

Feb 4

End of week. Peculiar perspective having both first and last Impressions on this first week and anniversary of our second month on St. Vincent. Amazing! I would have thought that this month would have crawled from the amount of sitting I have done in this office. At least our garden is in! (progress must be noted however small). The cabbages and lettuce have already begun climbing out of the ground. Hope the bugs don't destroy them. Anyway (as I wander everywhere) the week is finished. Two months is finished (only 22 left), and soon I'll be done for the day.

Deb cried quite a bit last night. She's lost two patients this week. Unnecessary deaths in that the skills, tech, meds or nothingn position unnecessary. She's watching a 16-year-old quad slowly degrade into as simple as a lack of pillows to keep him in proper bath is an unpleasant experience (to say the least) but e of human life. Her sorrow poured out last night at this



wastage.

I got angry at a system that lets people die, also for what it

is doing to a compassionate caring individual like Debbie. Sometimes (most times)I want to go home just to protect her. But I realize that the good she is doing for her patients and the people she works with is far more important than my agonizing over her sorrow. Should she choose to leave here (which would be highly unlikely) I would discuss it with her then go (or stay) whatever the results of discussion pointed to. But I want to be rid of this sorry place for her sake. I don't see the heartbreak, I only hear about it or feel it. To me, boredom is my greatest enemy while Debbie is involved in fighting death itself. She's been too tired lately and I'm worried about her. She's fragile and yet so tough. I just feel inadequate to help her cope.I just listen and tell her whether I understand or not. but I can't do more. I can't shake up the hospital system, manage it competently and change the system in which it works. I'm powerless to do anything and that impotence gnaws at me.

But the problem is greater than just an inept run hospital. it goes far beyond a cumbersome, disorganized government. The problem lies with the people. as it always does. Because hospitals and governments are merely responses to people's needs. They aren't the needs themselves. The people need to take responsibility for themselves. They can no longer afford to drift aimlessly about. Waiting for Godot. The fathers of the children need to acknowledge their responsibility. The women need to stand up for their rights and follow up on the power and responsibility they already have. I agree that the people of St Vincent (and the EC generally) need to bail out on the slave excuse and realize they are an important people with important ideas to share with the rest of the world. Until that time, people like Debbie will be torn by the sorrow and futility of life here.

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