sup>th</sup> and focuses on a relevant global health issue. This year's theme is "1,000 Cities, 1,000 Lives" and focuses on the effects urbanization has on our health. For more information about World Health Day 2010, visit (<http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2010/en/index.html>).

A private, non-profit organization, HVO was founded in 1986 to improve global health through education. HVO designs and implements clinical and didactic education programs in child health, primary care, trauma and rehabilitation, essential surgical care, oral health, blood disorders and cancer, infectious disease, nursing education, and wound management. In more than 25 resource-poor countries, HVO volunteers train, mentor, and provide critical professional support to health care providers who care for the neediest populations in the most difficult of circumstances. For more information about volunteering, visit the HVO web site ([www.hvousing.org](http://www.hvousing.org)).

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