News and Notes | MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

ABCT Member Jennifer S. Cheavens Featured on CNN’s American Morning

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ABCT member Jennifer Cheavens was featured on CNN’s American Morning on September 27, 2005. The CNN segment highlighted various recovery efforts following the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Dr. Cheavens is currently an assistant clinical faculty member at Duke University Medical Center with a specialization in applying positive psychology constructs to treatment outcome research. Thus, it was not surprising that she responded to one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history by serving as a Red Cross volunteer. Dr. Cheavens volunteered for two weeks in the Gulfport, Mississippi, area and attended to the psychological needs of those individuals personally affected by the hurricane, along with emergency personnel and volunteer workers who were also in the area providing assistance with the recovery efforts. A transcript of the interview can be accessed from http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0509/27/itm.01.html.

In the CNN segment featuring Dr. Cheavens, she discussed the different types of reactions that individuals commonly experience following a natural disaster. Dr. Cheavens educated viewers about the immediate psychological reactions as well as the long-term implications on adjustment. Consistent with her research in positive psychology, she also described the resiliency, strength, and determination that often emerge in individuals as a result of experiencing disaster. She reminded viewers that individual differences in emotional responses are large and that even wide fluctuations from day to day may be “normal.” However, Dr. Cheavens also advised that individuals that continue to experience distress should consult with a mental health professional. Dr. Cheavens proceeded to briefly discuss how she had been helping those affected by the hurricane meet their most immediate needs.

Overall, this segment did a nice job of highlighting the work of an ABCT member taking on the challenge of serving those who were suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, who will be remem-