

## Valley woman is heading to Haiti

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### Ines Allen Eager To Help Quake Victims

A Rancho Mirage woman picked up her phone Thursday morning and heard the question she'd been waiting to hear: "Can you come to Haiti?" Ines Allen agreed without hesitation, and within hours, she had booked an \$800 flight. Allen will leave Saturday for two weeks to help provide emergency relief to the victims of the Jan. 12 earthquake that continues to devastate the impoverished nation. "I don't know exactly how it's going to be. I'm just going blindly, because this is what I love to do," she said. Allen, 52, will work as a dental assistant for Tzu Chi Medical Foundation, a California-based nonprofit group that provides international relief. They solicited her help because of her work with the International Medical Alliance, the nonprofit group she founded 10 years ago, which provides medical relief to Third World countries. Most other details — what other kind of work she will do, where she will stay or how she will get around — were unclear Thursday afternoon. Allen has been "living and breathing" the story of Haiti since the earthquake hit, her husband, Tracey, said Thursday. "This thing about Haiti hit her particularly hard, and she felt kind of impotent," he said. "She's not asking anybody to send her on this trip. She just needs to go." Allen said she had searched for ways to travel to Haiti and offer her services, but could not find a group that had already set up a network and needed help. Now, she hopes she can build contacts that will help her arrange a return trip with doctors from the International Medical Alliance, which has more than 100 volunteer doctors nationwide. She also expects to spend the next two weeks applying gauze, distributing food and performing dental work. "I'll be just there helping as much as I can, whatever they need me to do," she said. "Any help that I can provide for them, I think I'm doing my job as a humanitarian."