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## Johnson helps homeless with medical needs

Health-Care Heroes

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by [Giannina Smith](#) Contributing Writer

In February, on one of Atlanta's coldest winter nights, Priscilla Johnson was out on the street handing out blankets to the homeless and trying to get them into shelters.

"She said she couldn't sleep thinking about the people who are out there who don't have any means," said Gayle Thomas, mission director of Abundant Life Church, where she met Johnson 12 years ago. "She was doing all kinds of things, providing soup and coffee and there she was in the middle of the night while most of us are asleep."

This is just one of the many selfless acts Johnson, who is assistant director of clinical and administrative affairs at [Morehouse School of Medicine](#), has performed over the years. After the earthquake hit Haiti, she traveled to the devastated country with Doctors Without Borders and is consistently giving her time to mentor young African-American people who express an interest in medicine. One of her most noted accomplishments, however, has been her work to provide free clinical care to the homeless attending the Hosea Feed the Hungry holiday dinners.

For her work with the homeless, Johnson is a finalist in the Community Outreach category for Atlanta Business Chronicle's 2010 Health-Care Heroes Awards.

"These parents and these ladies and whoever who are living out of their cars and have no means of getting their medication or getting whatever, she figures out connections for them and provides them with medical care and gives them contact for specialists so that their kids who have special needs can get their issues taken care of," Thomas said. "It's kind of hard to find those kinds of people these days who go the extra mile and she really does."

During the Thanksgiving, Christmas and Martin Luther King Day holiday, when thousands of Atlanta's poor receive meals at Hosea Feed the Hungry Holiday Dinner events, Johnson also makes it possible for them to receive medical care through a clinic she developed 10 years ago. Putting together a team of volunteers from the medical community, which includes physicians, nurses, nurse techs and even dentists, Johnson's clinic provides patients with health assessments, vitamins and flu shots as well as blood pressure, cholesterol, HIV and diabetes screenings. Skin care is also checked and patients are offered referrals to local STD clinics and mental health centers.

During the 2009 Thanksgiving event, 69 volunteers assessed 498 visitors at the clinic with an additional 264 receiving H1N1 immunizations from the Fulton and DeKalb County Board of Health.

One visitor was sent to the emergency room as a result of an existing illness and local pharmacists continue to work with five of the visitors.

"Priscilla is kind of a throwback from another generation, it seems. In a day when your health-care professional doesn't know your name, doesn't know you, things like house calls and all those things that maybe our grandparents are aware of, she's that kind of person," Thomas said. "As far as community service, she works with the homeless and most times they are kind of faceless; people that nobody pays attention to, but she does."

**Priscilla Johnson**

**Title:** Assistant director of clinical and administrative affairs at Morehouse School of Medicine

**Community service:** Developed a free medical clinic for the homeless and working poor at Hosea Feed the Hungry holiday dinner events and traveled to Haiti with Doctors Without Borders.

**Patients assessed at the 2009 Thanksgiving medical clinic:** 498